

For Referees Only

*EPIC Adventure 2
Into the Glimmer Drift*

TRAVELLER^{®20}
*Science-Fiction Adventure in
the Far Future*

QLI/RPGRealms

CT - Classic Traveller
T20 - Traveller20
Gateway Domain

**EPIC Adventure 2
Into the Glimmer Drift**

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Traveller for the *d20 System*
Science Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

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About This Book

This book contains a fully detailed adventure for *Traveller*. It follows the general style of the original 'Little Black Books' or LBBs published as part of the Classic Traveller product line.

This book contains a minimum of general background data and sufficient specific background to allow it to be used without reference to any other setting or adventure book. The adventure is presented in the standard 'EPIC' format developed by Marc Miller, creator of the *Traveller* game. It can be played straight out of the book or adapted to fit into an ongoing campaign.

It is possible to think of this adventure as being similar to the key episodes in a season of a TV series. Unrelated episodes can be slipped in between the key ones, but eventually the story will reach the series finale. Of course, there may well be another series, and so other adventures may follow this one.

This adventure is set in the Gateway Domain setting described by QLI in the Gateway To Destiny sourcebook. Possession of this sourcebook will be useful but is not necessary for enjoyment of this epic adventure. Indeed, *Into the Glimmer Drift* could be set in almost any game universe with just a little tweaking.

Events described in this adventure follow on naturally from *Traveller Epic 1: Stoner Express* but that adventure is not necessary to run this one. QLI's *Starfall Cluster* supplement describes a region adjacent to the end location of this adventure, but again this book is not necessary to run *Into The Glimmer Drift*.

THE COLOR CODE

The *Traveller Epics* adventure series includes material set in the various major eras and settings of the Official *Traveller* Universe. While any of them can be tweaked to fit another region, era or even a totally different setting, each Epic sits best in its 'home' setting. To allow the home setting of any given book to be quickly determined, a color code is used for the cover-edge and central stripes. Books are coded as follows:

- 993-1000 period: Blue
- 1107-1116 period: Red
- New Era (1248) period: Orange
- Generic or one-off: Green

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Please note that this is not a standalone game. It requires that you have access to a set of Traveller rules. The adventure was created for use with the T20 rules system from QLI and the original Classic Traveller rules, but can easily be converted to other versions of the game or even other rules systems.

Assuming you intend to run this adventure with the T20 rules, you will require at least the T20 Lite rules from QLI. We recommend the following:

- The Traveller's Handbook (T20 Core Rulebook) plus either the T20 Player's Book or a d20 system core rulebook such as the *Dungeons & Dragons™ 3rd Edition Player's Handbook*.
- One or more of each of the following types of dice: four-sided (d4), six-sided (d6),

- eight-sided (d8), ten-sided (d10), twelve-sided (d12), and twenty-sided (d20).
- Pencil (or pen) and paper for keeping notes about your character and the adventure. Graph paper is also recommended for making maps of places your character has visited.
- If you enjoy playing online, or are interested in playing *Traveller* online, you should also have a copy of *GRIP: Traveller*. *GRIP* (Generic Roleplaying for Internet Players) will allow a Referee and up to eight players to get together via the Internet or a local area network (LAN) and play *Traveller* (or any other RPG) no matter where they are located physically in the world. Visit <http://www.RPGRealms.com> for more information.

THE EPIC ADVENTURE SYSTEM

This adventure uses the EPIC adventure system created by Marc Miller. The EPIC system is a way around one of the commonest problems with many RPG adventures; the fact that they are very 'linear' in design. In far too many adventures, encounter one typically leads to encounter two, which inevitably leads to encounter three, ad-nauseum. This has several problems. Firstly, the players may not notice a critical fact and thus be left in limbo with no clue how to find the next plot element. Railroading them is sometimes the only solution, and in general railroading is a common feature of this kind of linear adventure. This can lead to player frustration, since there is little worse than not being captain of your own fate.

Reducing the amount of leading-by-the-nose is fine until one of those gaming groups comes along, who insist on doing everything in the wrong order and generally do violence to the plot of an otherwise great adventure.

The Epic Adventure System provides a new way to design and organize adventures, incorporating enough flexibility that the player characters have the 'freedom to roam' without causing the referee nightmares. Asides, delays and additional adventures can easily be slotted into an Epic Adventure.

An Epic Adventure is broken down into 6 parts:

The Cast of Characters – A description of major characters encountered in the course of the adventure, possibly including pregenerated player-characters.

The Background – The background provides the Referee with the information needed to prepare himself, and lays the groundwork for introducing this adventure to the players.

Minor incidents and encounters – Referred to as Minor Scenes or just Scenes, are encounters or events that involve the player characters in some form. Many are directly related to the adventure, and may provide clues, equipment, or other information and materials needed to eventually complete the adventure. Others are merely to provide diversion and amusement. Scenes, unless noted in their descriptions, do not need to be played in any particular order, and may be sprung upon the player characters when the Referee deems appropriate.

Critical Plot Elements – Referred to as Plot Keys, Key Scenes or simply Keys, make up the heart of the storyline for the adventure. They contain vital pieces to the plot that must be played for the adventure to make any sense to the players in the end. You may play any number of Scenes before and after each Plot Keys, but all of the Plot Keys should eventually be completed in their proper order.

Chapters – A Chapter or Act is made up of one or more Plot Keys. They outline the

plot to the Referee, and provide tips and information for playing the Scenes and Plot Keys that are contained in the Chapter. In order to complete a Chapter, each Plot Key within must be completed. Each Chapter must be completed, and played in order to successfully run the adventure. Due to the 'cinematic' nature of an EPIC adventure, it is easy for the Referee to allow the player characters to temporarily deviate from the current adventure storyline to follow a false lead or pursue another short adventure that has interested them. When you are ready to return the player characters back to this adventure plot line, simply pick up with the next Scene.

Adventure Checklist – The Adventure Checklist provides the Referees with a recommended guideline of the order in which various Scenes and Plot Keys in this adventure should be presented to the players. As the player characters complete each Scene or Plot Key, the Referee simply checks it off the list. When every Plot Key in a Chapter has been played, that Chapter has been completed the Referee may begin the first Scene in the next Chapter.

REWARDS AND ADVANCEMENT

Before embarking upon a *Traveller* game or campaign, it is worth deciding what the pace of advancement will be for participating characters. For one-off games this is not important but if the same characters are going to have future adventures, advancement becomes a major issue.

If too little experience is given out, players may become frustrated. There is always a new skill or feat that a character could have done with having, or that the player really wants to have, and for many people working towards gaining such abilities is an important part of the game. If the distant mountains never seem to be any closer, what is the point of walking towards them?

On the other hand, characters who gain large amounts of experience and other rewards may become overpoweringly powerful. True, a shotgun in the back will be as detrimental to the health of a 20th level veteran as a beginner, but skill levels are critical to adventuring success; too much too fast is bad for a game even if it does not make the characters invincible. Thus the Referee should tailor the experience awards suggested by the T20 core rulebook to his or her own game style. In our experience it is better to keep characters a little bit hungry.

This brings up the question of whether to give out experience at the end of each Act or at the end of the adventure. Each Act can be treated as a separate adventure in terms of experience awards. Typically, each Act (or Chapter) is about equivalent to an Amber Zone or Signal GK adventure, leading to the conclusion that it should be worth around 2000XP X the Average party level. This is not a good parallel, since some Acts are quite short and besides, over a 5-Act adventure this adds up to a LOT of experience.

If experience is to be given out at the end of each Act, it is better to use the following system:

Base Experience for the adventure is calculated as per the THB – this is a full adventure so experience award is set as 4,000 XP multiplied by the average party level (at the beginning of the adventure). Half of this is saved up to be awarded at the end of the adventure. The other half is available to be assigned at the end of each Act. It is possible to simply assign 10% of the total to each Act (assuming 5 Acts), but the Referee should consider assigning greater or lesser percentages to certain Acts if he/she feels that the characters would learn more from the events in that Act than from another.

The experience available for any given Act is subject to the standard multipliers listed in the T20 core rulebook; some acts are just plain more dangerous than others! The 50% block of experience is also subject to multipliers for difficulty of the overall adventure.

Remember that all experience awards are totals, and are then shared among the participating characters. Only characters present in a given Act gain experience for it. When determining who gains experience from the adventure as a whole, the Referee must use judgment. Obviously, characters who were there the whole time should gain the full amount. People who popped in for a single Act should not. If a player brought in a new character to replace one killed or otherwise indisposed, the Referee should count the character as being present for purposes of dividing up the experience but only award a portion of the total experience, based on how long the new character was involved. The rest of the experience entitlement was lost with the dead character.

Using this system, characters who were present for just one or two Acts of the adventure gain some experience, but do not share in the overall end-of-adventure award. Referees also are able to easily deal with the situation where a player brings along three friends to a session in the middle of the adventure, only one of whom comes back to play in the remaining Acts.

Example

Alice, Bob and Candy play 6th level characters through a 5-act adventure. Ignoring difficulty multipliers, this gives a base XP award of 4,000 x 6 = 24,000 points for the whole adventure. The Referee 'banks' 12,000 for award at the end, leaving 12,000 available to be divided up among the various Acts. She decides that Act 1 and 2 are worth 1,000 each, 3 and 4 (being much more complex) are worth 4,000 each and Act 5 is worth 2,000.

Alice's character manages to get killed during Act 2 and is replaced by a new one, who survives to the end of the adventure. She thus gains no experience for Act 1-2 (well, other than being a highly experienced corpse) but gains XP for Act 3,4 and 5.

Bob goes right through the adventure with no mishaps, but complicates matters by bringing his friend Dave along to Act 3. Dave misses Act 4 but manages to turn up for about half of Act 5.

Candy misses the very last session of Act 5 but plays throughout the rest of the adventure.

Experience is awarded as follows:

Act 1: Three characters participate. Experience is awarded: 1000 points divided by 3, or 334 points each.

Act 2: Three characters participate. Experience is awarded: 1000 points divided by 3, or 334 points each. Alice's character is dead, so this experience is buried with her.

Act 3: Four characters participate. Experience is awarded: 4,000 points divided by 4, or 1,000 points each.

Act 4: Three characters participate. Experience is awarded: 4000 points divided by 3, or 1,334 points each.

Act 5: Three characters participate in the majority of sessions in this Act. The Referee decides that Dave's relatively trivial contribution should not take experience away from the others and awards 2,000 experience divided by 3, or 1,667 points to each of the three main characters. She gives Dave a token award of a third of this – 555 experience points.

Final Award: The Referee decides that the adventure was carried by Alice, Bob and

Candy, and that Dave's contribution was relatively minor. However, Act 3 was a big one and Dave not only made his character useful but also got involved in the roleplaying. She decides that the experience Dave got from the two Acts he was actually present for is enough of a reward and awards the overall adventure experience among the three main characters. This is 12,000 divided by 3 or 4,000 points each. However, Alice loses part of this award since her character is a replacement. A 3/5 award (the new character was present for Acts 3-5) does not seem fair, since the first two Acts were quite minor. The Referee decides to award the overall experience in the same proportions as the per-Act XP, i.e. Alice loses out on 2,000/12,000 or 1/10 of her possible award.

Candy missed a single session, but the Referee decides that this is of no consequence.

Thus the experience awards for the Acts and the adventure as a whole work out as:

Alice: $1,000 + 1,334 + 1,667 + 3600 = 7,601$

Bob and Candy: $334 + 334 + 1,000 + 1,334 + 1,667 + 4000 = 8669$

Dave: $1,000 (\text{Act } 3) + 555 (1/3 \text{ of Act } 5) = 1,555$

The Referee has decided that although Dave was present in Act 3, a major part of the adventure as a whole, it would represent an isolated incident to him and thus he does not qualify for the overall experience award. This also avoids the problem of players who rarely turn up for a game possessing quite powerful characters whose experience was earned by other players.

Other rewards are of course possible within an adventure. Each Act will normally include opportunities for characters to gain advantages in terms of money, equipment, weaponry and contacts among rich and powerful individuals.

CHARACTER TYPES AND SKILLS

It is not the practice of QLI to list the skills a team of travellers will need in order to complete any given adventure (though skills required to get hired for the job might be listed). This is because *Traveller* is an open-ended game, and there are a great many possible paths to success. Almost any group, of any level, with any set of skills, can complete this or any other *Traveller* adventure if they are able to think creatively and maximize their strengths. There are no encounters or challenges in this adventure aimed at any type or class of character. Different characters will use different approaches and may struggle in some circumstances, but adventuring is not about having the right weapons, skills or equipment to meet a challenge; it is about meeting what the universe throws at you with what you have and finding a way to win – or at least survive.

Any group of characters can complete this adventure even if they do not have access to a starship. However, the difficulty of getting about the region using commercial traffic is considerable, so it is best if the characters do have a ship. A small Jump-2 vessel such as a Far Trader or a Scout/Courier is ideal. The adventure presents details of a typical Scout/Courier for this purpose.

Obviously, if the characters have a starship then they should be able to operate it. This implies that they need at least some level of skill between them in the relevant disciplines: Piloting the ship, navigating between systems, running the engineering plant and manning the ship's weapons (if any). However, there is no set level required for such skills.

Since this adventure assumes that the characters and their ship are somewhat impoverished, it is recommended that characters created specially for this adventure should not start with large amounts of cash from their mustering-out bonuses. The Referee should allow the purchase of a reasonable amount of equipment with this money prior to beginning play, then reduce whatever is left by 50-90%, leaving the characters with a few hundred credits to their name rather than tens of thousands.

Players who know about this in advance may decide to spend all their money before it is taken away. It is up to the Referee if this is acceptable or not. For example, it is entirely believable for a character taking a job as an engineer aboard a starship to invest her mustering-out cash in the very best hostile-environment suit available or for an amateur scientist to own an expensive personal computer. Characters who wish to buy a golf bag full of guns and a robot to carry it should be firmly discouraged.

Background

Into the Glimmer Drift is set in the Domain of Gateway, part of the Third Imperium, in the Year 993. The Domain is a somewhat turbulent place at present, after the controversial appointment of a new Archduke to oversee its affairs and a major war raging in the Solomani Rim just a couple of sectors away. However, life goes on, commerce continues, and starship operators need to make a living.

The characters are among the crew or 'mission personnel' aboard a merchant or scout ship operating in the Glimmerdrift Reaches sector beyond the Imperial border. This can be a hazardous occupation, especially in such difficult times, but fortunes are made by taking risks, not by staying home.

The following data is provided for the benefit of the Referee. How much of it can be determined by the players, and with what degree of accuracy, is a matter for the Referee to decide. In many cases a simple search on the ship's computer or any library terminal will suffice to provide at least the bones of the information.

THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Third Imperium is a human-dominated empire of some 11,000 star systems. It is not a vast, monolithic structure. The time lag inherent in interstellar communications makes this impossible. Instead, the Imperium resembles a vast federation of worlds that agree to certain common practices, and allow the Emperor and his subordinates to deal with foreign policy, military affairs and similar multi-world considerations while maintaining control of their internal affairs.

IMPERIAL PRESENCE IN THE REGION

Although Glimmerdrift Reaches sector is part of the Imperial Domain of Gateway, most of it lies outside the Imperial border and Imperial influence drops off as distance from the border increases.

Imperial presence in the sector is limited to a handful of worlds at the Coreward end and a rather larger number in the Spinward-Rimward corner. These are separated by the Delphi Rift (also known as the Darksky Gulf). It is thus not practical to administer the Spinward-Rimward Imperial worlds from the Domain capital at Annapabar in Ley Sector (to Coreward). Instead these Imperial worlds are administered from Delphi, directly to Spinward, until such time as the Imperial presence in the region grows to join both groups of worlds. This is not expected to happen for centuries, if ever.

The Imperium maintains a 'zone of interest' along its fringe and regularly sends ships to trade with or show the flag at worlds within 3-4 parsecs of the formal border. Beyond that, influence drops off fairly quickly and Imperial ships are increasingly rare.

There is some friction along the border from time to time, but for the most part the worlds and states close to the Imperial border are used to their status as clients or independent worlds. Relations are not always cordial, but understandings have been developed. Cross-border trade and travel is common and many businesses operate on both sides of the border. Law enforcement agencies usually co-operate, much to the detriment of criminals seeking refuge on the other side of the line. The Imperial Navy does make anti-piracy sweeps beyond its borders, usually but not always with the consent and cooperation of the local independent worlds.

INDEPENDENT WORLDS AND CLIENT STATES

Many of the worlds along the border of Gateway Domain are to a greater or lesser degree 'client states' of the Imperium. In effect, they are friendly independents who allow Imperial Navy vessels to use their ports and patrol their systems as a matter of course. Trade links are strong and relations generally cordial. Joint naval operations are not uncommon and extradition treaties are in place. Imperial-registered ships arriving in port on such worlds are treated more or less as if they were local shipping – papers are normally accepted at face value and customs checks are no more rigorous than usual. In return, client worlds are guaranteed protection against aggression and can request aid from the Imperium in times of trouble.

Some worlds have formal Client status and are listed as such in the star system data. Good relations with the Imperium and its citizens can be taken for granted. Some other worlds are a kind of 'informal client state' with friendly relations but no formal treaty in place. Some words listed as Independent fall into this group.

Other independent worlds are truly that; non-aligned. Some are actually quite hostile to the Imperium and will harass ships coming through their ports with endless paperwork or intense customs inspections. Actual violence against Imperial citizens acting lawfully would be a very stupid mistake, but some worlds will do everything they can to discourage Imperial attention and Imperial visitors.

The majority of Independent worlds are fairly neutral in their attitude to Imperial citizens, and treat them no better or worse than any other visitors. Attitudes do shift, however, due to internal or external factors.

THE GRAND DUCHY OF STONER

Situated along the Trailing edge of the Delphi Rift, the Grand Duchy of Stoner comprises a handful of worlds in the Alpha quadrant of the Glimmerdrift Reaches sector, and additional holdings to Coreward, most of which enjoy a fairly high technology level.

The original Grand Duke of Stoner was a Sylean noble who, not caring for what Cleon Zhunastu (Emperor Cleon I) was doing to the Sylean Federation, gathered his followers and headed out into the unknown in a fleet of starships with the intent of founding his own pocket empire. Centuries later, when the Sylean Federation had become the Third Imperium its scouts contacted the Grand Duchy which by then was well established and already a moderate success.

While the Duchy has no real love for the Imperium, there is no traditional enmity. Nevertheless, the Duchy is suspicious of Imperial expansion and works through legal and economic means to curtail it. Imperial corporations are not permitted to own facilities or even maintain offices within the Duchy.

Most worlds of the Grand Duchy are ruled by either hereditary Princes (there are several Princes, but the Grand Duke outranks them) or Appointed Governors, most of whom are Dictators with wide powers who answer directly to the Grand Duke.

The Grand Duchy annexed the world of Gazala in 960 through an economic masterstroke that saved the world's failing economy. Although Gazala gives its loyalty freely and wholeheartedly, its deeply religious citizens are not truly integrated with the population of the Grand Duchy as a whole.

The Grand Duchy of Stoner has a single armed force, the Ducal Household, which encompasses ground troops, security personnel, naval forces, emergency services

and royal couriers. Local (non Jump-capable) defense forces are backed up by Ducal Reserves and Expeditionary Forces.

The Ducal Household is well known for the arrogance of its personnel, and vessels entering Stoner space can expect to be stopped and searched by every naval vessel they encounter.

THE GLIMMERDRIFT TRADE CONSORTIUM

The Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium (or GTC) is a loose alliance of worlds tied together by economic, rather than political, ties. The Consortium is dominated by the high-tech economy of Fal, at the Trailing edge of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector. It is not a regional alliance but includes worlds scattered across the Glimmerdrift and Crucis Margin sectors.

Based upon trade and industry, the Consortium supports a range of agendas among its members, and while internal politics can be rather 'vigorous', the Consortium is not expansionistic. Its economic influence is felt across the sector, and there can be no doubt that it can bring considerable power to bear if it chooses, but for the most part the worlds of the Consortium – and the Consortium itself – are content to mind their own affairs. Occasionally a world petitions to join; most such requests are politely turned down.

Member worlds of the Consortium have very different governments, which deal with their own internal affairs. External matters like foreign policy (such as it is) are the concern of the Mercantile Council, a representative body which allocates votes to member worlds based upon the size of their planetary economy. The Council is divided into numerous factions, and any issue requires an impressive amount of favors, influence and outright bribery (of individuals and worlds) to achieve a decisive majority. For this reason, Consortium affairs are normally in a state of "chaotic stability", where changes are minor and gradual despite furious politicking on all sides. Outsiders find this situation rather exhausting to enter into, which effectively keeps foreign firms out of Consortium-influenced markets. This is probably not a coincidence.

While the merchant cruisers of the Consortium range far across the Sector (and even into Imperial space), firms based out of the Consortium worlds tend to be local in nature, and have few offices outside the member worlds.

The Consortium has a fair proportion of non-humans among its populace, including Vargr and some Wanderers, who have been integrated in local culture for centuries. Relations with the 2000 worlds were at one point almost cordial, though the activities of the Lords of Thunder have soured this relationship in recent years.

Border arrangements exist with neighboring powers, but only as negotiated by individual member worlds. There are few formal arrangements and treaties concerning the GTC as a whole – it prefers to make peace through manifest benefits to both parties rather than the formal wording of a treaty.

The various member worlds maintain local defensive forces and a few Jump-capable warships, but the nearest the Consortium has to a Navy is the so-called "CP-CK Fleet". This is a collection of small warships (nothing bigger than a destroyer) on loan from various worlds, assigned to "CP" (commerce protection) and "CK" (corsair killing) duty. Seepies and Seekers (as they are colloquially referred to) range beyond the systems of the Consortium, and at times have been known to assault and occupy known pirate havens.

The majority of Consortium merchant cruisers are armed. The larger ones carry

bay weapons but none have spinal mounts. However, these vessels are able to defend themselves against most raiders and can even project force at a modest level, should the Consortium ever need to.

Each planetary navy and merchant line has its own uniform, though centuries of co-operation have resulted in commonality of insignia and ranks, creating a modicum of corporate identity among the diverse forces of the Consortium.

THE FARREACH MARGRAVATE

The Margravate is a fairly large interstellar state centered on three clusters of worlds, lying mostly in the Delta quadrant of the Glimmerdrift Reaches sector and thus outside the area covered in this adventure. It is possible that its trade ships and the odd patrol vessel might be encountered. However, the Margravate has problems on its Rimward border and is unlikely to be very active to Coreward at this time.

The Margravate has existed (in one form or another) since the last days of the Rule of Man, though in that time it has been conquered, liberated, expanded, reduced to only 3 worlds, and at least twice wracked by internal wars.

The Margravate is a very loose organization ruled by an elected council headed by the hereditary Margrave. In recent times the central government has become little more than a political ornament and as a result the Margravate is in deep decline. Central control has broken down, the Margrave has been nothing but a figurehead for centuries and member worlds have been jockeying for influence and control over their neighbors for decades. It seems likely that the Margravate will break up sometime in the next few decades, though the dissolution is not likely to be very violent.

The Loyal Nineworlds Republic, located to Rimward in the Sepik subsector, has annexed the world of Shoehorn and seems inclined to keep taking territory in the region. Protests (probably the only means of retaliation the Margravate has available) have not deterred the Republic, and if expansion continues a conflict of some sort becomes increasingly likely.

This is not a conflict the Margravate can win.

The Margravate has traditionally maintained a naval force controlled by the central government. This force is composed of vessels constructed specifically for it, and crewed by personnel from across the polity. However, the Margravate Navy is bitterly divided along factional lines, and no longer properly controlled by the central government due to planetary influences being brought to bear. Many worlds want to see its resources divided up among them. Ironically, the only obstacle to this is lack of agreement on the division.

In addition to the Navy vessels, various member worlds maintain private navies, some of which are coming to rival the Margravate Navy in size and capability. Vessels are mainly in the light cruiser size range, but tend to be generalist designs carrying a small wing of fighters, some ground troops and craft for them, and a light spinal mount.

THE STARFALL CLUSTER

At the very edge of the region covered by this adventure lies the world of Starfall. Starfall is part of the Starfall Cluster, a location covered in a forthcoming supplement from QLI. The cluster is not a unified power and does not exert major influence on this adventure, except that ships of the Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium use the cluster as a stepping-stone on their way Spinward towards Imperial territory.

Glimmerdrift Reaches Sector

Most of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector lies well beyond the borders of any major state, so while influences are felt the region is in fact somewhat fragmented. Populations are predominantly human, and Vargr are less common than in Ley Sector to Coreward.

Star density is rather low in the central area of the sector. Some astrographers consider this region to be an extension of the Darksky Gulf (or Delphi Rift), though it contains far more stars than what is normally considered Rift space. The low-density central area is known as the Glimmer Drift, since it contains numerous clouds of interstellar gas. It is bounded to Spinward-Rimward and Coreward by a region of true rift some 2-5 parsecs deep. This rift presents navigation problems, as it can only be crossed by Jump-2 ships at two points, though once across the gulf, traversing the Glimmer Drift is somewhat easier.

The Glimmerdrift Reaches sector is a battleground for Solomani and Imperial agents trying to create sympathy for their respective causes. The Solomani could use neutral worlds in the Reaches as a base for commerce raids into the Imperium (indeed, it is suspected that they already are doing so), and are constantly seeking alliances or basing agreements. Thus many worlds are equipped with Solomani weaponry sold at knockdown prices in return for a little political favor. Both sides are using all the tools at their disposal, from flag-showing naval vessels and economic assistance to covert action and blatant strongarm tactics to prevent the other from gaining an advantage.

This adventure is primarily concerned with events in the Kraxin and Williamsburg subsectors of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector. There are no Imperial worlds in these two subsectors, and only one formal Imperial Client. Some worlds do feel considerable Imperial influence, but for the most part the Grand Duchy of Stoner is more influential than the Imperium.

THE GLIMMER DRIFT, STARREACH GULF AND KULDERSEN DEEP

The Rimward end of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector is divided into two regions by the Starreach Gulf, an extension of the Delphi Rift that extends from Coreward-Spinward to Rimward-trailing. The Gulf is a major obstacle to navigation, and can only be crossed by Jump-2 ships at two points. Neither lies within the region covered by this adventure. Just to Coreward of the Starreach Gulf, the 'central' region of the sector is known as the Glimmer Drift which (unlike the Darksky Rift) contains a number of gaseous clouds that glitter with reflected starlight. The Glimmer Drift is a region of relatively sparse stars. The Rimward ends of Kraxin and Williamsburg sectors lie in the Glimmer Drift, while the Coreward end of Williamsburg is split by the Kulderson Deep.

Crossing the Deep without taking a long detour to Coreward requires a Jump-3 ship or passage via Didan into the Starfall Cluster, most of which lies in neighboring Tasman subsector. The difficulty of navigating these regions has shaped the pattern of colonization and development in the sector for many centuries.

KRAXIN SUBSECTOR

Kraxin Subsector has only one multiworld state, the Grand Duchy of Stoner. It comprises nine star systems, of which eight are located in the Stoner Cluster. Only Gazala, important as a Jump-2 link Coreward, lies beyond the cluster.

The remaining 16 worlds of the subsector are all independent, and are mostly quite undeveloped.

Just to Rimward of the midline of the subsector a finger of the Darksky Gulf (or Delphi Rift) divides the subsector and makes Jump-2 transit difficult.

WORLDS OF KRAXIN SUBSECTOR

Allegiance Codes: X - Non-Aligned; I - Imperial (Domain of Gateway); Ic - Imperial Client State; Gs - Grand Duchy of Stoner

| Name | Loc. UWP | Bases | Codes | PBG Allegiance/Stellar |
|----------------|----------------|-------|------------------|------------------------|
| Adasha | 0912 E785675-2 | | Ag Ni Ri | 625 X M2 V |
| Modoc | 0919 E65A303-5 | | Wa | 223 X K6 V |
| Irda | 1013 A4238BA-7 | | Na Po | 500 GS K2 III M3 V |
| Gesham | 1014 B10088D-9 | | Na Va | 601 GS G2 V |
| Ember | 1018 C989332-7 | | | 724 X M2 V K6 D |
| Massen's World | 1112 B6468AC-6 | N | Ag | 515 GS G4 V |
| Stoner | 1113 B100ACB-E | | In | 810 GS A3 V |
| likhi | 1114 D100462-9 | | Va | 515 GS M7 V |
| Khad Khabar | 1212 B310885-6 | | Na | 712 GS M4 V M6 D |
| Irge | 1213 B879457-C | | Ni | 303 GS M3 V |
| Geon | 1215 E647985-6 | | In | 415 X G1 V M8 D |
| Lagu | 1219 E100400-8 | | Va | 803 X M0 V |
| Gazala | 1311 D100AEC-D | | In | 201 GS M5 III |
| Urmek | 1313 D788563-6 | | Ag Ni Ri | 902 GS G4 V F7 D |
| Shinan | 1319 C422594-A | Ni Po | 420 X M0 V | |
| Grand Endeavor | 1413 A475769-A | Ag | 102 X K8 III | |
| Hope Rock | 1414 E110489-5 | Ni | 114 X M2 V M2 D | |
| 534-817 | 1417 B6A2100-D | | 105 X M7 V | |
| Uukishku | 1420 B100574-B | Ni Va | 501 X K2 V K6 D | |
| Burukansse | 1511 A542548-B | Ni Po | 604 X M2 V | |
| Kalder | 1515 E200200-5 | Va | 401 X F5 III | |
| Kalash Nain | 1520 X696389-0 | | 712 X M0 V | |
| Kibarlimmar | 1611 C756453-5 | Ag Ni | 800 X K2 IV A2 D | |
| Gurgaliinash | 1613 C672756-6 | Ni | 704 X M3 III | |
| Drahcir | 1616 E300A96-8 | In | 514 X A3 V | |

MAP LEGEND

WORLD CHARACTERISTICS

- No Water Present
- Water Present
- ☼ Asteroid Belt

BASES

- ★ Naval Base
- ▲ Scout Base
- △ Way Station

TRAVEL ZONES

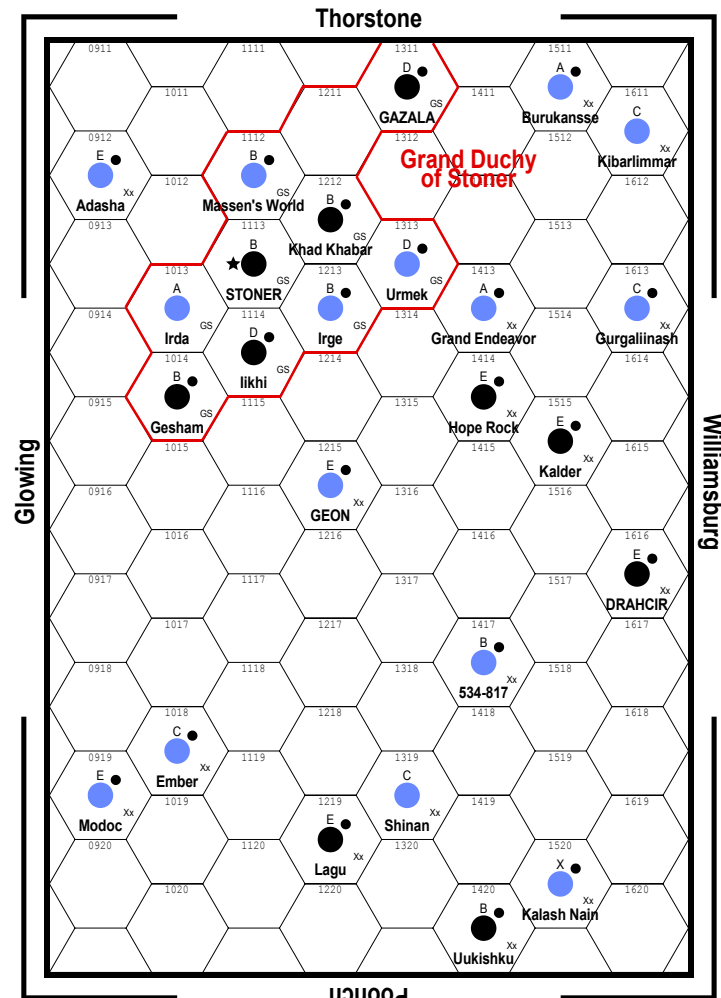
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

POPULATION

Secundus under one billion
PRIMUS over one billion

World names in red are subsector capitals

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D |
| E | F | G | H |
| I | J | K | L |
| M | N | O | P |



Kraxin Subsector

(subsector F of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector)

WILLIAMSBURG SUBSECTOR

There are no multiworld polities in Williamsburg subsector. The major grouping of worlds in the quadrant, the Broken Chain, is a Jump-1 main with a single 1-parsec break stretching from Akhag at the Spinward end, right across the subsector and on into Tasman subsector via Nu Khidam and Miracle. The smaller half (the Broken Links) centers on Wideocean, while the major half (the Chain Majoris) contains 14 worlds, of which few have any major importance. The Broken Chain provides a trade link to the worlds of the Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium to Trailing and the Farreach Margravate to Rimward.

Linked to the Broken Chain by the Didan system is another significant grouping, the 10 worlds of the Starfall Cluster which includes one of the most high-tech worlds in the sector, Idam Lee.

WORLDS OF WILLIAMSBURG SUBSECTOR

Allegiance Codes: X - Non-Aligned; GT - Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium

| Name | Loc. UWP | Bases | Codes | PBG Allegiance/Stellar |
|----------------|----------------|-------|----------|------------------------|
| Gloriana | 1712 C11068A-B | | Na Ni | 404 X M3 V |
| Siigi | 1714 E594646-3 | | Ag Ni | 612 X M9 III |
| Anish Ishas | 1715 B765668-8 | | Ag Ni Ri | 200 X K9 V |
| Akhag | 1718 A624559-C | | Ni | 614 X K0 V |
| Bubi | 1810 E464313-7 | | | 903 X G7 V |
| Wideocean | 1816 B98A620-8 | | Ni Wa | 300 X M1 V K1 D |
| Udar's Dagger | 1817 C79879C-4 | | Ag | 204 X K1 V A6 D |
| Aapizishga | 1913 B262653-A | | Ni Ri | 403 Cs M3 V |
| Zarkhakugsi | 1916 C244678-9 | | Ag Ni | 322 X M7 II A0 D |
| Tailend | 2115 C786764-3 | | Ag Ri | 204 X K7 V |
| Bartle | 2117 C64A634-9 | | Ni Wa | 602 X M3 V K2 D |
| Sea of Light | 2118 B567356-8 | | | 503 X G2 V F8 D |
| Eda | 2211 A100544-F | | Ni Va | 505 X G3 V M2 D |
| Shuriken | 2212 B300568-A | | Na Ni Va | 904 X K0 III |
| Cixntha | 2215 C100999-A | | | 400 X M3 V M9 D |
| 015-424 | 2216 E7A08BC-4 | | De | 703 X M3 V |
| Miller's Reach | 2218 D344348-6 | | | 821 X G7 V |
| Am | 2319 C110513-7 | | | 223 X M9 V K1 D |
| Starfall | 2411 B654554-B | | Ag Ni | 803 X M2 V |
| Didan | 2415 C629301-8 | | | 300 X M5 V M7 D |
| Nu Khidam | 2417 E765255-5 | | | 403 X K0 V A2 D |
| Miracle | 2418 B755675-B | | Ag | 800 X M4 III F4 D |

MAP LEGEND

WORLD CHARACTERISTICS

- No Water Present
- Water Present
- ☉ Asteroid Belt

BASES

- ★ Naval Base
- ▲ Scout Base
- △ Way Station

TRAVEL ZONES

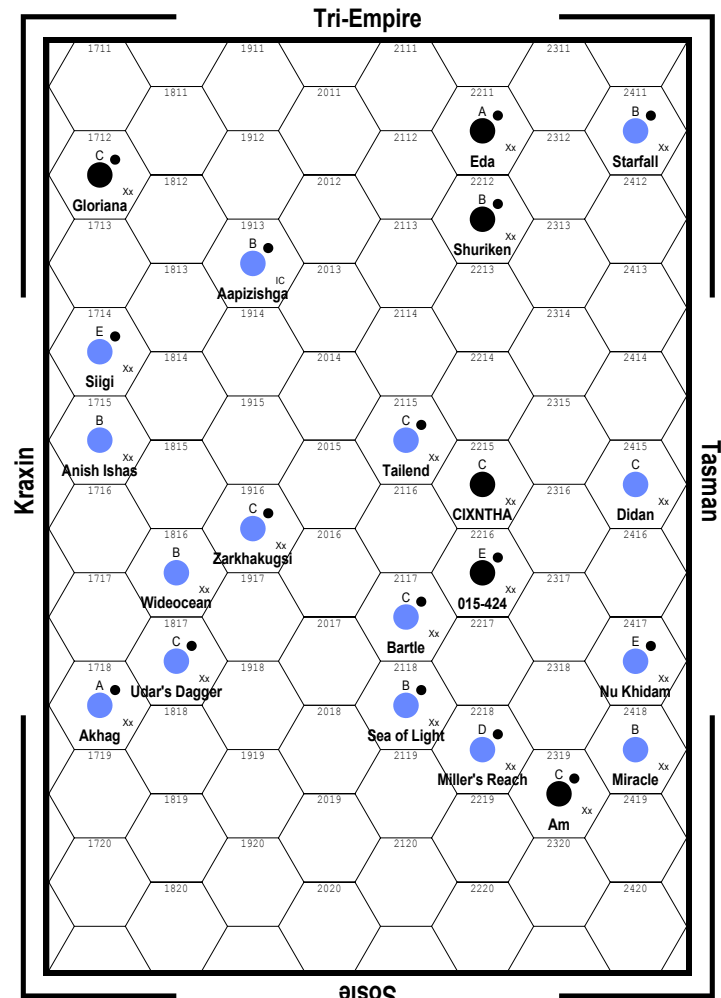
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

POPULATION

- Secundus under one billion
- PRIMUS over one billion

World names in red are subsector capitals

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D |
| E | F | G | H |
| I | J | K | L |
| M | N | O | P |



Williamsburg Subsector

(subsector G of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector)

World Data

It is not possible to detail every world the characters are likely to visit during the course of this adventure, nor is it really desirable. Referees can flesh out the UWP data presented in this adventure as necessary.

A number of worlds are detailed here, either because they have a significant influence on the region or because the adventure is likely to take the characters there.

GRAND ENDEAVOR

Grand Endeavor 1413 A475769-A Ag 102 X K8 III

Settled long ago, during the Rule of Man, Grand Endeavor was to have been the base and staging point for the settlement of what is now the Stoner Cluster. This project was not a success and for many years Grand Endeavor was little more than a self-sufficient agricultural colony.

Today, the world is ruled by a planetary governor answering to the Grand Duchy of Stoner, which has gradually taken over the world's economy and finally its administrative apparatus. Grand Endeavor is not a formal member of the Grand Duchy but is certainly moving in that direction. It is expected that a Hereditary Prince will be appointed soon (possibly the current governor) and the world will be absorbed at that time.

At present Grand Endeavor's excellent starport provides refits for visiting vessels and builds ships under contract to buyers across the subsector and beyond. The port and associated Startown are the hub of the world's economy and governmental apparatus, with the majority of the ten million planetary inhabitants living within 500km of the port. The remainder are scattered in small agricultural communities across the entire planetary land mass.

The Grand Duchy of Stoner maintains a regular naval presence in the system. Most shippers find it more convenient to sell their cargoes here rather than enter or cross Stoner space, so Grand Endeavor sees a great deal of commercial activity in its portside mercantile quarter.

KALDER

Kalder 1515 E200200-5 Va 401 X F5 III

Kalder is a rockball world with no atmosphere and no free-standing water. Its 400 inhabitants are miners or their families, scraping a living from the world's deposits of gold, platinum and copper. Most of the proceeds go on offworld mining equipment and life-support gear, since Kalder's machine shops can only produce crude and bulky (but robust) items for use in the field.

Most ships entering the Stoner Cluster go around via Gurgaliinash, bypassing Kalder and Hope Rock. It is not hard to see why.

GURGALIINASH

Gurgaliinash 1613 C672756-6 Ni 704 X M3 III

Significant as a Jump-2 link into the Stoner Cluster, Gurgaliinash is a dry but otherwise reasonably pleasant world inhabited by some seventy million humans. Unusually for the region, the world has a Vilani name. How this came to be is lost in history, but the commonest theory is that the world was settled by a Vilani group fleeing the conquest of

the Ziru Sirka by the Terrans. Certainly there are Vilani traditions to be observed among the population, though the bloodline has been thoroughly diluted over time.

The world is self-sufficient and makes a decent profit on servicing starships crossing to and from the Stoner Cluster. Away from the port region life goes on at a steady and comfortable pace as it has since time immemorial. Although the planetary tech level is relatively low, there is a fair amount of offworld technology available to the locals via trade with Grand Endeavor, and many families have a few TL-A conveniences.

The people of Gurgaliinash are apparently content with their gentle way of life and while they are friendly and welcoming to offworlders, they have no desire to adventure or seek fortunes among the stars.

DRAHCIR

Drahcir 1616 E300A96-8 In 514 X A3 V

An industrialized mid-tech world with a very large population (a little over 50 billion people), Drahcir is the other reason why trader ships enter the Stoner Cluster via Gurgaliinash. The world's impersonal bureaucratic government has for centuries espoused a policy of isolationism, to the point where the locals are openly hostile to offworlders.

The 'E' port designation refers to facilities that are available to visitors (i.e. hardly any). The world government has a number of military and industrial spaceports available and maintains a large force of low-tech missile boats on patrol in the system. Clunky space vessels ply regular routes between various mining and industrial outposts and tugs drag ice asteroids into orbit over the mainworld, ready to be stripped and added to the planetary resources.

The system receives very few visitors, though a few traders have managed to establish working relations.

ANISH ISHAS

Anish Ishas 1715 B765668-8 Ag Ni Ri 200 X K9 V

A rich agricultural world, Anish Ishas is an important link between the Broken Chain and the Stoner Cluster, and thus represents prime real estate. Its large and well-equipped starport sees considerable traffic and refits starships at very reasonable rates. Despite this, visitors approach Anish Ishas with caution.

The world was effectively conquered in a coup by offworld forces in 986 and remains an occupied territory. The origin of these forces is unknown and their equipment was a mix of Imperial, Solomani and Stoner-made systems of a sort that can be obtained anywhere in the sector. The invaders fielded the equivalent of a brigade of grav cavalry equipped to TL A or so, but with the advantage of surprise (and, apparently, some infiltration ahead of time) this force was more than enough to over-run the stunned defenders and establish a military dictatorship in a matter of days.

Since the occupation, the new world government has treated visitors with extreme courtesy and taken pains to ensure 'business as usual', though large numbers of offworld mercenaries equipped with local TL-8 weapons have now been brought in to suppress unrest. Control is very tight in the port region, but there is open rebellion in more distant areas. The high-tech forces make the occasional sweep but for the most part the rebels are opposed by TL-8 forces using an effective combination of brutality and lenient treatment for those who surrender. It seems likely that there will be trouble for some years to come, but the invaders are steadily winning their campaign.

The dictatorship is actively courting the Grand Duchy of Stoner, presumably in the hope of gaining recognition as the legitimate government of Anish Ishas.

WIDEOCEAN

Wideocean 1816 B98A620-8 Ni Va 300 X M1 V K1 D

Wideocean is, as its name suggests, almost completely covered in deep oceans. The three million or so inhabitants dwell on widely separated island chains which each have their own democratic government. These in turn participate in the planetary democracy.

Wideocean is a warm and pleasant world with bountiful seas that yield vast amounts of food and farmed seaweed for very little effort. As a result the locals are a laid-back and friendly bunch who can be infuriating to offworlders simply because of their habit of putting off anything that can possibly be done later. Many employees at the Starport are in fact offworlders used to a faster pace of life. Even a fairly lazy worker from, say, Stoner, is a workaholic by Wideocean standards and can command a very good salary on account of being far more productive and efficient than the equivalent Wideoceaner.

Wideocean is a popular place for crews to put their ship in for a fortnight's refit at the port and take a holiday, and for spacers to retire to. Many come to the port near the end of their career, work for a few years on a high salary, gradually winding down to a more 'local' pace. When they have acclimatized to the glacial pace of local life, retirees buy a retirement home to spend the next few years sitting on the porch of, watching the two suns set over the vast oceans.

There is a small but significant trend in the opposite direction: aging but highly experienced spacers who wake up one morning and realize they cannot stand another day of lazy retirement on a sunny beach and rush to the Starport to sign up with any ship that will let them work for a living.

SEA OF LIGHT

Sea of Light 2118 B567356-8 503 X G2 V F8 D

The gas clouds that give the Glimmer Drift its name are particularly dense near the system of Sea Of Light, illuminating the night sky in a breathtaking rainbow of scattered starlight. The world is very nearly a T-prime planet – i.e. it is ideal for human habitation. Despite this, it has only five thousand permanent inhabitants, most of whom live and work around the Starport.

Most of the planet is virgin wilderness. It has probably been explored several times, but there are no records of a planetary survey at the starport. Odd groups of homesteaders and prospectors occasionally arrive and head out into the wilderness for various reasons. Thus there are a few little settlements scattered all over the world; not all of these are included in the population figures.

Occasional rumors surface that ruins of an earlier civilization have been found, but these remain unproven. Natural resources are rather scarce, making mining a losing proposition, so the world remains a stopover on the Broken Chain and nothing more.

EDA

Eda 2211 A100544-F Ni Va 505 X G3 V M2 D

Eda is the highest-technology world in the sector. Indeed, its technology is in advance of anything outside the prototype laboratories of the Imperium. However, with its relatively small population base (500,000 individuals), Eda's industrial and therefore

export capability is rather low.

Eda was settled quite deliberately by a very well-prepared expedition from Terra. They sought a world with good natural resources, which was fairly isolated and also of little interest to colonial groups seeking a Terra-like home. The early settlers intended to ensure they would be left alone to develop their world until the colony was past the vulnerable early stages.

The colonists were right, and as the Long Night drew in their small but sustainable industrial base allowed them to construct new starships and to trade for what they needed throughout the dark years. Eda was one of the few beacons that shone out in the darkness of the Long Night; never flickering or dimming.

With a long history of technological society, it is hardly surprising that the people of Eda have reached a high level of development; indeed, the only real reason why they have achieved more is the essentially conservative nature of Edan society. Every development must be tried and tested. Every change must be sustainable. Reliability is more important than performance.

This deep-rooted conservatism features elsewhere in the Edan psyche. The world is welcoming to visitors and traders – indeed, its starport is something of a wonder – but is not accepting of immigrants. Eda's three cities are maintained at a comfortable level of population, and only a handful of immigrants are accepted every year. Conditions for acceptance are difficult to meet, and all immigrants are considered to be probationary for at least a generation.

For those who are full members of Edan society, life is good. Standards of living are very high, and laws are fairly relaxed. Individual conservatism is more of a factor than intrusive law enforcement. The eager traders who come to Eda Starport seeking high-tech items for sale provide a handsome income which is spread across the whole of the population by Eda's well-regulated economy.

Some traders are disappointed, however; Eda does not sell weapons of any sort to anyone. Even the craftsperson-built starships constructed at the small orbital yards are supplied unarmed and lacking fire control. Weapons and supporting systems must be obtained elsewhere, though Eda's yards will fit systems supplied by the buyer.

It should be noted that as the only source of TL-F starships in the sector, Eda can charge what it likes to those who desire the technological edge these vessels give them, and are willing to take the risk of a breakdown far from the only port able to provide proper spares. Ships are practically hand built; even standard designs cannot be said to be mass-produced. Eda manufactures the best starships in the region, but only for those who can afford to pay well over the odds.

CIXNTHA

Cixntha 2215 C100999-A Va 400 X M3 V M9 D

A link on the Broken Chain, Cixntha is a tidally locked, airless rockball orbiting close to its primary. As a result, the "bright face" is a scorched wilderness while the "cold face" is cratered by meteor impacts. Between the two lies the twilight region where most of the world's population and industry are found. A belt of arcologies linked by subterranean transit tubes circles the twilight region and houses 90% of the world's 4 billion population. The remainder dwells in mining or industrial outposts, or in subterranean cities on the bright or cold faces.

Cixntha's main exports are light industrial produce and TL-A electronic systems, and the process of mining, refining and using the raw materials required to support this industry employs a sizeable percentage of the population. The populace are ruled by a restrictive (but not particularly oppressive) bureaucratic government.

Visitors to Cixntha are struck by its drabness more than anything else. Clothing styles tend to be tasteful and functional, ornamentation is sober; even park areas are formally laid out according to strict rules that make them all seem alike. Cixnthan art and music are mass-produced and, to an outsider at least, extremely boring. Some observers prefer to describe both art and music as "subtle", implying that true appreciation is beyond the understanding of the uneducated masses. This piece of snobbishness has been at least partially successful – Cixnthan art and music have enjoyed considerable export success in the past few years, being bought mainly by people who don't want to admit that they, too, find it boring and drab for fear of seeming like cultural Neanderthals.

Cixntha's small starport is situated on the Cold Face, a thousand kilometers from the nearest Arcology but close to an industrial marshaling point. As well as a stopover for trade ships plying the Broken Chain, Cixntha Down acts as a port of registry for many independent vessels. Most ships registered out of Cixntha have nothing to do with the world, other than as a flag of convenience. Cixntha conducts workmanlike checks on the legality and spaceworthiness of vessels using its flag, and so its endorsement is considered to be worth paying the high registry fee for.

Probably the only thing about Cixntha that is not drab is the cuisine. Almost the entire food production on-planet comes from vast algae tanks and tiny gardens and microfarms. Making anything interesting to eat out of these limited raw materials is a challenge, so when a Cixnthan chef has access to shipments of spices and frozen produce from other worlds, he or she plunges into the task with heart and soul – and the results are simply incredible.

015-424

015-424 2216 E7A08BC-4 De 703 X M3 V

A desert world with an atmosphere unbreathable to humans without technological assistance, 015-424 is a refuelling point on the Broken Chain for Jump-1 ships. Jump-2 vessels bypass it.

Incredibly, the world has a human population; seven hundred million people call this world home (in point of fact they call it Arakhransia, a local dialect word that translates as 'gigantic desert'). The population dwell in virtual slavery in underground cities that were clearly built at a higher tech level than the world's current sustainable TL of 4. The government, which is a highly unpopular dictator and his followers, maintains control through brutal oppression. Since venturing onto the surface is death without proper equipment, and protective equipment is controlled by the dictator (who also controls the environmental support systems), the populace have little choice but to submit.

The human civilization on 015-424 is in deep decline and despite some ingenious attempts to replace high-tech life support gear with crude mechanical systems, the cities cannot last more than a couple more centuries without external assistance. This is the last thing the dictator wants, so the downward spiral is set to continue.

The few ships that do come to 015-424 are directed to a special community peopled by supporters of the Dictator and are treated well; some visitors realize that things are very bad elsewhere but many leave without ever realizing that there are other cities at all.

The Dictator's forces do patrol the surface whenever possible, picking over the ruins left behind by their declining civilization. They have some offworld weapons and systems available but for the most part rely on bulky TL-4 air supply units for survival.

Note that most library data entries list 015-424 as having a single settlement at Takraf Plateau, inhabited by some thousands of people, and make no mention of the rest of the population. The existence and the state of the remainder is known to some crews that ply the Broken Chain, and is suspected by others. It is possible to uncover this information by talking to crews who have visited the world, but it is by no means common knowledge. Most spacers prefer not to consider the fate of the rumored other inhabitants of the world, so take 015-424 at face value and decline to investigate further.

Referee's Overview

The Imperium has a shortage of escort and patrol ships suitable for anti-piracy and similar duties. Many such vessels have been called away as a result of the Solomani Rim War. A number of compromises have therefore been made in order to close the gap somewhat. One option is the recall of Scout Service vessels for patrol work, and another is the deployment of second-line ships reactivated from the 'mothball fleets' situated at the naval depot In Ley Sector.

There is still a shortage, however, and every borderline-capable warship that can be assigned to patrol a safe rear area frees a patrol cruiser or a close escort for operations among the more hazardous border systems.

In the early months of the war, the Third Imperium enjoyed a mature TL14 capability, but constant efforts are underway to push the technical boundaries, efforts that will someday lead to a TL15 rating. The Testbed Ramada class close escorts are an artifact of these efforts. The Ramada class is a standard close escort, a reliable workhorse of the fleet used for patrol work along with its designed role as a close escort for larger warships. A handful have been converted as testbeds for new electronic systems, notably fire control and ECM systems, which are far in advance of those installed in current warships. Were one of these testbed ships to fall into the hands of a rival power, the Imperium's technical edge would be seriously eroded.

Normally, testbed ships are operated under strict security in safe area, but with the shortage of vessels some of Depot's Testbed Ramadas were assigned to low-risk areas to free up regular ships for other operations. One such vessel, INS *Akahasii*, was inadvertently transferred to escort an important merchant convoy bound for the Imperial naval base at 025-841. Resembling (and registered as) a normal Ramada, the *Akahasii* was unable to refuse the transfer order without revealing her status, something her captain was expressly forbidden to do. The best thing for it seemed to be to send a request for a special recall back to depot (which would go straight over the subsector admiral's head and result in a transfer back to the safer region around Depot) and to go along with the convoy until the recall arrived.

The convoy was attacked en route, by two unbelievably daring Solomani commerce raiders working in concert with a merchant ship forming part of the convoy. Although the ringer merchant was destroyed and one of the raiders suffered heavy damage, most of the escort was taken out in the initial surprise assault, and the escort commander ordered the convoy to scatter.

Commander Alix Fenemann, commanding officer of the *Akahasii*, had a clear duty to preserve his vital ship by Jumping out. However, he also had a duty to the helpless merchant spacers he was sworn to defend. Interposing his ship between one of the raiders and a fleeing freightliner, Fenemann engaged the surviving raider. *Akahasii* scored several telling hits, but the much larger Solomani *Kormoran* class commerce raider was able to take the punishment and hit back even harder.

With the rest of the escort force crippled or destroyed and the raiders slaughtering the convoy, Fenemann ordered the merchants to make an immediate Jump despite the risks. The convoy was at that time within the 100-diameter limit and Misjumps were a distinct possibility. His vessel made a stand to keep the raiders off the convoy then, facing two battered but superior foes, made the choice between a risky emergency Jump with a

damaged drive and certain destruction.

INS *Akahasii* is now listed as overdue, presumed lost.

Details of this engagement were recovered in the wreckage of one of the escort ships. It is known that INS *Akahasii* was hit as she entered Jump, which is likely to have caused a Misjump even without other factors. It is likely that the vessel was destroyed, or that she emerged from Jumpspace in a remote location and now drifts in deep space.

Assuming she did Misjump, if she came out in Imperial space she will eventually be found. But if the testbed ship emerged beyond the Imperial border it is just possible that a rival power might find the wreck and salvage it. This is not a palatable option, so Imperial Naval Intelligence maintains a low-key search for the vessel. It has been nearly two years since the incident and while various rumors have been followed up, so far not a trace has been found.

Until now, that is.

A Naval Intelligence officer operating covertly out in the Glimmerdrift Reaches has turned up a rumor of a battle-damaged wreck crashed on a world in the Glimmer Drift. His standing orders require that all such rumors be followed up. However, he is operating alone, gathering intelligence and passing it up a long chain back to Ley Sector. He cannot leave his post at Grand Endeavor to investigate and has no-one else to send. Unless of course he uses freelancers. And so, with some reluctance, Imperial Naval Intelligence seeks a band of adventurers to investigate the wreck and recover or destroy the data cores.

Unfortunately the agent is known to Solomani Security, who also maintain agents in the region. They are interested as to what Naval Intelligence is doing out here and will send their own agents to shadow the characters. These agents have orders to take whatever actions are necessary. They would just love to return with a prize like the Testbed Ramada's computer cores...

PLAYING OUT THE ADVENTURE

The characters will not be told the significance of their mission. As far as INI are concerned it might be a wild goose chase anyway, and it would not be wise to reveal that there may be a high-tech treasure lying around out there. So instead the characters are given a general mission and sent off to search.

Naval intelligence does not know exactly which planet the wreck is on. The rumor that came in was garbled and confused, to say the least. The characters will have to search several worlds and may have all manner of incidental adventures along the way. They will eventually come to the attention of Solomani Security, which will make an effort to find out exactly what they are doing, then kill them and steal the computer cores.

The early stages of the adventure will be along the lines of a trading cruise across the Kraxin and Williamsburg subsectors, with a little investigation on each world along the way. It eventually becomes clear where the wreck is located (on 015-424), but after arriving there the characters will have to locate it and recover it – not the easiest of tasks since it has been claimed by the planetary dictator and his supporters. After obtaining what they need, the characters will then have to get offworld and return the data cores to an Imperial official.

Note that *Into the Glimmer Drift* is a very 'open' adventure, with few key scenes. It could turn into a minicampaign as the characters wander about the Broken Chain for several months trading, collecting information and having adventures along the way.

Eventually the characters will find the downed ship and the adventure finale will begin. The Referee should note, though, that this adventure works best if the characters' journeys on the Broken Chain are not glossed over. Travelling through unknown space IS an adventure, and while it is not possible to script each and every planetfall in this adventure, the Referee should be able to extrapolate sufficiently from the UWPs given in this volume to create unique places for the characters to visit.

Players who crave action at every turn may find the early stages of the adventure a little slow. There is nothing to stop the Referee fast-forwarding to the later scenes if this is appropriate. However, a better option is to drop in some 'asides' in the forms of random encounters and unrelated short adventures along the way, which will satisfy the desire for gunplay and action without destroying the flow of the adventure. These 'asides' could end up leading to new adventures after the main mission is completed.

PUSH, PULL, ENIGMA AND GIMMICK

Four elements of the typical adventure story are push, pull, enigma and gimmick. *Into the Glimmer Drift* contains all four:

Push: The characters are as always short of cash. As the adventure goes on there is the added 'push' that someone else seems to be following them or heading for the same goal.

Pull: The characters are promised a fairly decent reward for their efforts. In addition, they may be helping out an old friend.

Enigma: The characters are in territory which is not familiar to most Imperials. While for the locals this is home, to the characters it is as if they were exploring a new region. Additionally, there is the question: what is so important about this rumored wreck that everyone seems to want it?

Gimmick: If the characters succeed, they will gain the gratitude of a Naval Intelligence operative who may be able to help them out in future. There is also the remote possibility that the characters might be able to retain some of the TL15 combat software from the wreck for use in their own vessels, but this is left up to the Referee to determine and should not be possible without strenuous efforts, if at all.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON 015-424

The later stages of this adventure are set on the desert world of 015-424. The basic outline is presented in the world data section. It has already been noted that most people think that 015-424 has a population numbering in the thousands and that the people are reasonably content. The fact is that of the 700 million people who dwell in the underground cities, a very small percentage could be considered content.

The social organization is simple. At the lowest level are the common citizens, cowed and kept down by the Dictator's forces and the fact that he controls what remains of the world's life support technology. Above them are the 'trusted' citizens, who have demonstrated loyalty to their lord and are rewarded with positions among his troops or in charge of groups of commoners. A small inner circle of 'nobles' exist and above them is the Dictator himself.

The previous Dictator was a harsh and somewhat corrupt man, who nevertheless provided for the well-being of his subjects so long as they did his bidding. He was replaced in a palace revolution some 9 years ago by a military officer named David Fraisseman, who instigated a series of purges and a paranoid clampdown that firmly established his

control over the world.

Fraisseman dwells in a settlement that serves both as his personal domain and the main center for technology. Most of the world's surviving TL 9 gear, and all the offworld technology that has been bought in, is concentrated here. Families of particularly prominent loyalists are granted the privilege of dwelling in the capital, which has certain benefits for a paranoid autarch.

The cities, each a hive of some tens of millions of inhabitants, are connected by underground railroads. These are powered, like the cities, by fusion reactors set up by the original colonists. They were designed to run for generations, and already have. Some have failed and the remainder are overloaded. The only way to maintain them is to bring in offworld technicians, something that the dictator is not willing to do.

Although the world has access to some TL 9 equipment, most of the actual manufacturing capability is TL4 for the citizens and a little higher in the small and well-guarded technology centers in each city. Repairs to essential services are generally carried out by the dictator's technicians at TL6 or by locals with whatever is to hand if the need is urgent.

The dictator's forces are armed mostly with TL6 smallarms, which are entirely adequate for keeping down the populace. Some higher-tech gear is available to personal bodyguards and for defense of the capital, should it ever prove necessary. For trips outside, TL6 air supply units are used by the dictator's troops. Few vehicles are available since moving around on the surface is generally not necessary.

There is, of course, a deep anger among the common citizens, but there is little they can do. A resistance movement does exist, and has been successful in driving out the dictator's forces from two of the hive cities, but this cuts off access to what little higher technology was available and has made the rebels lives worse rather than better. The rebels need offworld help and support, something the dictator is keen to prevent them from receiving.

Note that other than at Takraf Plateau, the above-ground entrances to the cities are very hard to locate. This is in part a deliberate policy of concealment but has as much to do with the ever-drifting desert sand and wind-blown rock fragments as anything else. Entrances are often located in canyons and on the shoulder of bluffs where some shelter is available. This is not enough of a clue, however, as there are so many possible locations that it would be impossible to search them all.

Rumors and Scuttlebutt

As they proceed through the various ports and worlds along their way, the characters are bound to talk to people. They will likely pick up rumors about current events in the local region and the wider universe. These rumors might or might not be true. They may lead to new adventures or merely add to the feeling of a 'living' game setting.

Rumors can be presented more than once. They can be rephrased or embellished at the Referee's discretion.

RUMORS

- Aapizishga has been a client state of the Imperium for many years and has a regular naval presence alongside a permanent embassy. The world has recently made representations to Archduke Erechs, asking for full membership.
- The Imperial Navy is stretched very thin in the region now that many vessels have been sent to the Solomani Rim. Smaller ships are being moved about a lot to maintain the illusion of strength and cross-border patrols have been cut to the bone.
- The world of Grand Endeavor, ruled by a Stoner planetary governor but not a member of the Grand Duchy, is to be given as a fief to a newly-elevated Hereditary Prince. The world will become a full member at that time.
- Imperial-registered trade ships have been turned back at Gazala in recent months. This is causing tension between the Grand Duke and the Imperial Archduke.
- Corsair activity in the area has shot up in recent months.
- Ships of the Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium have been coming into Stoner ports lately.
- A Solomani cruiser called at Grand Endeavor last year.
- War between the Farreach Margravate and the Loyal Nineworlds Republic, two states to Trailing-Rimward across the Glimmer Drift, is looking increasingly likely.
- Ruins have been discovered on Hope Rock dating from well before the Rule of Man. They look like human habitations.
- An Imperial trading firm, likamaruu Enterprises, has been sending small ships into the Coreward end of Glimmerdrift Reaches sector for some time now. It looks like they're being successful so maybe a larger follow-up mission can be expected.
- A ship came into Didan, over in Williamsburg subsector, a while back. It'd suffered a massive Misjump and been in J-space for nearly 20 years!
- The GTC is expanding fast. Not in terms of worlds but ships and trade runs. Smaller operators are being edged out.
- Another bunch of fools just headed out across the Glimmer Drift, chasing a rumor about some lost treasure from the Rule of Man era.
- There is good money to be made in Belting out in the Glimmer Drift. The asteroids of several systems have turned out to be surprisingly rich.
- Droyne ships all the way from Crucis Margin sector have been sighted in the region.
- The Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium, based out of the world of Fal over to Trailing, is quietly expanding. It has run into some trouble at Lunarmise in the Starfall Cluster, but this is sure to be transient.
- If Grand Endeavor becomes a full member of the Grand Duchy, presumably its port will cease servicing non-Stoner ships in keeping with the Grand Duchy's standing policy. Surely that would damage the world's economy.

Plots and Episodes

ACT 1: GRAND ENDEAVOR

The characters are offered easy money to do what they were doing anyway.

SCENE 1: REFIT AND VACATION

The characters have been on Grand Endeavor for a few days while their ship is receiving some much-needed maintenance. Crews typically use this downtime to take a holiday, and Grand Endeavor is a fine place to do so. Although the atmosphere is tainted and requires a filter mask if an individual wants to venture outdoors, the climate is pleasant and the scenery is worth seeing.

A moderately high-tech world that receives large numbers of starships – and refits many of them – Grand Endeavor is geared up as a holiday resort with many activities available to visitors. Local laws are strict and thoroughly enforced, but the Enforcement Service is polite and helpful towards lost offworlders. Thus the characters should be able to find plenty of ways to enjoy themselves, from relaxing on a warm beach to rock-climbing, visiting museums or sampling the vibrant night life.

However, the vacation is drawing to a close and soon the characters will have to board their ship and seek a way to earn their living. Their ship's overheads are small, so it may be possible to break even doing simple freighting work around the region, or maybe courier runs carrying small packages. (It is possible that the characters have just completed such an assignment, which turned out to be a bit more interesting than anticipated. See *TE1: Stoner Express* for details).

The other big question to be addressed is, should the characters head back toward Imperial space, either through Stoner or onto the Phelina Main, or should they head out to Rimward-Trailing, into the Glimmer Drift?

Referee

Let the characters have a few days of enjoying themselves if this suits the players. *Traveller* games can be so much richer when the characters 'live' rather than 'have adventures'. It should be possible to pick up some rumors and information on Grand Endeavor, but eventually the time will come to proceed to Scene 2.

SCENE 2: PATRON ENCOUNTER (KEY SCENE)

As their vacation comes to an end, the characters are contacted by a woman named Lauren Kelsey, ostensibly about a courier job she needs a ship for. However, in fact Kelsey is an agent of Imperial Naval Intelligence, placed out here to monitor traffic and collect information on a variety of subjects including the Grand Duchy of Stoner and the activities of Solomani agents.

Exactly how much information Kelsey will reveal depends upon the characters. If any of them is a veteran of the Imperial Navy or Marines then it is possible that she has encountered them professionally before, in which case she may decide to confide in them. Otherwise, she will present the mission as a search-and-retrieval without going into too much detail about the target or how it came to be in the Reaches.

The basic pitch offered by Kelsey to people she does not know personally is as follows:

Her cover is as a shipping agent at Grand Endeavor Starport, and in this capacity she offers the characters Cr5000 to drop off a one-ton cargo at Gurgaliinash and Cr10,000 to drop another at Anish Ishas. This kind of premium-rate courier work is ideal for small ships and is not uncommon where a shipper needs a small cargo moved quickly but is unwilling to pay a charter rate for an entire ship. Whatever else the characters can make on the trip is up to them. It should not be difficult to pick up some incidental cargo or freight and turn a small profit on the trip.

However, that is just the beginning. Since the characters are going that way, she has a commission for them that is worth the sort of money required to keep their ship in service. She will not discuss it without a signed agreement not to discuss the commission with anyone else.

The commission, assuming the characters agree, is as follows: Kelsey wants current information on the market situation along the Broken Chain, the major main running across the subsector from Spinward to Rimward and beyond. She is not too worried about anything beyond the subsector but her clients are interested in the possibility of setting up a regular freighting run along the Chain and she needs to investigate viability.

To this end she will provide the characters with Cr50,000 of working capital (which must be repaid) to engage in freighting, passenger carrying (unlikely in the ship they have, but the possibility should be investigated) and speculative trade along the Chain. Any profit they make beyond the initial 50,000 is theirs to keep and if they make a loss then the funds will be written off – though only after a fairly fearsome audit of the ship's books.

In addition to the ship's books, Kelsey wants a detailed report on each world the characters visit, which will contain:

- Notes on the quality of the port and service there
- The volume of shipping in system and the amount of trade going on in port
- What is being traded or shipped
- System security and perceived risks
- Vessels encountered along the way

The good news is that she will pay Cr15,000 for each report (provided it is sufficiently detailed) upon the characters' return. The information is in confidence, of course, so the characters are expected not to reveal their mission to outsiders. After all, that might influence others to set up a run similar to the one Kelsey's clients have in mind.

There is one other thing, which Kelsey adds almost as an afterthought. Every now and then, she says, somebody manages to lose a ship. Usually it's a freighter taken by pirates, or an aging rustbucket that gives up the ghost after too many skimmed refits. However, she's heard a rumor that somebody has managed to lose a warship along the Broken Chain somewhere. It's probably no reason to be alarmed – it's probably not even true – but it is something her clients would like to know about. If warships are being lost then this may not be the best place to open a shipping line.

Kelsey thus asks the characters to make discreet enquiries along the way. Her clients would really like to know whose ship this was (if the rumors are true), what type it was, and how it came to be lost on the Chain. She will pay a bonus for this information, which will be greater if the characters can bring physical evidence that they have found this vessel and have a positive identification of it.

Referee

If Kelsey is a friend of the characters, or they have a good reputation (decorated veterans of Imperial services, for example) then she will add the following information:

Actually, it may be that the ship is an Imperial Navy close escort, a Ramada class, which has been missing for some time. The Navy would dearly like to confirm the fate of its vessel and bring the remains of the crew home. Of course, it is standard practice to retrieve or destroy the ship's data systems and computer cores, and Kelsey would like the characters to ensure that this has happened – or do it themselves. She can arrange a considerable reward (probably Cr100,000 or more) if the characters can bring her the computer cores or get them to Aapizishga, where the Imperial Navy maintains a small presence.

SCENE 3: DEPARTURES

The characters' first stop is Gurgaliinash. They have two tons of cargo in their hold, and can do as they please with the remainder of the available space. There should be a fair amount of freight available, but speculative trade is a better way to make a profit, especially if the characters can afford to carry high-value cargoes.

Whatever they choose to do, the characters will eventually depart Grand Endeavor. They will probably be headed for Gurgaliinash. It is likely that one or more Stoner naval vessels will be on patrol in the Grand Endeavor system in addition to local forces. The system sees a lot of traffic, so control procedures are quite strict. This means that the characters may experience delays in obtaining departure clearance. A cursory analysis shows that Stoner vessels are clearly being given precedence over independent (and especially Imperial) ships.

Finally, however, clearance comes and the characters can head out to make their first Jump.

ACT 2: EARLY STAGES

SCENE 1: PLANETFALL AT GURGALIINASH

The world of Gurgaliinash is an important link between the Stoner Cluster and the Broken Chain, and also for ships moving through the sector without entering Imperial space. It is possible that Imperial trade vessels may be encountered in the system; certainly there will be a fair volume of traffic through the small starport.

Gurgaliinash Downport marshals the smaller vessels on a single large apron, while larger (1000 ton plus) are generally assigned to their own berthing area. At present there are few large ships in port; the *Pegasus*, a 2000t long-range freightliner out of the Farreach Margravate and the *Darrugi Venturer*, a 5000t trade cruiser operated by the Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium. The latter stands on the most remote bay surrounded by smart security personnel and 'watchdog' robotic detection units. It is certainly an impressive vessel, armed for self-defense and capable of carrying large cargoes over long distances.

Gurgaliinash is a busy trade port; it should be possible to pick up some cargo or freight here, or maybe even a courier commission (see below). There are enough crews in port to swap rumors and tall tales with. But more importantly to a crew just out of Jump aboard a small ship there are open spaces to wander around in, people to talk to and recreation establishments to blow off steam in.

The Pegasus

The *Pegasus*, registered out of H-10 in the Farreach Margravate, is a utilitarian vessel, showing her age after some years on the Margravate-Grand Duchy run. Her crew keep mostly to themselves but could be befriended by a charismatic character. They have plied the Broken Chain several times, departing Rimward from Am to head into Margravate space. Right now they are headed back after a run into Stoner but have been on a stopover here for the past 10 days. They prefer to take their mid-run break here, in independent space, rather than at Stoner. Most of the crew will admit to finding the Grand Duchy very unwelcoming to foreigners.

The Margravate crew seem bored and complacent overall, and have little good to say about anyone. They do like to play card games, however, and will happily gamble a few hundred credits on a game.

The *Pegasus* crew can tell the characters a few general things about the worlds of the Broken Chain, and maybe a rumor or two.

The Darrugi Venturer

The crew of the *Darrugi Venturer* are also in port, enjoying a couple of days' liberty in the welcoming Startown. Their elegant uniforms stand out among the informal locals and rather scruffy Free Trader crews, but the crewmembers themselves seem devoid of arrogance or any air of superiority. Their attitude is one of relaxed and friendly confidence. The GTC knows that its crews are ambassadors in foreign ports, and does not allow surly, ill-tempered personnel to ruin the reputation of the Consortium.

The *Venturer* is headed for Stoner, having crossed the Broken Chain from the Starfall cluster, by way of Didan. Like the Margravate crew, above, the GTC personnel will chat about ports along the way and recommend restaurants, theaters and other recreational establishments. There is a general policy of not spreading rumors, so gossip tends to be limited to things the GTC crew have actually seen for themselves.

Despite their deliberately friendly demeanor and lack of 'attitude', GTC crews are often perceived as arrogant and full of themselves by independent spacers. Crewmembers are trained to take care of themselves (and also to defuse situations before they can become violent) and this, coupled with the fact that the GTC is savage in its legal reprisals against those who assault its personnel, tends to result in a reluctance to do more than sneer on the part of most detractors.

However, those that choose to associate with the GTC are generally subject to the same derision, and there is less reluctance about physical violence towards these hangers-on. Characters who associate with the GTC crew will be safe enough while they are around but once isolated they are likely to face a barrage of abuse from the various free trader crews in port. Responding in kind might result in a scuffle.

SCENE 2: A SCUFFLE

If the characters have been seen talking to the GTC crew, it is possible that this will offend other members of the free trader community. In recent years there has been a growing feeling that the GTC is planning to expand and edge out the minor traders in the region (this is unlikely to actually happen; there is a lot of room for free traders in the Reaches!), leading to resentment. The free trader community has developed an 'us and them' attitude towards GTC crews and this has gradually become real hostility. Much of this sentiment is just self-fuelling resentment, but the feeling is real. Small-ship crews that

associate with the GTC are seen as breaking the united front and need to be corrected. This will be attempted by a bunch of irate free trader crewmembers at some point, probably late at night or in a quiet moment.

Note that while Gurgaliinash has an overall law level of 6, no weapons at all may be carried in the port or the associated Startown. Law enforcers carry batons and stunguns on normal patrol, with weaponry up to and including light machineguns and LAGs available to deal with serious incidents. Armed response units (with SMGs and handguns) will be called to any disturbance involving a weapon, which includes blades as well as firearms. The traders know this well and limit their weaponry to fists and feet, plus maybe the odd set of knuckle dusters or an improvised club that just 'happened to be lying around nearby'.

The scuffle will begin with a confrontation and threats made by several angry men and women. The characters may not actually realize why this is happening straight away and as they struggle to make sense of things, someone decides to escalate matters and lunges in, fists flying. A brawl or a chase will most likely result.

The authorities will be reluctant to press charges against anyone without very clear evidence, and will try to downplay the whole business as high spirits among stressed spacers. The last thing they want is delayed ships and a reputation for violence in their port. If someone is seriously hurt or killed, however, the authorities will act firmly.

Referee

This is not a serious attempt to kill the characters. Although there are 2-3 times as many spacers as characters involved, they will not all attack at once. The intent is to scare the characters, give them a few digs and maybe chase them around the port a bit, not to get involved in a homicide. If the characters respond with extreme violence the attackers will melt away and call the cops. Otherwise, they will try to seize some of the characters and give them a moderate roughing-up, but without doing any permanent damage.

It may be that characters are able to flee. A midnight chase through the port has many opportunities for mayhem and chaos, and the Referee should make best use of the surroundings to create a memorable scramble for safety.

SCENE 3: ON TO ANISH ISHAS

The characters have a courier cargo to drop off at Anish Ishas, so this is likely to be their next stop. Anish Ishas has a fine port and sees considerable traffic despite its bad reputation (a result of the coup that established the present government).

Most starships never land on the planet itself but instead berth at the large Highport that orbits the mainworld. Constructed at TL8 with some imported components, the port is rather basic but entirely functional. It can handle large ships and has sufficient facilities that a trip to the Downport is unnecessary for most crews. The majority of commercial activity is conducted in the Highport's offices.

The port has tight security, as might be expected, but efforts have been made to ensure that security is as unobtrusive as possible. Very obvious armed guards with snub SMGs are mixed with discreet patrols of plain-clothes mercenary security troops with snub pistols under their jackets. Despite this, there is an uncomfortable atmosphere at the Highport, and most crews prefer to conduct their business and move on as swiftly as possible.

Anish Ishas is the last port of call for the characters before they enter the Glimmer

Drift and begin their journey along the Broken Chain. They are likely to want to pick up any rumors and gossip they can before they make the Jump.

Any of the standard rumors listed above can be heard in port (but not more than a couple to avoid information dump). There are a couple of specific ones going around as well:

- The takeover was a long-term Solomani operation, and the system is now a covert base for Solomani commerce raiders.
- The planetary government is thinking of closing the port to Glimmerdrift Trade Consortium vessels. This is probably due to the encroachment of the GTC on existing trade runs.
- A whole shipload of bounty hunters came through a few weeks ago aboard a mercenary cruiser. They asked a lot of questions then headed out via Wideocean.

There is no significant plot event at Anish Ishas, though there are plenty of opportunities to pick up adventure leads.

SCENE 4: COURIER WORK

At any port of call along the way, the characters may choose to look for courier work. This is dealt with separately from regular freighting.

The normal procedure for moving a small cargo is to get it shipped world by world on an ad-hoc basis in spare cargo space aboard whatever ship is passing that way. However, this process is slow and a little unpredictable. If a cargo is large enough to justify it, a ship can be chartered or a special shipping contract might be negotiated to deliver the cargo all the way to its final destination. This is simply not economical for small cargoes of under 10 tons, however.

Among the many ships that ply the spacelanes are numerous small merchant craft that take up the slack in the shipping industry by moving small cargoes around. These ships generally cannot afford to take on a contract to deliver 3 tons of cargo to a specific world 4 Jumps away; to do so might mean passing up better opportunities.

Enter the courier ship. With its small cargo space, the courier vessel cannot make a living shipping freight, and speculative trading is something of a lottery. But where a client is willing to pay a premium rate to get a cargo to a particular destination by a certain date, it is possible for the courier to make a profit. Often, courier jobs do not pay the ship's overhead entirely, but they offset it sufficiently that incidental cargo can be carried in remaining hold space at a profit.

The standard rate for freighting is Cr1000 per ton, per Jump. Courier work is more variable. The base rate for a courier job is Cr2500 per ton, per parsec (not per Jump), with a premium applied for time-sensitive cargoes that require a Jump-3 or Jump-4 ship (usually 50% or 75% respectively).

Finding Courier Work

Courier work can be sought in any port, and of course the Referee is free to decide if any is available according to the needs of the storyline. There is generally relatively little of it available, and no guarantee that it is headed in a suitable direction. To determine randomly, roll 1d6. If the roll exceeds or equals the value shown on the table below, one or more courier packages are available:

Table: Courier Work Availability (1d6)

| Starport Type | Roll Required |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| X | Not Possible |
| E | 7 |
| D | 6 |
| C | 5 |
| B | 3 |
| A | 2 |

Modifiers

Character served 1 or more terms in Merchant service: +1

Character served 4 or more terms in merchant service: +2

Size of Cargo and Destination

To determine the size of the cargo, roll 1d6:

1-2 indicates a cargo smaller than 1 ton, which will fit into the ship's locker or other odd corners and not take up any cargo space. Payment for such a cargoes calculated as if it were a 1-ton cargo.

3-4 indicates a small cargo of 1 ton displacement.

5 Indicates a minor cargo. Roll 1d3+1 for size.

6 Indicates a fairly substantial cargo. Roll 1d6 for size; on a 6, reroll and add to the initial 6t. Subsequent sixes repeat this procedure.

Very large courier cargoes are rather special and always have a story behind them. They cannot be split.

The Referee is free to determine the destination of a courier cargo any way he/she sees fit. If random determination is required, use the following procedure:

To determine the destination of the cargo, roll 1d6:

1-4 indicates distance is 1d3 parsecs.

5-6 indicates a long-distance cargo. Roll 1d6+2 for destination distance.

To determine a rough direction for the cargo, roll 1d6 and count round hex sides from 1 (straight up the map). Choose the nearest world to the point indicated by direction and distance as the final destination unless this is obviously unsuitable. This roll should be subject to Referee interpretation, of course, and considerable initiative can be used in determining the final destination.

SCENE 5: INTO THE GLIMMER DRIFT (KEY SCENE)

From Anish Ishas, the characters will join the Broken Chain and begin their cruise. The Glimmer Drift is considered to begin with the Broken Chain, so crossing into it is something of a momentous occasion. Among local starfarers the first crossing in or out made by any given person is treated rather like crossing the Equator was in ancient times on Terra. It is often an excuse for a fancy-dress party on the last night before Jump emergence (or the first after entry as the ship leaves the Drift).

Jump calculations are slightly more complex in the Drift, thanks to the gas clouds that give the region their name. Some are dense enough to cause navigational problems, so

must be figured into Jump calculations. The results of a failed Astrogation attempt are also slightly more hazardous. The Referee may choose to apply a small penalty to Astrogation rolls to reflect this, but it is optional.

It should also be noted that this far from the Imperial border, people generally have no real idea how big or powerful the Imperium is. Trade ships are not that common and naval vessels are very rare out here. Imperial registry is no more impressive than GTC, Margravate or Stoner registry, and in some cases less so as the Imperials' reputation is colored by distance and rumor.

In short, the characters are on their own out here. They are just another bunch of independent spacers at the mercy of local powers. Their wits and common sense are their greatest assets, and if those fail then no amount of shouting 'I'm an Imperial Citizen!' is going to help...

ACT 3: ALONG THE BROKEN CHAIN

The characters cross into the Glimmer Drift region, trading at the worlds they visit.

SCENE 1: ALONG THE WAY

No doubt the characters will visit several worlds along the way and conduct trade or even have adventures as they go. This part of the adventure is unstructured; it is up to the Referee to determine the flow of events according to the actions of the characters. It is possible to gloss over events not connected to the plot of this adventure, but the game experience is better if the characters 'live' their visits even to worlds where nothing much happens.

Rumors, other EPIC adventures or the Odd Job and Signal GK adventure ideas published by QLI can be used as a basis for additional situations that might occur.

Along the way, however, the characters will eventually play out some or all of the various scenes described below. None are critical to the adventure plot but some provide useful information and others show aspects of the game universe in close-up.

The characters may want to engage in some trade and speculation as they ply the Broken Chain. The normal trade rules apply to such activity.

Ship Encounters on the Broken Chain

Other than the two scripted ship encounters described in scenes 2 and 4, below, the characters may encounter a range of vessels along the way.

The normal ship encounter system can be used, but the following guidelines apply when deciding upon the origin of a given vessel:

Jump-1 ships are confined to one half of the Chain or the other (Chain Majoris or Chain Minoris) unless they take special measures like loading spare fuel tanks or bladders into the cargo hold and conducting a deep-space refuelling between Zarkhakugsi and Tailend. This is not something that would be done on a regular basis, so a J-1 ship encountered in one half of the chain will likely remain there for the duration of the adventure. Jump-1 vessels are able to carry more cargo than their longer-range cousins, however, so can make more profit on any given run. J-1 ships are thus still very common on the Chain. As a rule cargoes come in on J-2 vessels at Wideocean and Cixntha, and via J-1 or J-2 vessels into Miracle from Trailing, and are distributed mainly by J-1 traders from there. Many vessels (free traders and Subsidized Merchants) ply a section of the Chain back and forth from one end to the other, though most are usually found on a run of 1-3 Jumps and

back again.

Jump-2 ships sometimes ply the main from one end to the other, crossing the break when they come to it. With more choice of which worlds to visit, Far Traders and similar higher-Jump vessels are rarely seen in the backwater class D and E ports.

There is little formal law enforcement on the Chain, other than local defense forces operated by the various space-capable worlds. Warships of local origin are likely to belong to the planetary navies of Akhag, Cixntha and Miracle, or else be mercenary ships on contract to hunt pirates or protect commerce. Piracy and smuggling are fairly common on the Broken Chain, though the fact that most ships carry at least some armament for self-defense keeps the situation more or less under control.

Warships of the GTC CP-CK fleet sometimes sweep the Chain, and military vessels out of the Grand Duchy of Stoner and the Farreach Margravate can also be encountered. Imperial vessels are quite rare now but until the Solomani Rim War, a task group would visit a few worlds of the Chain every six months or so. Solomani warships are virtually unheard of this close to Imperial space... but there is one now so perhaps there will be others.

Pirate vessels can take any form, of course, though the most likely candidates are armed merchant craft masquerading as legitimate commercial traffic. Larger raiding ships out of the Raidermarch, two subsectors to Trailing, sometimes set ambushes on the Chain to try to take a significant prize like a GTC merchant cruiser.

Other craft can be encountered. For example, Belters get almost everywhere and all manner of small craft are in use by the worlds of the Chain.

SCENE 2: SHOWING THE FLAG

As the characters exit Jump they have an unexpected and unwelcome surprise. There is a Solomani warship in orbit around the planet ahead!

The vessel is a *Texas*-class light cruiser, an 8000t design that became obsolescent some decades ago. Little use on the battlefronts of the Solomani Rim War, these ships are still reasonably effective in the patrol role or as flag-showing vessels in backwater regions. They are also pretty good commerce raiders, being quite capable of destroying any merchant ship and knocking apart a couple of escorting destroyers.

However, this ship is merely showing the Solomani Confederation flag and has little interest in taking out a passing scout/courier. If her crew take any notice of the characters' ship beyond noting her presence, they broadcast a greeting and a curt but polite note:

IMPERIAL VESSEL, YOUR SAFE CONDUCT IS GUARANTEED PROVIDING YOU
REFRAIN FROM OFFENSIVE ACTION
COMPLIMENTS COMMANDER VITO, SOLOMANI CONFEDERATION NAVY

Even if the characters turned around and ran back into Jump, there is no way they could escape before that warship or her small craft would catch them. Yet she sits there peaceably enough (unless they approach very close) and lets them land unmolested.

There are Solomani Marines at the Downport, of course, and naval crewmembers enjoying a few days' liberty. The characters are met by a junior officer from the Solomani cruiser, flanked by a couple of marines and a SolSec monitor. The lieutenant offers a salute to the captain of the scout, treating the character like the master of a major cargo vessel. She has been given a message to deliver, and does so. The content is very simple.

“Commander Vito of CNS *Galveston* extends his compliments. Our vessel is engaged in routine diplomatic and piracy-suppression operations and has no hostile intentions towards your crew. In the light of the current state of hostilities between our nations, the commander advises you to maintain a discreet distance from Solomani personnel and vessels, and suggests that you depart this region for your own safety.”

This is an outrageously arrogant statement (some would say typically Solomani). The characters are far from Confederation space and right next door to the Imperial border, yet the Sollies are acting like the characters were poking around in their backyard! However, this attitude is not uncommon, and at least they are being polite.

Apart from the shadow of a Solomani light cruiser overhead, the characters' port visit is not much different than usual. They are not interfered with. However, a couple of things do become apparent.

Firstly, the *Galveston* has a certain amount of fresh battle damage. It is nothing serious but she has clearly been in a fight recently. According to local rumor this was gained chasing off a corsair vessel a few weeks ago. Commander Vito is somewhat notorious as a pirate-hunter, so this is entirely plausible.

Secondly, there are some problems in the startown. According to the locals there was a minor disaster a few days ago when an independent starship – a real rustbucket – crashed on takeoff and took out a power distribution center. The Solomani ship loaned several technicians and some spares to get the system running again, and generally earned the gratitude of the local population.

Astute characters may wonder what is going on here. On the face of it, the Solomani ship is behaving quite normally. It is well known that the Confederation sends its ships far afield with orders to assist local powers and generally promote good relations with foreign states or individual worlds. Thus ships do not merely ‘show the flag’, they chase down pirates, assist with disasters and technical problems, and escort commercial traffic. Crews are smart, polite and friendly, creating a positive image of the Confederation wherever they go.

However, it was rare enough before the war to see a Solomani cruiser (even a little old one) this far Coreward, and to allow an Imperial ship to see what it is doing and move on unmolested... that is odd, to say the least.

It is as if the Solomani, who are at this point pushing into the Imperium in the Old Expanses region, WANT to be seen operating so close to the border. Perhaps they are rubbing the Imperial Navy's collective nose in the fact that they can. Perhaps they are trying to draw much-needed ships off the battle lines... the characters have no way to tell. They can apply an old military axiom, though – victory lies in convincing the enemy that he is defeated.

And certainly the Solomani are acting like they're winning.

Which in turn implies that this ship wanted to be seen and reported.

Referee

The likely deductions mentioned above are more or less true. The Solomani Confederation is not merely fighting a formal naval campaign to defeat the Imperium, it is using every psychological trick it can to obtain an advantage. Commerce raiders pull many times their own tonnage off the battle lines, bold flag-showing cruises may convince neutral worlds or even the Imperials that the Solomani are winning. Thus the Imperial Navy will have to make a choice – chase down this ship and defeat or drive it off, which

will absorb many vessels for some months, or let it brazenly make its presence felt in ports on the Imperial border, in turn creating the feeling that the Imperial Navy is too weak to do anything about it.

Either way there are advantages for the Confederation.

Other implications of this ship's presence can be inferred by the Referee or may become apparent in future QLI publications such as *Gateway to Destiny* or *Powerplays*.

SCENE 3: A FIND

While wandering around the shops and marketplaces of the port they are visiting, the characters come across a small shop or booth selling memorabilia. There are all kinds of items, but most are related to uniforms and badges of various starfaring services. Items turned up and asking prices include:

- Various insignia and medals from planetary navies Cr2d6 X 5 (Cr10-120)
- A Solomani naval officer's dress sword (very old) Cr500
- A complete dress uniform of a GTC deck officer Cr300
- An Imperial navy lieutenant's rank insignia Cr75
- An officer's cap from the Farreach Margravate Cr25
- A Naval Infantryman's tunic from the Nineworlds Republic Cr50
- An Imperial Marine officer's gauss pistol, in working order Cr5000
- An NCO's dress saber from the Grand Duchy of Stoner Cr250

The gauss pistol may ring some alarm bells among the characters. It is rare to find an officer's sidearm for sale like this – they are sometimes retained when personnel leave the service as a weapon of honor, but if one turns up for sale somewhere it means that the original owner has probably been killed somewhere nearby. Powerpacks on gauss weapons last for quite a while (they remain charged up for years, usually). The fact that the three magazines with this weapon are only a little less than fully charged suggests that the owner lost this weapon sometime in the past 12-24 months or so.

Marine and naval weapons carry a data chip with the owner's details stored in it. The chip can be read by any hand computer or Imperial comm (allowing weapons to be returned after, say, being serviced by the armorers). This weapon's chip states that the weapon is on issue to Imperial Marine Lieutenant Jerome Kashartii, serving aboard INS *Turbulent*, a Ramada class close escort. The navy insignia are not from this ship, though it will be impossible to establish their origin.

Any character who has served in the Imperial armed forces will know about the chips in service weapons. Other characters might if the Referee feels they have had an opportunity to come by the information sometime in the past. It is fairly common knowledge.

The trader does not know where the pistol came from. She buys up bits and pieces from passing crews and sells them on to collectors. The pistol is unusual, she concedes, and if convinced to think about it for a while, she may remember that it was sold on by a free trader coming in from one of the worlds of the Chain Majoris. He told some garbled tale of a military-looking man who took passage aboard his ship and traded the weapon for his ticket. The previous owner was pretty close-mouthed, but he seemed preoccupied and either ill or injured. He transferred to another ship and headed on his way.

The trader knows no more than this. It does, however, suggest that at least one survivor of the missing ship was trying to reach Imperial space.

SCENE 4: THE HIDDEN FACE OF THE ENEMY (KEY SCENE)

At a port somewhere on the Broken Chain, the characters are directed to a landing pad alongside a vessel that turns out to be a Solomani long-distance trader. This is an 800t vessel with a reasonable armament, designed for long cruises. Such vessels do make quite reasonable commerce raiders, though this one, the *Aldebaran Misfit*, is on a trading cruise. The Solomani Confederation makes a point of sending long-range trade missions out beyond its borders for several reasons. There is the possibility that a new market may be discovered somewhere, of course, and in addition the Solomani have no Scout Service like the Imperium does. Trade missions of this sort bring back information from distant places, and of course serve to remind the foreigners that the Confederation exists only a sector or two away.

The crew of this ship are of course not pleased to see an Imperial ship in port. After all, they are at war and run the risk of being chased down and attacked by an Imperial warship if they are reported. However, this is neutral space and there is no reason for trader crews to make the political business of war personal, is there?

The Solomani crew will go about their business as if the Imperials were not in port. They are loading up a speculative cargo and arranging fuel etc – normal tasks for a working starship. Although they wear formal uniforms and are accompanied by a black-gloved SolSec monitor, the Solomani crew seem to be just another set of commercial spacers. It is hard to see them as the enemy.

If the characters approach their opposite numbers, the Solomani are surprised and a little wary, but will be courteous enough. They are just making a living out here on the frontiers. The war is a terrible thing and they certainly don't want personal involvement. They will not allow Imperials access to their ship or go drinking with them, but will be polite if they have to interact. However, every attempt to be friendly is met with a request to leave the crew alone, and hanging around may result in a direct threat of violence.

Referee

Most Solomani ships operating out beyond the borders carry a Solomani Security (SolSec) Monitor, a sort of political officer. This is a fact of life in the Confederation and it would be remarkable if there was not one aboard this vessel. The ship really is on a long-range trading mission, though the pragmatic Confederation uses most such cruises as information-gathering exercises.

But there is a little more to this ship than usual. The *Aldebaran Misfit* is carrying several undercover SolSec agents among her crew, unknown even to the active Monitor. They have been alerted to the possibility of a downed Imperial vessel. Though they do not know it is an advanced testbed, but since the technology of the Solomani Confederation lags behind that of the Imperium somewhat, obtaining the electronic systems of any Imperial warship would be advantageous to the Confederation. These agents are discreetly searching for the same wreck as the characters.

ACT 4: THE SEARCH NARROWS

The characters finally discover a possible location for their prize.

SCENE 1: A CLUE IN A TALL TALE (KEY SCENE)

In a starport bar, over too many drinks, a young Belter pilot boasts of her piloting expertise. Her story may be overheard or coaxed out of her by the characters. However it

is obtained, the gist of the story is as follows:

Her ship was down on an asteroid. She was undertaking the laborious task of cracking ice for fuel and incidentally poking around in the eternal hope of finding some mineral deposits worth staking a claim on. Instead she found the usual nothing – rock, ice, then more rock. However, as she lifted off her ship's sensors (left on high-intensity search mode after the mineral survey) picked up some metallic debris drifting nearby. Investigating, she discovered that it was fragments of starship hull – always a disturbing find.

The debris was drifting towards the mainworld of the system, suggesting that a crippled vessel had tried to make planetfall. Thoughts of salvage rights drove caution from her mind and she slipped her Seeker into orbit, beginning a surface scan. Not long into the scan, she picked up a distress beacon on the surface. To her disappointment it was a personal beacon rather than a ship's emergency signaling system, but nevertheless she prepared to make a landing.

The signal was coming from a deep, twisting desert canyon, requiring that she pilot her ship along it, almost scraping the walls, to reach the site of the beacon. She'd hoped the wreck might be down there, somehow hidden from sensors by the canyon walls. It was a pretty forlorn hope but Belters are well known for chasing such low percentages.

What she found was no wrecked ship but a single individual, wounded and holed up atop a huge boulder. Several figures were visible around the base of the boulder, wearing weird bulky air supply units like something out of a *Space Barbarians* vid. Some of them were shooting up at the guy on the rock while others looked to be trying to climb up to get him.

The Belter was able to tickle her ship in for a precarious landing on the top of the rock – most pilots would not have been able to do it, she boasts – and the guy scrambled aboard. He'd taken a gunshot wound that wasn't too serious in itself but for the fact that it had breached his suit. He'd breathed some of the local atmosphere as a result.

After introducing himself as an Imperial Marine officer – a strange thing to find atop a rock on the Broken Chain, right enough – the guy asked for passage to a decent starport. He paid using what looked like an emergency funds package. The Belter didn't care much; Imperial credits spend well enough out here.

The Marine was pretty ill and spent a lot of time asleep. All the Belter got out of him was that his ship had Misjumped and crashlanded, and he was the only survivor. He'd gone to a settlement seeking help and been attacked by the locals. The story didn't ring true (for example, where was the wreck?) but that was all he was willing to say.

The Marine took passage on a freighter as soon as he could. He was still pretty ill but in a real hurry to get home. The Belter went back to look for the wreck but never found it.

With a little coaxing, the Belter can remember that the world where she rescued the Marine was 015-424. This was a little over a year ago. She searched for the wreck for a few weeks and was pretty convinced it was there somewhere – that guy could not have gone far on foot – but she never found it. There is a maze of canyons on 015-424 so it is possible that she missed it somehow. The locals are friendly enough if you go to the crude little starport but the ones she encountered out in the desert (what could they have been doing there – searching for the wreck?) fired at her without warning.

She did find some hull fragments and such like that almost certainly came from a downed vessel, but no sign of the ship itself.

Eventually she gave up the search.

Referee

Of course, the wreck is on 015-424. It is not in the open any more, though there are still some bits of debris lying around here and there.

The Marine officer clearly never made it back to the Imperium. His eventual fate is left up to the Referee.

SCENE 2: DOWN IN THE DESERT

Arriving at 015-424, the characters discover that it is indeed an inhospitable place. The desert is cut by many deep canyons and broken by rugged outcrops. The landscape has been worn by the action of the nitrogen-rich atmosphere rather than by water. There is very little water on this world, all of it found in deep artesian basins.

The only obvious settlement, as noted in the world description, is at Takraf Plateau. The 'landing area' is little more than a region of wind-scoured bedrock adjacent to the bluff into which the settlement entrance is carved. It is highly unlikely that other ships will be present here. There are a few above-ground buildings and a windbreak constructed of a mix of raw stone and some kind of local concrete. It has clearly not been maintained in years.

Fuel is obtainable at Takraf Plateau, in the form of water pumped up from an artesian basin. On a desert world such as this, water is precious in the extreme. However, fuel prices are no higher than usual; the planetary dictator does not want to discourage what little offworld trade comes in.

The settlement at Takraf Plateau is mostly underground. It differs from all the others on the planet in two important ways: firstly, it is obvious. With the landing area marked out and kept clear of drifting debris, and the above-ground buildings, it is not difficult to discern that there is some kind of settlement nearby. Secondly, it is populated by a select group whose loyalty to the Dictator is either proven or secured by hostages. These people can be trusted to present the world and its leader in a positive light and not to acknowledge the existence of the other settlements.

Or so the Dictator thinks.

In fact, the resistance movement has agents even in Takraf Plateau. They will watch the characters for a while to see if they are worth contacting about some smuggling or other assistance. The agents are gambling with their lives every time they try this, so they will proceed cautiously.

One thing that will be noted by the characters as they enter the large and rather clumsy personnel lock at Takraf Plateau is that the settlement (and this applies to all the worlds underground cities) seems to have been built at TL 8-9 initially, and has clearly been in decline for many decades. Neat wiring and piping has in places been repaired with low-tech replacements (this is much more apparent in the other settlements).

The people of Takraf Plateau are welcoming to starfarers and show them polite hospitality. There are no hotels or restaurants; the characters are offered well-appointed apartments (by the standards of 015-424) with staff to look after them, and a number of invites to dinner at the houses of various dignitaries.

Trade will be discussed in due course. There is very little freight in a place like this, and there are few exports other than art objects and a little precious metal ore mined near the plateau. The locals need spares for their technological systems, but the balance of trade is such that they have little to pay with.

SCENE 3: GUESTS OF THE OVERLORD (KEY SCENE)

During their stay, the characters will get blank looks of they ask about downed starships and related matters. Nobody has any idea what anyone might want, running around in the desert miles from anywhere. The only other settlement that 'officially' exists is the Dictator's retreat, which is off-limits to visitors. Not even its location is revealed. If asked why, the locals explain that what remains of their higher-tech capability is situated there and must be preserved at all costs. For this reason, they explain, nobody is allowed near the underground railroad that leads to the Retreat.

In short, the characters will draw a complete blank at first. Even bluntly accusing the locals of lying or concealing the existence of the rest of their cities has no effect, though it will draw comments on the subject of rudeness and perhaps a broad hint that the characters are becoming less welcome.

It might be noted by the characters that although weapons are not permitted in the town or the port area, there are plenty of security personnel around, armed with autopistols and batons. They are blandly polite for the most part but will become firm, then violent, if needed.

After a while of this, when the characters are alone, they are suddenly approached by a young man who seems nervous. They have seen him around before, only then he was the very picture of the contented worker. Now he licks dry lips and asks to speak privately with the characters.

Quickly, the young man (whose name is Chastel, though he will not volunteer it) tells the characters the following:

"You know about the other cities, don't you? You know what's really going on here? Well, that ship you asked about. I think I know someone who knows what happened to it. She'll want something in return, though. Here's some coordinates; when you leave the port, pretend to climb to orbit. They can't track you that far. Then go into the canyon at these coordinates and wait. Someone will contact you."

Chastel hands over a flimsy piece of paper and makes himself scarce.

Referee

If the Dictator's men discover what he is doing, Chastel is a dead man, and so are his family. They are employed as staff (i.e. they are hostages) at the Retreat. However, the characters' interest in the downed ship is the lever that the resistance movement has been looking for. The risks are enormous but there won't be an opportunity like this for a long time.

SCENE 4: CONFIRMATION (KEY SCENE)

If the characters do as Chastel suggested, they find themselves sitting in their ship in the bottom of a dry canyon, some 300 kilometers from the plateau. After a short time, figures appear as if from the tumbled rocks all around. They carry bulky carbines (developed for use in the extremely low oxygen atmosphere) and clumsy low-tech air packs. They have nothing resembling a uniform between them, unlike the smartly equipped guards at the port.

If the characters agree to speak to these ragged gunmen, it turns out that they are led by a woman whose Galanglic carries a distinctly 'Imperial' accent. She introduces herself as Chief Petty Officer Hazel Arikal'ai, Imperial Navy. She was an electronics specialist aboard the Ramada-class escort INS *Turbulent*.

Hazel offers to explain more, but wants the characters to see something first. If they agree, the characters will be escorted to a concealed entrance in the rocks, which leads to an airlock and into one of the rebel cities.

The first thing that will strike the characters is the smell. It is obvious that the life-support machinery is not doing well and cannot support the population for much longer. The second obvious thing is the poor quality of life compared to the port region. Even without inadequate air and water supplies, the people are clearly jammed into the city, dwelling in old, substandard housing and subsisting on an inadequate diet.

Work crews are everywhere, conducting low-tech running repairs on what was once an elegant integrated life support system. Hazel greets a few acquaintances as she leads the characters through the city, and fends off inquisitive glances with the oft-repeated phrase; “They’re friends. But no, they’re not saviors.” Disappointed workers smile or wave half-heartedly at the characters then go back to trying to keep their city running.

After the characters pass an open area where young men and women are training with handguns and blade weapons, clearly for a desperate close assault, Hazel leads the characters into a building, then suddenly turns and says sharply to the nearest character, “Well, are you? Friends, that is? Are you shocked and sickened by the way these people are forced to live? Would you like to help them?”

Hazel pauses then adds, “Or do you WANT to?”

“It’s worse here than in the ‘loyal’ cities of course,” Hazel explains. “They managed to kick out the Dictator’s thugs and set up on their own, but of course they lost what little tech support they were getting in the process. We reckon we can keep the fusion plants running for years, especially with my help, but the system as a whole is dying from a million little breakdowns. We need spares, machines to make spares, and tools to fit them. And these things are just plain not available except in one place on this miserable planet. Hence the assault force you saw training down there. Pathetic, aren’t they? Well, they’re what there is. In just a couple of months we’re going to have no choice but to try to smuggle them through the railroad and assault the Dictator’s Retreat. It’s suicide but so is sitting here.”

Hazel shrugs and waves a hand to encompass the city. “It’s probably worse at Dalphen, the other rebel city. When the resistance smuggled me here – that’s how I got to be involved in this mess, by the way – at least I was able to offer some technical assistance. But you want to know about the ship, right? Well, we managed to make a crashlanding, quite near one of the cities as luck would have it. The dictator’s troops came out and offered us help, but ended up taking the survivors prisoner. Myself and the ship’s Master-at-Arms got loose and tried to escape. I think they cornered him out in the desert, but I was rescued by the resistance. And here I am.”

Hazel is willing to introduce the characters to the resistance leaders, who are now the leaders of the rebel city. She will answer questions as best she can, but what she knows comes back to these simple facts:

- Most of the crew of INS *Turbulent* perished in the battle that caused her Misjump (unless the characters obviously know about the ship’s history, Hazel will not talk much about this. She will not reveal or acknowledge its testbed status to anyone.)
- The survivors were able to crashland the ship in the desert well to the north of here.
- After they had been taken prisoner, the Dictator’s troops began rounding up huge work parties. According to the resistance, they were able to drag the ship into the city’s cargo entrance. This cost many lives but the Dictator does not care about such things.
- The rest of the crew are either prisoners or dead. The Dictator has not managed to reactivate the ship, which will certainly never fly again.
- Things are sufficiently bad that the resistance is going to have to launch an

assault very soon. They will either try to storm the Dictator’s Retreat and gain access to the technology center there, liberate one or more cities to escalate the fight more slowly, or try to take the starport in the hope of buying decent weaponry from visiting starships.

- The resistance has no hopes that messages smuggled offworld will bring help. That has been tried and no offworld agency or government has shown any interest in aiding them.
- If the characters want to salvage the *Turbulent*, then Hazel and the resistance can help, but they need assistance in return.

There are several things the characters can do to help. Any modern weapons they have could swing the balance of the fighting, whether in local hands or wielded by the characters themselves. The characters could carry enough weaponry in their cargo hold to equip dozens of locals, but they would have to Jump to another system to buy it. The resistance has some money, but probably not enough to fill the ship.

The ship could also be used to transport assault troops quickly to a chosen destination.

Hazel eventually finishes up, saying, “You’ll never get to that ship without help, and there’s all the help you could want straining at the leash out there. For my part, I’m hoping you can give me passage back to an Imperial world when this is over. But first, I owe these folks my life and I have to try to rescue any other crew survivors. I need you, the people of this city need you – and you need us. How about it?”

Referee

Hazel is telling the truth, though not quite all of it. She was a member of a hand-picked crew aboard a testbed ship. She knows that her duty is to destroy its electronics systems rather than allow anyone to get hold of them – or better, to return them to the Imperial Navy with the results of an actual combat recorded on them. The deal she puts forward is probably the only way the characters can get to the ship, and Hazel intends to be with them when they do. She does not as yet trust their intentions fully, so plays some of her cards close to her chest.

If the characters agree, Hazel introduces them to the Revolutionary Council, the rather ramshackle ruling authority in the city, and Act 5 begins.

ACT 5: THE DESERT AFLAME

Open rebellion breaks out on 015-424 as the people rise to fight for their freedom.

SCENE 1: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (KEY SCENE)

The Revolutionary Council is composed of a half-dozen locals who have led the fight against the Dictator, plus a few prominent figures from among the city’s leaders. The council’s spokesperson is a middle-aged woman named Myessa Arkish, whose technical genius is responsible for the life-support system continuing to function. She is a close friend of Hazel’s now, having worked closely with her on the endless running repairs.

Myessa more or less echoes Hazel’s comments. It is obvious that the rebels are going to have to do something, and soon, or they will simply perish. There are several options, none of them particularly attractive, and the final choice will be dictated by what

the characters do – assuming of course they do not simply board their ship and fly away.

Ideally, the rebels would like the characters to go to a neighboring world and fetch them a few tons of smallarms. Even civilian weapons like handguns and shotguns would make quite a difference in the coming fight and a few light automatics (SMGs and assault rifles) will really tip the balance. However, this may not be practical. There is little chance the Dictator's people will manage to track the ship leaving and returning but the delay could prove fatal. The matter will be discussed.

Whether the characters agree to go and get weapons or not, the outline plan proposed by the rebels looks like this:

Parties of rebel fighters will begin to slip through the rail tunnels with minimal weaponry, ready to attack from inside, and will alert what allies are available in the 'loyal' cities. When the operation is due to begin the signal will be given and attacks launched on targets in several cities more or less simultaneously. It is possible that these will trigger popular risings, but that is considered unlikely. What is more certain is that the Dictator's forces will be confused by the noisy demonstration attacks and unable to focus on the real threat.

There is little chance of storming the Dictator's Retreat, though the rebels plan to raid it in the hope of freeing some hostages and forcing the Dictator onto the defensive. Their real target is the secondary technical center at the city of Dorlif. INS *Turbulent* is now located there, so the characters have an interest in helping with the assault.

The aim is to liberate the city gaining access to the technical and manufacturing resources there. This will allow the rebels to continue their fight. They have small hopes of toppling the Dictator at this time, but if one city can be liberated, perhaps the war can eventually be won. The biggest problem facing the rebels is getting their forces into the city. The solution is risky; small parties with concealable weapons will slip in and, when the time is right, will strike and seize the entryways to the rail tunnels, allowing their more numerous and better-armed companions to enter the city. If this stage of the operation fails the rebels will be massacred in the narrow tunnel bottlenecks.

The characters are invited to make suggestions, which might include using their ship to land a cargo hold full of fighters near the city's above-ground entrance, launching a surprise assault from that direction. Ex-military characters might volunteer to lead an assault party. Stealthy types might decide that a little advance scouting and sabotage is in order.

Any help the characters can offer will be gratefully received, but whatever they say or do the rebels will go ahead with their preparations. They have little alternative.

SCENE 2: PREPARATIONS

The characters have a little time to prepare for the operation. This might involve going to a neighboring world to obtain weapons or assisting the rebels in training for the assault. There are plenty of other opportunities to help out; the rebels are desperately short of doctors and technicians, so any help the characters can offer would be very useful.

There are many possible options at this point. The Referee should determine the flow of events. However, within a few days or a couple of weeks, the deadline for the operation arrives and the time for preparation is over. It is time to act.

SCENE 3: THE BATTLE OF DORLIF (KEY SCENE)

If the characters are part of the infiltration, they will have to slip through the rail

tunnels stealthily, using maintenance ducts to bypass the main guard stations. Fortunately the guards are arrogant and complacent; they go through the motions of patrolling and maintaining security but are less than diligent unless a senior officer is visiting the post.

Once in the city, it may be necessary to bluff patrols. The characters should have had time to practice a local accent, but this is unlikely to be perfect. Citizens moving about are routinely questioned by security patrols, a process that often involves the odd blow just to show the commoners who's in charge. Anyone who resists is (at best) beaten senseless with batons and dragged off to the cells for interrogation. Few are ever seen again. Thus anyone who resists this treatment or protests it will find themselves in a fight with the guards, who will not hesitate to draw their guns if seriously threatened. Gunfire will eventually bring other guards, and could jeopardize the whole operation.

Once the operation begins, storming parties will attempt to overwhelm the entry points, assisted by some of the infiltrators attacking from inside. Other infiltrators will begin making noisy diversion attacks elsewhere to spilt the attention of the security forces. The storming parties are mostly made up of determined but very scared rebels, most of whom have never been in a real fight. In addition, they have many years of living with a metaphorical boot on their necks. Most people have developed a submission-reflex. This means that the morale of the storming parties is rather shaky. While they are winning they are likely to take huge risks and to perpetrate some horrific massacres of the security forces – surrendered enemies are likely to be beaten to death in a frenzy – but when things get rough the rebels will waver.

Whether they are sneaking through the city, charging a security post at the rail tunnels or storming the ground-level entrances, the characters' example could swing the odds, especially if they display good leadership or fight particularly well. There is also plenty for non-combat oriented characters to do. Medical personnel are always in short supply, and technical expertise will be needed to bypass security or to gain control of electrical systems.

The battle rages for some time. It is an ugly business, as rebellions tend to be. Urban fighting is always bitter, but in this case it is worse than usual. The rebels have years of pent-up resentment to release while the security forces are arrogant bullies who know they will receive no mercy if they lose the fight. In some areas the population rallies to the rebels, but most people just take cover and hope to survive. Fires break out and lighting circuits are interrupted, plunging whole districts into darkness.

The battle of Dorlif is a nightmare business, but ultimately the rebels begin to win.

Referee

The level of player involvement in this battle should depend upon the type of group playing the adventure. Fighting fools may want to plan and game out a complex campaign, resolving critical actions and charting the progress of the battle. A more role-playing oriented approach would be to drop the characters into the middle of the chaos and play out scenes that affect them. Their experience of the liberation of Dorlif should be one of sporadic gunfights as squads of security personnel and rebel fighters stumble into one another in the confusion, or attempt to storm strongpoints. The Referee should play up the dramatic aspects of the situation rather than turn it into a wargame. Enemies are as likely to break off contact after a fleeting exchange of fire as to fight to the death.

All this is taking place in a semi-darkened underground city, parts of which are now on fire. People scurry about seeking loved ones or a place to hide. Injured combatants

(and innocents) cry out for help. Allies engage in barbarous atrocities which, while understandable, are not really acceptable to civilized people.

In short, the Referee should strive to make the liberation as thoroughly confusing and unpleasant as possible for the players.

SCENE 4: THE TECH CENTER (KEY SCENE)

Liberating the city is an important part of the rebels' plan, but more than anything else they need to gain access to the tech center and carry off large quantities of spares and equipment. This is a fairly tall order, requiring that they have control of the center and a clear route to the rail tunnels for some time – probably days.

If the city has not been fully liberated, keeping this line of communication open might be a tall order. However, this is not the characters' main problem. They need the tech center in friendly hands if they are to enter the wreck and retrieve the systems they want from INS *Turbulent*. This really means that they will have to participate in the assault or sneak in under its cover.

The ship itself is not very important to the Dictator, in that it has been in his possession for over a year and his people have removed everything they easily can for study. It will be guarded, but the guards are likely to be called away to help defend the center as a whole. Certainly the center commander, faced with a serious attack, will not consider protecting the ship to be a major priority.

Once inside the tech center's perimeter wall, it will not be very difficult to get aboard the vessel and overcome the one or two guards that remain. Of course, that is where the fun starts, as the adventure proceeds to Act 6.

ACT 6: GRAVE OF HEROES

The characters finally board the vessel and make some interesting discoveries. A new foe enters the fray.

SCENE 1: BOARDING THE SHIP (KEY SCENE)

INS *Turbulent* was a new ship when she began her fateful cruise, but it is impossible to tell that now. Crippled by laser fire, she has endured an atmospheric entry that she was not designed for and has since been gutted by mid-tech scientists seeking any useable components. Her wiring hangs out of open panels; sealed areas have been crudely cut open. Anything removable is long gone.

Searching the ship will turn up a couple of interesting facts. Firstly, characters familiar with the Ramada class may come to realize that this vessel is not a standard model of the type. She has consoles in different places, and a slightly different interior layout to accommodate the uprated drives. Even just looking at a deckplan of the standard model will indicate that this ship is different in several ways.

The other odd thing is that her computers have not been stripped. There are signs that some components were removed then, in some cases, clumsily replaced. This is a great boon for the characters but it begs the question: why?

The answer will present itself soon enough.

Since she met the characters, Hazel has been forming an opinion of them. The question she now faces is, should she destroy the computer cores or enlist the characters' help in trying to return them to Imperial space? The characters' actions are all she has to go on, and she is going to have to make a decision very soon.

SCENE 2: NO COMMON ESCORT (KEY SCENE)

If the characters think to ask Hazel about the unusual ship layout, she will partly answer their questions. She admits that the *Turbulent* was an advanced model with a Jump-5 engine aboard and some other upgrades. She may seem a little distracted at this point, but that is mainly because several people she knew well died aboard this vessel.

Hazel cannot offer an explanation as to why the computers are largely intact, other perhaps than that the locals could not use them and decided that they might be salable. Unless the characters have given her a solid reason to suspect their motives, she will gamble at this point and suggest that the Imperial Navy would be very grateful towards whoever returned the ship's flight recorders and data cores. It would be a shame if the data collected on the ship's last cruise were to be lost.

Hazel suggests that although she cannot pay the characters personally, and cannot make promises on behalf of the Imperial Navy, a substantial reward would be likely for anyone bringing in the components. The Jump drive will have to be destroyed; the characters are not going to be able to remove it and the design is classified.

It will take a few minutes to rig the drives and computers for demolition. Most of the charges are still in place, but the control mechanisms are out of action. Ideally this is a job for a character with Demolitions skill. Hazel will supervise the removal of the data cores and seems nervous about them if anyone chooses to observe her. She also succumbs to the temptation to search for mementoes of her comrades; anyone following her around may find her in tears over some ceramic fragments – pieces of a comrade's favorite mug.

However, Hazel is quickly businesslike again. She has a job to do and is experienced enough to understand that her priority is to retrieve the ship's data cores and destroy anything that might be of use to a foreign power. Even though there is a possibility that some of her comrades may be alive in captivity, the best she can do for them is to get home with the news and hope a rescue mission is launched – unless of course the rebels win a stunning success and free any captives still alive.

However, before the characters and Hazel can complete their task, things become a little more complicated.

SCENE 3: ENTER SOLSEC (KEY SCENE)

Unknown to Hazel or the rebels, the Dictator has been trying to ring every advantage he can out of his windfall. Knowing that the Solomani would pay well to obtain an Imperial warship (even though nobody on-planet suspects its importance), he has been putting out 'feelers' for some time, seeking contact.

A few days before the rebels launched their assault, a party of offworlders arrived aboard a free trader. They are Solomani officials, come to negotiate the purchase of the ship. The Solomani are well aware that they can take the vessel by force, but the difficulty of transporting it all the way back to the Solomani Rim means that they need to be sure they are getting something worthwhile. This advance party was assigned to look over the wreck and report on it when backup arrived. If a reasonable price was asked they would pay. If the Dictator was unreasonable then the ship would be taken by force.

Fortunately for the characters, the Dictator has been very difficult with his guests, refusing to even let them see or know the location of the wreck. Several days of fruitless negotiation have gotten the visitors nowhere. Frustrated and irritated, the Solomani

commander has decided to seize the ship. Extracting the location of the vessel at gunpoint, he led his team into the middle of the battle with the goal of securing the wreck. A smaller squad is attempting to get outside to set up a communications antenna.

The Solomani visitors are of course all SolSec agents. They have a ship hiding on an asteroid just a few hours' flight away. Their plan is to gain control of the wreck and hold off the locals until help arrives. This is a rather hasty and ill-thought-through plan but the commander is afraid that the situation might slip beyond his control if he waits any longer. So, as the characters attempt to rig the *Turbulent* for destruction, a squad of SolSec commandoes attempts to storm the ship.

Just the thing to make the day that little bit more interesting...

SCENE 4: OUR VERY OWN LITTLE WAR (KEY SCENE)

As the battle for the tech center rages, the characters are forced to defend themselves from a group of SolSec agents. Fortunately the latter have only the weapons they were able to bring into the Dictator's Retreat, with amounts to handguns and SMGs concealed in their cases, plus cloth body armor. The fight is likely to be quite fierce, and the characters – whether they know it or not – are on a time frame here. The Solomani ship is inbound with reinforcements, and they will be carrying heavier weapons.

The characters are going to have to get past SolSec and out of the ship, then reach their own vessel. Hazel will suggest that Solomani reinforcements may be inbound if the characters do not think of it. They may feel bad about abandoning their new friends but in fact by the look of things the rebels have achieved what they set out to do. They seem to be winning the battle for the city and are gaining the upper hand in the tech center. Hazel thinks that her friends will understand and as to the Solomani, they are an unknown that could tip the balance of power in almost any direction. The only certainty is that they are hostile to Hazel and the characters.

Escape seems like the best option.

Referee

If the characters choose to remain and fight it out with the Dictator and SolSec, they can do so of course. The Referee will have to extend the events of the adventure to accommodate this. The SolSec troopers have access to Combat Armor and advanced weapons which the characters will likely have no reply to. Fortunately they are not interested in oppressing the locals and indeed may choose to topple the Dictator either because he was so intractable with their diplomats or because he offends their sensibilities – SolSec are not monsters, and it is obvious that this is a very cruel regime.

The rebels may be able to come to an accommodation with SolSec over the remains of the *Turbulent*, but this is not going to be possible with Hazel and the characters still in the picture. Thus the locals will urge the characters to flee rather than bring the Imperial-Solomani conflict to their world.

SCENE 5: A HASTY DEPARTURE

The characters' ship should avoid detection for some time, since it is most likely in the bottom of a canyon. If they can reach it and are careful enough, they should be able to take off with sufficient head start to escape from the Solomani vessel – which turns out to be the *Aldebaran Misfit* encountered earlier.

Hazel is of the opinion that the Solomani will concentrate on getting the wreck

secured rather than immediately giving chase. By the time they realize that all they have managed to capture is the hulk of a nonstandard escort ship with few remaining traces of the advanced system she once carried, the characters and their ship should be well clear of the planet en route for the Jump point.

It is likely that the characters will prefer to sneak past the hostile vessel rather than engaging in battle. Even if an encounter turns into a fight, the characters only have to stay alive long enough to enter Jump. That might be a tall order, of course, if they are detected early. However, if the characters do not do anything stupid they should be able to escape, albeit narrowly.

Once in Jump, the next thing is planning a route homewards. This can be as eventful as the Referee pleases...

EPILOGUE: DELIVERING THE GOODS

The characters finally reach an Imperial port.

SCENE 1: BACK HOME AGAIN

Unless the characters have Hazel with them, or are dealing with someone who knows about the missing ship, it may be difficult to get anyone to take any notice at first. However, after a while the characters are granted an appointment with the senior naval officer, who wants to know every detail of their adventures.

Solomani cruisers on the Broken Chain? SolSec agents sniffing around a few parsecs from Imperial space? Lost Navy ships? It's a fascinating tale all right, and as soon as any proof is offered the Navy sits up and takes notice. The characters may not know the significance of the ship they found, but the Navy does. Even with Hazel's assurance that all the sensitive systems aboard the vessel were destroyed, the Navy is concerned about the situation and wants to verify it. A mission will be launched to 015-424 as soon as possible, to verify the destruction of the wreck and to find out if anyone else survived.

But in the meantime, the characters have done the Navy and the Emperor a great service. It wouldn't do to make a big fuss about it, since that would draw attention to the fact that the Navy has been misplacing its warships. But a reward is definitely in order. Any repairs the characters' ship needs will be completed in a naval dockyard, and (if the Referee feels it is appropriate) perhaps a minor upgrade might be made.

In addition the characters receive an 'expenses' voucher good for Cr100,000 drawn on the Imperial Diplomatic Corps funds and therefore valid in most places within a subsector or two of the Imperial border.

And of course, there are those reports they were compiling. Surely the characters must have a pretty comprehensive set of them by now...

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The characters might decide to return to the Broken Chain, perhaps to help the rebels on 015-424 in their fight for freedom or to search for any other survivors from the *Turbulent*. They do, of course, have an outstanding commission to compile reports on the systems they visit along the way.

The flow of subsequent events should be determined by the Referee.

EPIC Adventure Checklist

Act 1: Grand Endeavor

| Key? | Done? | Scene |
|------|-------|-----------------------------|
| - | _____ | Scene 1: Refit and Vacation |
| K1 | _____ | Scene 2: Patron Encounter |
| - | _____ | Scene 3: Departures |

Act 2: Early Stages

| | | |
|----|-------|-------------------------------------|
| - | _____ | Scene 1: Planetfall at Gurgaliinash |
| - | _____ | Scene 2: A Scuffle |
| - | _____ | Scene 3: On to Anish Ishas |
| - | _____ | Scene 4: Courier Work |
| K2 | _____ | Scene 5: Into the Glimmer Drift |

Act 3: Along the Broken Chain

| | | |
|----|-------|---------------------------------------|
| - | _____ | Scene 1: Along the way |
| - | _____ | Scene 2: Showing the Flag |
| - | _____ | Scene 3: A Find |
| K3 | _____ | Scene 4: The Hidden Face of the Enemy |

Act 4: The Search Narrows

| | | |
|----|-------|---------------------------------|
| K4 | _____ | Scene 1: A clue in a Tall Take |
| - | _____ | Scene 2: Down in the Desert |
| K5 | _____ | Scene 3: Guests of the Overlord |
| K6 | _____ | Scene 4: Confirmation |

Act 5: The Desert Aflame

| | | |
|----|-------|------------------------------------|
| K7 | _____ | Scene 1: The Revolutionary Council |
| - | _____ | Scene 2: Preparations |
| K8 | _____ | Scene 3: T the Battle of Dorlif |
| K9 | _____ | Scene 4: The Tech Center |

Act 6: Grave of Heroes

| | | |
|-----|-------|----------------------------------|
| K10 | _____ | Scene 1: Boarding the Ship |
| K11 | _____ | Scene 2: No Common Escort |
| K12 | _____ | Scene 3: Enter SolSec |
| K13 | _____ | Scene 4: Our Very Own Little War |
| - | _____ | Scene 5: A Hasty Departure |

Cast of Characters

LAUREN KELSEY

One of those youngish-looking women who could be 25 or 40, Kelsey is a minor independent freighting consultant at Grand Endeavor. She is best described as 'nondescript'. Kelsey rarely stands out in a group and is often mistaken for a secretary – at least until she adopts her business manner. When in business mode Kelsey likes to lead her associates in one direction with slightly misleading statements then suddenly spring her real requirements on them while they are off balance. She is gaining something of a reputation as a sharp, if slightly underhand, negotiator at the port. She has been based there for a couple of years now.

Notes:

Kelsey is in fact an agent of Imperial Naval intelligence, gathering information out beyond the borders. She is supposed to have several agents to back her up, but they have never been assigned so she makes do as best she can. Kelsey dislikes working with freelancers but she has little choice. Those that prove their worth are noted and given new assignments. In this way, Kelsey is building up an unofficial intelligence network in the region.

She is also running up a large expenses bill in the process, but so far INI has not made any comment.

It is unlikely that stats will be needed for Kelsey.

HAZEL ARIKALAI

A veteran petty officer with 16 years' service under her belt, Hazel Arikal'ai has had a fairly undistinguished career in the Imperial Navy. Her personnel record is full of approving comments from her commanding officers, noting her leadership skills and strong sense of duty. However, she has always been somewhere else when an incident occurred. Again and again Hazel was transferred out of a ship just before it stumbled across and spectacularly smashed a pirate nest. Her assignment as a technical instructor at Depot/Ley took her out of INS *Wrathful* just in time to miss the cruiser's now-legendary engagement with a Solomani commerce raider. Hazel's peers joke that you can tell when a barfight is about to break out by watching for Hazel to go to the bathroom.

Until now, having Hazel Arikal'ai aboard a ship has been a guarantee of a safe and uneventful deployment... but that has changed.

Notes:

Hazel is no shirker, nor does she have the supernatural powers some people ascribe to her. She has merely experienced a series of coincidences during her career. She was, however, becoming embarrassed at the feeling that she was not doing her part, which is one factor that drives her to gamble on getting the data cores home rather than just destroying them. This might be the only time in her life that she experiences danger; she does not merely want to get through it, she is determined to excel.

Hazel desperately wants to find out if any of her crewmates survived and are still in captivity, but her sense of duty drives her to concentrate on the mission at hand – deal with the ship and hope a rescue can be mounted later. Under her professional exterior she is

deeply upset at the deaths and the fact that she is going to be running out on the survivors (if there are any), but she knows what she is supposed to do and anyway, the Navy is very keen on rescuing captives, so perhaps escaping now is really the best thing she can do for them.

In quiet moments, though, she has her doubts.

Chief Petty Officer Arikalaa, Imperial Navy (Navy level 9)

Stamina 34, Lifeblood 10 Init +0; Speed 6m (4 squares);

Armor Class: 13 (+2 Jack +1 dex), **Armor Rating: 2** (Jack)

Str 10, Dex12 Con10, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha10, Edu 13, Soc 13

SV Fort +3; Ref+4; Will +6;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Autopistol | +4 | 1d10 | 21 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |
| Carbine | +4 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 20 |
| Fist | +4 | 1d3 | -- | 20 x2 | -- | -- |

Skills: Pilot +2, T/Communications +4, T/Computer +10, T/Electronics +8, T/Mechanical +8, T/Sensors +6, Leader +10 Liaison +9, Gunnery +11

Feats: Vessel (grav), Armor (light, vac suit), Weapons (marksman, laser, ships weapons), Brawling, Zero-G/Low-G adaptation, Zero-G combat, First Aid, Vessel (Grav Vehicle),

Equipment: Jack Armor, Autopistol, Carbine

CT: Navy, 4 terms 786977

Skills: Electronics-3, Computer-2, Gunnery-2, Mechancial-1, Handgun-1, Vac Suit-1

Equipment: Jack, Autopistol, Carbine.

THE DICTATOR'S SECURITY PERSONNEL

Regular Mid Tech (Army 6)

Stamina 26, Lifeblood 11 Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);

Armor Class: 15 (+4 flak jacket, +1 dex), **Armor Rating: 4** (flak jacket)

Str 11, Dex12 Con11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha10, Edu 10, Soc 10

SV Fort +2; Ref+6 Will +2;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Autorifle | +4 | 1d12 | 60 | 20 x2 | 1/4 | 20 |
| Autopistol | +4 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |
| Baton | +4 | 1d6 | -- | 20 x2 | -- | -- |
| Fist | +5 | 1d4 | -- | 20 x2 | -- | -- |

Skills: Spot +9, Driving +10, Pilot +10, Forward Observer +9, Gunnery +9

Feats: Vessel (grav), Armor (light), Weapons (marksman, combat rifleman, heavy weapons, field artillery), Brawling, Heavy Metal, Vessel Specialization (Air/Raft)

Equipment: flak jacket, autopistol, baton, autorifle in combat situations

REBEL FIGHTERS

Human Rogue level 6

Stamina 32, Lifeblood 12 Init +5; Speed 9m (6 squares);

Armor Class: 13 (+2 jack, +1 dex) **Armor Rating: 2** (jack)

Str 11, Dex12 Con11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha10, Edu 6, Soc 5

SV Fort +2; Ref+6 Will +2;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Fist | +5 | 1d4 | -- | 20 x2 | -- | -- |
| B a t o n / Cudgel | +4 | 1d6 | 1.5 | 19 x2 | -- | -- |
| Dagger | +4 | 1d4 | 1.5 | 19 x2 | -- | -- |
| Autopistol | +4 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |
| Shotgun | +4 | 3d6/2d6/1d6 | 3 | 20 x2 | 1 | 10 |
| Carbine | +4 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 20 |

Skills: Bluff+9, Innuendo +9, Intimidate +9, Listen +11, Spot +11

Feats: Weapons (marksman, swordsman), Armor (light, medium), Alertness, Toughness, Brawling, Improved Initiative, Spot Trouble, Quick Draw,

Equipment: Jack armor and cudgel or dagger. Most have Autopistol, some have shotgun or carbine

CT: Rogue, 2 terms 787755

Skills: Brawling-1, Gun Combat-1, Streetwise-1

Equipment: jack cudgel or dagger, possibly autopistol, shotgun or carbine

CREW OF THE ALDEBARAN MISFIT

The majority of crewmembers of the Aldebaran Misfit are Merchant Ship Crew, as per the entry below. Among the crew are several SolSec agents, who use the following stats:

SOLSEC AGENTS (COVERT)

These agents are the 'diplomatic party' that storms the wreck of the *Turbulent*.

Regular Marine (Marine level 6)

Stamina 44, Lifeblood 14 Init +1; Speed 6m (4 squares);

Armor Class: 13 (+4 Cloth, +1 dex), **Armor Rating: 4** (Cloth)

Str 12, Dex12 Con13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha10, Edu 10, Soc 10

SV Fort +6; Ref+3 Will +5;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Autopistol | +11/+6/+1 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |
| SMG | +10/+5 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1/4 | 30 |
| Fist | +11/+6/+1 | 1d4 | 1.5 | 20 x2 | -- | -- |
| Dagger | +10/+5 | 1d4 | 1.5 | 19 x2 | -- | -- |

Skills: Spot +9, Demolitions +6, Pilot +5, Forward Observer +5, Survival +4

Feats: Vessel (grav), Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Weapons (marksman, combat rifleman, swordsman, high energy), Weapon focus (Autopistol), Brawling, Zero-G Combat, Second Wind, Toughness, High Morale

Equipment: Cloth armor, SMG, autopistol, dagger, personal medkit, communicator

CT: Marines, 3 Terms 989777

Skills: Combat Rifleman-2, Brawling-2, Handgun-1, Vac Suit-1

Equipment: Cloth Armor, SMG, Autopistol, Dagger

SOLSEC AGENTS (OVERT)

If the characters hang around long enough and the landing party from the *Aldebaran Misfit* lands, these combat-armored agents arrive.

Regular Marine (Marine level 6)

Stamina 44, Lifeblood 14 Init +1; Speed 6m (4 squares);

Armor Class: 13 (+7 Cbt armor, +1 dex), **Armor Rating: 7** (Combat armor)

Str 12, Dex12 Con13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha10, Edu 10, Soc 10

SV Fort +6; Ref+3 Will +5;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Autopistol | +11/+6/+1 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |
| ACR | +10/+5 | 1d12+2 | 72 | 20 x2 | 1/4 | 20 |
| Fist | +11/+6/+1 | 1d4 | 1.5 | 20 x2 | -- | -- |
| Dagger | +10/+5 | 1d4 | 1.5 | 19 x2 | -- | -- |

Skills: Spot +9, Demolitions +6, Pilot +5, Forward Observer +5, Survival +4

Feats: Vessel (grav), Armor (light, medium, vac suit), Weapons (marksman, combat rifleman, swordsman, high energy), Weapon focus (Autopistol), Brawling, Zero-G Combat, Second Wind, Toughness, High Morale

Equipment: Combat Armor-12, Advanced Combat Rifle, Autopistol, Dagger, personal medkit, communicator

CT: Marines, 3 Terms 989777

Skills: Combat Rifleman-2, Brawling-2, Handgun-1, Vac Suit-1

Equipment: Combat Armr, ACR, Autopistol, Dagger

MERCHANT SHIP CREWS

These basic stats can be used for almost any crewmember encountered, be they free traders or crewmembers of GTC, Imperial or Margravate ships.

Human Merchant Level 6

Stamina 24, Lifeblood 12 Init +1; Speed 9m (6 squares);

Armor Class: 12 (+2 jack), **Armor Rating: 2** (jack)

Str 11, Dex10 Con12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha10, Edu 6, Soc 5

SV Fort +4; Ref+2 Will +3;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|-------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Fist | +2 | 1d4 | -- | 20 | -- | -- |
| Snub pistol | +1 | 1d10 | 45 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |

Skills: Appraise+6, Bluff+4, Bribery +4, Broker+8, Driving+6, Gather Information +6, K/ Interstellar Law+6, Liaison+6, P/Admin-8, T/Computer-4, T/Electronics+4, Trader-6

Feats: Vessel (wheeled), Weapons (marksman, swordsman), Armor (light), Barter, Brawling, Steward, Carousing, Connections (Merchant)

Equipment: jack armor and snub pistol

CT: Merchant, 3 terms 676887

Skills: Bribery-1, Handgun-1, Jack-o-T-1, Computer-1, Electronics-1

NAVAL CREWS

The crews of any of the naval vessels encountered can be represented by the following basic stats:

Human Ship Crew (Navy level 6)

Stamina 22, Lifeblood 10 Init +0; Speed 6m (4 squares);

Armor Class: 13 (+3 vac suit), **Armor Rating: 3** (vac suit)

Str 10, Dex10 Con10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha10, Edu 12, Soc 11

SV Fort +2; Ref+2 Will +5;

Attacks:

| Weapon | Hit | Damage | Rng-M | Crit | ROF | Rnds |
|-------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|
| Snub Pistol | +4 | 1d10 | 21 | 20 x2 | 1 | 15 |
| Snub SMG | +4 | 1d10 | 24 | 20 x2 | 1/4 | 30 |
| Fist | +5 | 1d4 | 1.5 | 20 x2 | -- | -- |

Skills: all: Pilot +9, T/Computer +10, P/Administration +9, Liaison +9, Gunnery +11, T/ Sensors +10

T/Astrogation +10, T/Communications +10, T/Sensors+10,

Feats: Vessel (grav), Armor (light, vac suit), Weapons (marksman, laser), Brawling, Zero-G/Low-G adaptation, Zero-G combat, First Aid, Vessel (ship's boat), Weapons (ship's weapons)

Equipment: vac suit-12, combat snub pistol

CT: Navy 2 Terms 777787

Skills: Gunnery-1, Pilot-1, Vac Suit-1, Handgun-1

Equipment: Vac Suit, Snub Pistol or Snub SMG

PEOPLE – RANDOM AND INCIDENTAL ENCOUNTERS

During the course of their travels, the characters may encounter and interact with a wide range of individuals. Combat or other interactions requiring skill rolls may occur with some of these. However, stats are only included in this volume for characters and groups with whom there is a high likelihood of conflict. If stats are needed for others, examples are available in the *T20 Core Rulebook* and in *Travellers' Aide #4: 76 Gunmen*, or in *Classic*

Traveller materials such as *1001 Characters* and *Citizens of the Imperium*. Guidelines are given here as an indication of the sort of stats that may be needed.

T20 uses a standard rating system for NPCs, as follows:

Green: Inexperienced or unready: Level 3 characters

Regular: Experienced and capable members of their profession: Level 6 characters

Veteran: Highly experienced members of their profession, alert and ready to react: Level 9 characters.

Elite: Extremely capable or dangerous individuals. Level 12 characters.

Note that these levels may be split between classes. For example a regular army technician might be a 6th level character with 3 levels in Army and 3 in Professional.

Incidental Encounters:

Stats will probably not be needed for incidental characters. If they are, use the guidelines below:

BAR PATRONS AND PASSERS-BY

T20: Random people encountered can be considered to be Green (level 3) in most cases. Ordinary people will be Professionals. Spacer crews can be considered to be Scouts or Merchants, and are more likely to be Regular (level 6) due to their more adventuresome lives. It is unlikely that these individuals will be carrying weapons illegal at the local law level, and if weapons are legal they will be armed with handguns and/or blades that can be carried comfortably. People rarely lug heavy weapons around in their daily lives unless there is a clearly perceived need.

CT: Assume stats of 777777 and no real combat skills (e.g. gun combat-0 for armed civilians)

BARFIGHTERS AND BOUNCERS

T20: People of a sort likely to actually brawl (rather than fleeing from an incident) are likely to be fairly experienced: Regular and in some cases Veteran members of their profession. Tough guys can be considered to be Rogues while professional security personnel such as bouncers or door supervisors will be Mercenaries. In most establishments, the security staff are 'officially' unarmed but able to grab an implement very similar to a baton that 'just happened to be there'. Some low-law worlds may have armed bouncers on the door (usually with pistols) and heavier weaponry available at need.

CT: Assume stats of 889777 and Brawling-2, Handgun-1

LAW ENFORCERS, GUARDS AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

T20: Guards and customs personnel at various starports, and indeed law enforcement officials, can be considered to be Regular (Level 6) Mercenaries. They are normally equipped with a flak jacket and a sidearm (autopistols or snub pistols are common) and a baton. Most guards have access to heavier firepower (shotguns, SMGs or rifles) if necessary.

CT: Assume stats of 889888 and Brawling-1, Handgun-2, Shotgun, Rifle or SMG-1

SCOUTSHIP BROADSIDE OF A BARN

This adventure presumes that the characters have access to a small starship such as a Scout/Courier. If an existing group of characters has a ship available, then obviously they can use that vessel. If not, they might be hired as the crew of a ship such as the one described below.

If the characters have arrived at the beginning of this adventure after completing *Stoner Express* then their vessel will be the Scout/Courier *Broadside of a Barn*, refitted and repaired at Grand Endeavor after the adventures of the Stoner run. They have whatever cash on hand that remains after paying for the refit (which costs Cr 42,000 plus any repairs needed.)

If not, then perhaps the characters happen to own a vessel that is quite similar to this one...

The Scout/Courier *Broadside of a Barn* is old; over a century and a half old. She has had many owners, and few of them were particularly careful. Passed from hand to hand, sold on, refitted in less than reputable ports and occasionally shot up, the *Barn* is prone to a range of annoying glitches from landing gear that refuses to retract to an intermittent short that dims the galley lights (Murphy's Law being what it is, this seems to happen whenever anyone tries to use a sharp implement!). But overall she's a good ship; she gets her crew and whatever they are carrying from place to place safely, on time, and only drives them slightly nuts in the process.

Unable to carry much cargo or any passengers, the *Barn* has been making a living doing courier work along the very Rimward frontier of the Imperium. Small-package freighting of this sort is not commercially viable for most ships, but an almost-paid-for Scout/Courier can make a reasonable living at it if the crew will accept less than standard salaries or a cut of the meager profits.

The *Barn* is a standard Type S Scout/Courier in most respects. She mounts a dual turret containing twin missile racks, and carries three missiles for each rack. Spare missiles could be carried in the cargo hold and manually transferred to the turret while the ship is grounded; otherwise no reload is possible outside a starport.

A Scout/Courier is nominally worth MCr42 if purchased new. However, as the *Barn* has changed hands and aged her value has dropped. Her existing mortgage is for MCr3.4, with a monthly payment of 14,170. This is quite a lot of money to find for a ship that can make only Cr20,000 per jump freighting with a full hold.

In addition, the crew must provide for annual maintenance. A proper annual refit would cost Cr42,000, requiring an additional Cr3500 to be put away each month to cover the costs. However, maintenance is usually skimped somewhat (this carries some risks that add up over time). It is possible to get a just-good-enough refit for about Cr25,000 if the crew are willing to bear an increased chance of Misjump and the general deterioration of the ship over time.

Life-support costs add up to Cr750 per week per crewmember. The ship will happily run on unrefined fuel (though her purifiers are becoming slow and erratic as a result of skimped maintenance), which costs Cr100 per ton. This works out at Cr2400 per Jump-2.

Overheads for a month of operation, assuming two Jumps and purchasing fuel rather

than skimming it, add up to Cr18970 plus Cr750 per Jump per crewmember (or passenger, though it is unlikely that a vessel of this type would carry any). If funds are put away for a minimal refit, add Cr2100 per month, and for a standard refit Cr3500 per month must be found. This is of course in addition to any funds the crew draw for themselves or take as salaries. A crew that never leaves the ship and eats only ship's rations can live very cheaply right up until they go stir-crazy and knife one another.

Referees who dislike book-keeping should assume that Cr70,000 per month will cover fuel for 2 Jumps, life support, annual maintenance, berthing fees and such like for a crew of 2-4 individuals, leaving only personal cash to be found.

SHIP STATUS

At present *Broadside of a Barn* has Cr9,000 in her general coffers and an additional Cr12,000 put away for annual maintenance. This is not a great situation to be in. The next annual maintenance is due in 5 months and it really needs to be a full-price one. The ship has had too many skimmed refits in the past and she is becoming unreliable. It is only a matter of time until she becomes dangerous or is condemned as a hazard to navigation.

The vessel is short on all necessary tools, rescue gear and so on. Lost or damaged items have not been replaced, and the air/raft that comes as standard with ships of this type long ago broke down and was sold off for spares. The Air/Raft bay now contains an assortment of spare parts, tools and random junk picked up here and there on the offchance it might be useful someday.

SHIP'S LOCKER

The contents of the ship's locker varies from vessel to vessel. Supposedly it should contain emergency equipment, a few weapons for security, spares, tools and other items necessary for operation of the ship and conduct of missions aboard it. In the case of older ships like the *Barn*, the locker tends to be a dumping ground for all manner of junk, magazine collections belonging to crewmembers who retired yeas ago, old shoes, sports gear and anything else that does not have a place of its own aboard the ship.

The Referee should 'personalize' the contents of the ship's locker. For example, there is indeed a toolkit, but it contains components from several other kits, a set of sockets that don't fit any bolt aboard the ship and a Blade that has clearly been used to lever up deckplate at some point and become very bent in the process.

If the crew needs a relatively trivial item, they may be able to find it after a period of uncomfortable rummaging around in the back of the locker, even if it is not listed here. Note that there are some items (such as vac suit spares) that will always be present. They are literally lifesavers and no sane crew would go into space without them. How accessible they are is a different matter – especially if the crew have been rummaging about looking for other items.

Suggested contents of the Ship's Locker include:

Survival Kit, Personal – A small backpack or belt pack containing personal survival equipment. There should be one per crewmember plus a couple of spares. Contents include:

- Small knife
- Fire-starting equipment
- Blanket/poncho

- 4 days' preserved rations
- Water bottle
- Compass
- Light cord or string
- Mirror
- Water purification tablets
- Survival manual

Survival Kit, Vehicle – A standard kit carried aboard lifeboats, vehicles and starships, the Vehicle Survival Kit designed to equip 4 people. Imperial Law requires that all spacegoing vessels include one kit per 4 passengers or crew. The one aboard the *Barn* has probably been pillaged several times to deal with minor emergencies and may lack much of its listed contents at the Referee's discretion. Contents include:

- 1 Survival Rifle, plus 50 rounds shot and 50 ball
- 1 Hatchet
- 1 Field Medical Kit
- 4 Personal Survival Kit
- 4 Field Kit, Personal
- 4 Sets/Emergency Cold Weather Clothing
- 4 Combination Masks plus extra filters
- Field Rations for 60 person-days (15 days for 4 people)
- 4 Bulk water storage containers with filters
- 1 Water Purification Kit
- 2 Pressure Tent

Arms and Protective Equipment:

- 1 Snub Revolver
- 1 Shotgun
- 3 Blade
- 8 Combination Mask
- 8 Life-Support Mask
- Assorted Vac Suit Spares
- 1 Standard TL 12 Vac suit per crewmember

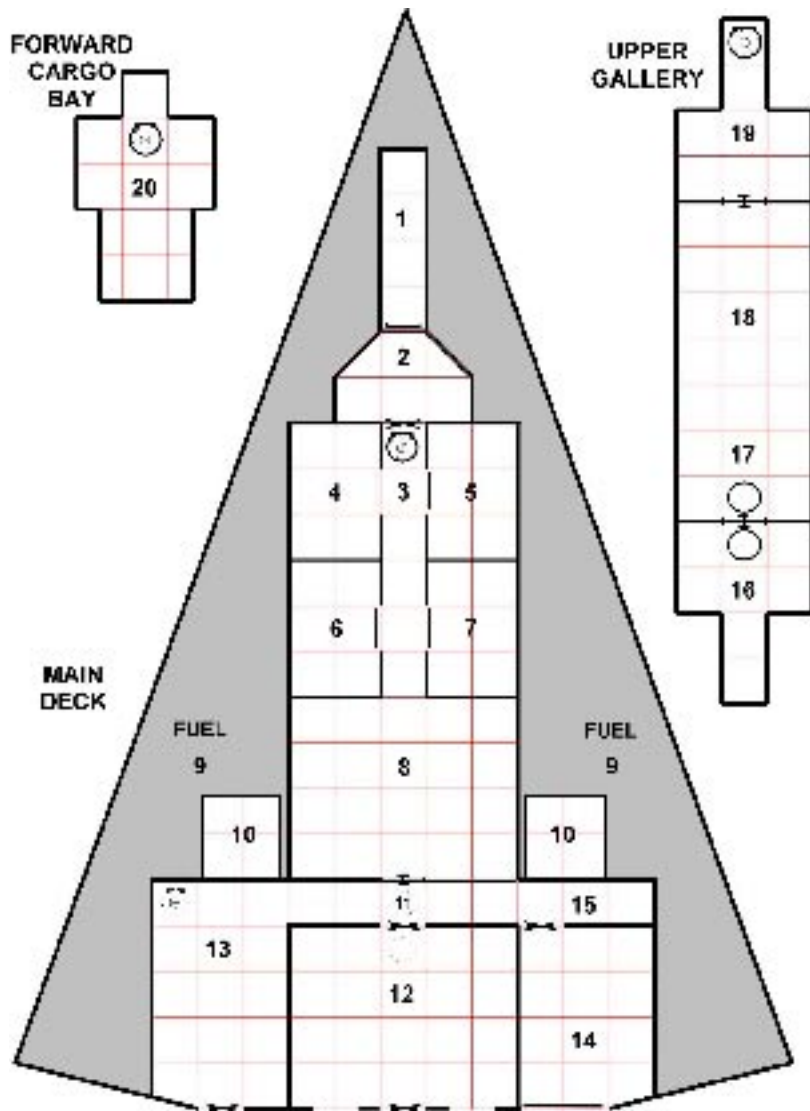
The Locker also includes slings, holsters and a few dozen rounds of ammunition for the two guns.

Survival and Emergency Equipment:

- Rescue Balls (Located throughout the vessel)
- Emergency Softsuits: (1 per duty station, 8 spares in Locker)
- 1 Portable Airlock
- Emergency Bulkhead Patches
- 4 Emergency Radio Distress Beacons

Tools and Other Equipment:

- Electronic Toolkit (Originally quite comprehensive)
- Mechanical Toolkit (Originally quite comprehensive)



IMPERIAL SCOUT/COURIER (Type S)

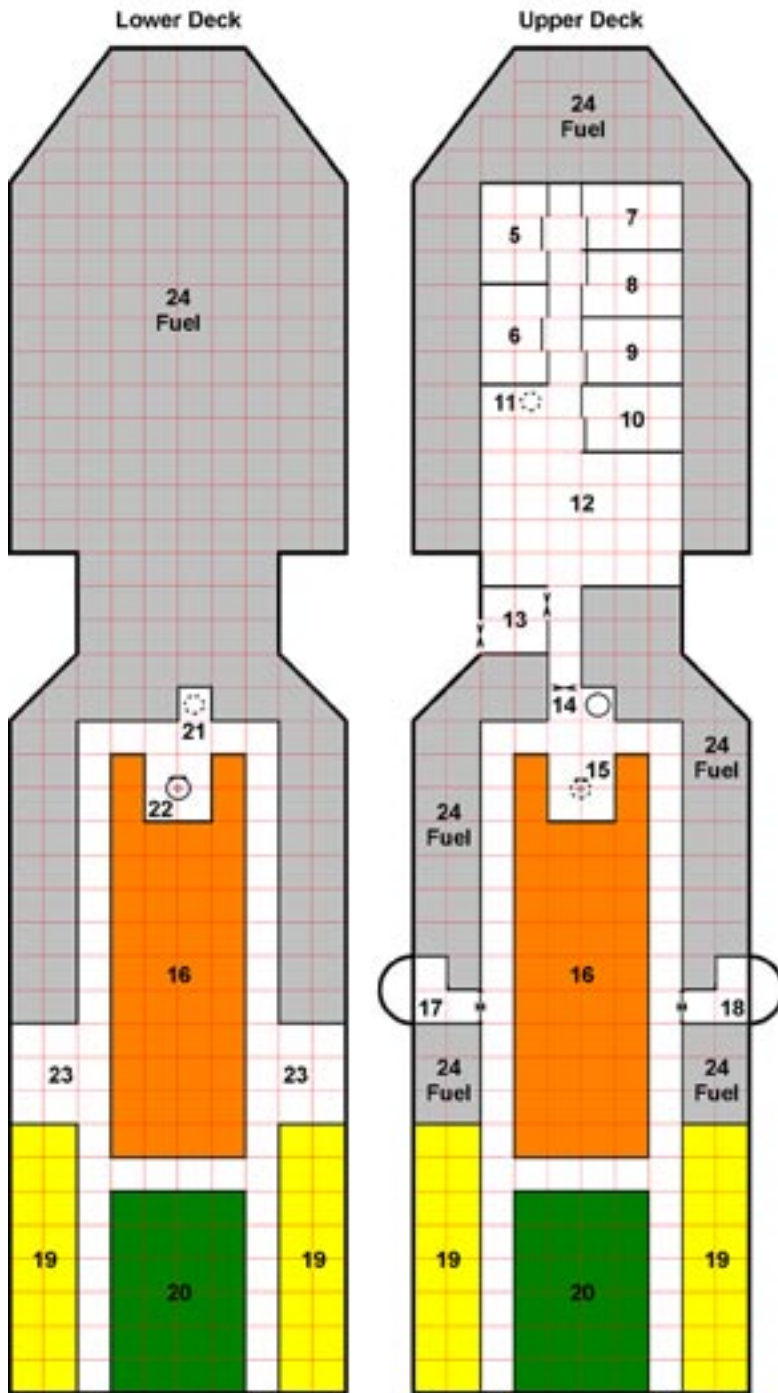
| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Class: Starship, type S | EP Output: 4 (2 excess) | Double Turret: (empty) |
| Tech Level: 11 | Agility: 2 (+2 EP) | |
| Size: Medium (100 tons) | Initiative: +2 (+2 agility) | |
| Streamlining: Yes | AC: 12 (+2 agility) | |
| Jump Range: 1x Jump-2 | Repulsors: 0 | |
| Acceleration: 2-G | Nuclear Dampers: 0 | |
| Fuel: 24 tons | Meson Screens: 0 | |
| Duration: 4 weeks | Black Globes: 0 | |
| Crew: 1 | AR: 0 | |
| Staterooms: 4 | SI: 100 | |
| Small Cabins: 0 | Main Computer: Model/1 (5 CPU) | |
| Bunks: 0 | Sensor Range: Close (Mod/1) | |
| Couches: | Comm. Range: Close (Mod/1) | |
| Low Berths: 0 | | |
| Cargo Space: 20 tons | Cost: MCr42.578 (new) | |
| Atmospheric Speeds: | NoE = 275kph | |
| | Cruising = 825kph Maximum = 1100kph | |
| Other Equipment: Air/raft, fuel scoops | | |

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Avionics Bay | 8. Common Area | 15. Ship's Locker |
| 2. Bridge | 9. Fuel Tankage | 16. Gunner's Position |
| 3. Central Corridor | 10. Landing Pylon Bay | 17. Storage |
| 4. Stateroom One | 11. Gallery Access | 18. Upper Gallery |
| 5. Stateroom Two | 12. Drive Room | 19. Forward Sensor Position |
| 6. Stateroom Three | 13. Commo Bay | 20. Forward Cargo Bay |
| 7. Stateroom Four | 14. Air/Raft Bay | |

The Type S Scout/Courier is the most commonly seen ship in Charted Space. Small, cheap, and reasonably economical to operate, these ships have become a workhorse for both the government and military fleets; some are encountered in commercial use. Most Scout/Couriers are actually former Scout Service vessels either purchased as surplus from the government or are assigned for the private use of former Scouts currently on Detached Duty. In return for use of the ship the Scouts (and the ship itself) are subject to recall at any time for temporary or indefinite duty, as the Scout service requires.

The ship itself is built using the smallest available hull for a starship, 100-tons. The vessel carries a Maneuver drive capable of up to 2-G acceleration and a Jump-2 drive. The power plant provides just enough energy to power the maneuver drives or the Jump drive. If laser or energy weapons are installed, a larger power plant will be needed. Most ex-Scout vessels have had their powerful computer and sensor arrays removed and replaced with a standard Model/1bis computer. 4 staterooms are available for crew and passengers. Small cargoes may also be carried in the ship's compact 20-ton cargo hold. The vessel also carries a small vehicle bay, usually containing an air/raft.

The Scout/Courier requires a crew of one to operate; the pilot who must assume the duties of pilot and astrogator, and also oversees the highly automated drive section. A second crewmember is desirable. The Type S costs MCr42.578 new, and takes 5 months to build.



IMPERIAL RAMADA CLASS CORVETTE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Class: Starship, Type L | EP Output: 44 (16 extra) | Battery 1: Pulse Laser (x2), Attack Bonus +3 (+3 USP), Damage 3d10. Battery 2: Fusion Gun (x2), Attack Bonus +5 (+5 USP), Damage 5d20. |
| Tech Level: 14 | Agility: 4 | |
| Size: Medium (400dt) | Initiative: +4 | |
| Streamlining: Streamlined (Wedge) | AC: 17 (Agility +4, Armor +3) | |
| Jump Range: 5 | Repulsors: None | |
| Acceleration: 3 | Nuclear Dampers: None | |
| Fuel: 248 | Meson Screens: None | |
| Duration: 4 weeks | Black Globes: None | |
| Crew: 11 | AR: 0 | |
| Staterooms: 6 | SI: 145 | |
| Small Cabins: 0 | Main Computer: Model/4 | |
| Bunks: 0 | Sensor Range: Long (Model/4) | |
| Couches: 0 | Comm. Range: Long (Model/4) | |
| Low Berths: 0 | Cost: Experimental | |
| Cargo Space: 0 | Atmospheric Speeds: NoE = 1175kph Cruising = 3525kph Maximum = 4700kph | |
| Other Equipment: Fuel Scoops, No Fuel Processor. | | |

The Ramada Class of corvette was designed to fulfil several roles. It was to be capable of the traditional patrol work and escort duties, to act as a close-support craft for assault landers, and also to demonstrate the concept of the dedicated close-escort class in the fleet role. Designed and placed in service at TL-14, the class was also used as a testbed for new TL-15 components gradually becoming available.

The Ramada Class has a streamlined hull allowing it to provide protection all the way to the ground. The experimental version is capable of Jump-5, while the standard service variant has the usual jump-4 capability. A top of the range maneuver drive enables it to provide close support for any ship and its four ship grade turrets provide enough firepower to squash most foes of similar size and these are complemented with 2 fusion gun turrets for ground support. Armor is rather light, but this is considered acceptable in an escort.

The Testbed Ramadas also have a new sensor and computer suite and these upgrades alone increase the effectiveness of the class considerably.

One concept that was originally mooted for the Ramada, but which was not incorporated, was attachment points for drop tanks. The class was originally intended to demonstrate this concept in the fleet role, too, but the design team wisely decided that the class was already over-burdened with requirements and dropped the concept.

A future project, currently titled "Close Escort CEX-Antelope", is under discussion. If it proceeds, this Experimental Close Escort class will carry drop tanks for extended range, and possibly a particle accelerator main battery.

Texas-class Light Cruiser

| | |
|--|---|
| Class: Starship, type SCL | EP Output: 500 (82 excess) |
| Tech Level: 12 | Agility: 1 (+82EP) |
| Size: Large (8000 tons) | Initiative: 10 (+1 agility, -1 size) |
| Streamlining: Streamlined | AC: 15 (+1 agility, +5 armor, -1 size) |
| Jump Range: 1x Jump-3 | Repulsors: None |
| Acceleration: 4-G | Nuclear Dampers: None |
| Fuel: 2900 tons | Meson Screens: None |
| Duration: 6 weeks | Black Globes: None |
| Crew: 92+31 troops | AR: 5 |
| Staterooms: 70 double | SI: 425 |
| Small Cabins: 0 | Main Computer: Model/4 |
| Bunks: 0 | Sensor Range: Long/4 |
| Couches: 0 | Comm. Range: Long/4 |
| Low Berths: 30 emergency | Cost: MCr 4627.2224 excluding smallcraft and supplies |
| Cargo Space: | |
| Atmospheric Speeds: NoE 1175 kph | Cruising 3525 kph |
| Max 4700 kph | |
| Other Equipment: Sickbay, 2x Autodoc, Engineering Shop, 10x 10-ton Fighter Bays, 30-ton Boat Hangar, Air/raft bay, G-Carrier Bay, 4x Extra Airlock, 15 Missile Magazines (300 missiles total). | |

2x Particle Accelerator Bay (100-ton): Particle Accelerator; Attack Bonus +8 (+8 USP), Damage: 8d12 + radiation, Range Increment: 60,000km.

3x Triple Turret Batteries (4 linked turrets): Beam Laser; Attack Bonus +5 (+5 USP), Damage: 5d8, Range Increment: 30,000km.

5x Triple Turrets: Missile Rack; Attack Bonus +2 (+2 USP), Damage: per missile, Range Increment: 90,000km.

3x Triple Turret: Sandcaster; Bonus +5 (+5 USP).

Margravate Long Range Freightliner

| | |
|---|--|
| Class: Starship | EP Output: 40 (8 excess) |
| Tech Level: 10 | Agility: 0 |
| Size: Large (2000 tons) | Initiative: 0 |
| Streamlining: Streamlined | AC: 9 (-1 size) |
| Jump Range: 1x Jump-2 | Repulsors: None |
| Acceleration: 2-G | Nuclear Dampers: None |
| Fuel: 440 tons | Meson Screens: None |
| Duration: 4 weeks | Black Globes: None |
| Crew: 19 | AR: 0 |
| Staterooms: 13 | SI: 275 |
| Small Cabins: 0 | Main Computer: Model/2bis |
| Bunks: 0 | Sensor Range: Close/1 |
| Couches: 0 | Comm. Range: Close/1 |
| Low Berths: 20 | Cost: MCr 602.1232 excluding smallcraft and supplies |
| Cargo Space: 1234.1 tons | |
| Atmospheric Speeds: NoE 75kph | Cruising 200kph |
| Max 300kph | |
| Other Equipment: Pinnacle Hangar, Air/raft Bay. | |

4x Triple Turret: Beam Laser; Attack Bonus +2 (+2 USP), Damage: 2d8, Range Increment: 30,000km.

Single Turret: Sandcaster; Bonus +1 (+1 USP).

GTC Trade Cruiser

| | |
|---|--|
| Class: Starship | EP Output: 148 (0 excess) |
| Tech Level: 13 | Agility: 0 |
| Size: Large (5000 tons) | Initiative: 0 |
| Streamlining: Partial | AC: 9 (-1 size) |
| Jump Range: 1x Jump-2 | Repulsors: None |
| Acceleration: 2-G | Nuclear Dampers: None |
| Fuel: 1148 tons | Meson Screens: None |
| Duration: 4 weeks | Black Globes: None |
| Crew: 38 | AR: 0 |
| Staterooms: 27 | SI: 350 |
| Small Cabins: 0 | Main Computer: Model/4 |
| Bunks: 0 | Sensor Range: Short/2 |
| Couches: 0 | Comm. Range: Short/2 |
| Low Berths: 10 emergency | Cost: MCr 1440.448 excluding smallcraft and supplies |
| Cargo Space: 2844.8 tons | |
| Atmospheric Speeds: NoE 75kph | Cruising 200kph |
| Max 300kph | |
| Other Equipment: Sickbay, 4 Missile Magazines (80 missiles total), Shuttle Bay, Air/raft Bays x2. | |

2x Double Turret Batteries (4 linked turrets): Beam Laser; Attack Bonus +5 (+5 USP), Damage: 5d8, Range Increment: 30,000km.

2x Double Turret: Missile Rack; Attack Bonus +2 (+2 USP), Damage: per missile, Range Increment: 90,000km.

2x Double Turret: Sandcaster; Bonus +3 (+3 USP).

Solomani Long-Range Trader

| | |
|--|---|
| Class: Starship | EP Output: 30 (6 excess) |
| Tech Level: 14 | Agility: 0 |
| Size: Medium (800 tons) | Initiative: 0 |
| Streamlining: Partial | AC: 12 (+2 armor) |
| Jump Range: 1x Jump-2 | Repulsors: None |
| Acceleration: 2-G | Nuclear Dampers: None |
| Fuel: 190 tons | Meson Screens: None |
| Duration: 4 weeks | Black Globes: None |
| Crew: 12 | AR: 2 |
| Staterooms: 20 | SI: 205 |
| Small Cabins: 0 | Main Computer: Model/2s |
| Bunks: 0 | Sensor Range: Short/2 |
| Couches: 0 | Comm. Range: Short/2 |
| Low Berths: 20 | Cost: MCr 266.62096 excluding smallcraft and supplies |
| Cargo Space: 361.2 tons | |
| Atmospheric Speeds: NoE 75kph | Cruising 200kph |
| Max 300kph | |
| Other Equipment: Sickbay, Extra Airlock. | |

4x Double Turret: Beam Laser; Attack Bonus +3 (+3 USP), Damage: 3d8, Range Increment: 30,000km.

2x Double Turret: Missile Rack; Attack Bonus +2 (+2 USP), Damage: per missile, Range Increment: 90,000km.

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