

VILLAINS
AND
VIGILANTES

FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED

2032b

DANGER IN THE DEPTHS

ISSUE #2

BY
KEN CLIFFE



8/5/09

CERULEAN STAR HATES MONITOR DUTY. BOREDOM IS SETTING IN...



PYROMANCER...
...ANY SIGN OF THEM?
THE TEAM'S BEEN GONE
FOR TWO DAYS!

NOPE, STAR...



...JUST SAND, SUN, SURF AND
YELLOW WARNING TAPE FROM
THE SAURIAN ATTACK*..

*IN ISSUE #1 - ED.

"... I HOPE EVERYTHING'S OKAY!"

BLACKBODY, WE'RE CUT
OFF FROM THE OTHERS!



I KNOW G.B.!
WITH ANY LUCK THIS WILL BE
QUICK AND PAINLESS!

BUT GODFATHER B KNOWS THIS WON'T BE PAINLESS
AND WORSE, HE KNOWS RESISTANCE IS FUTILE!

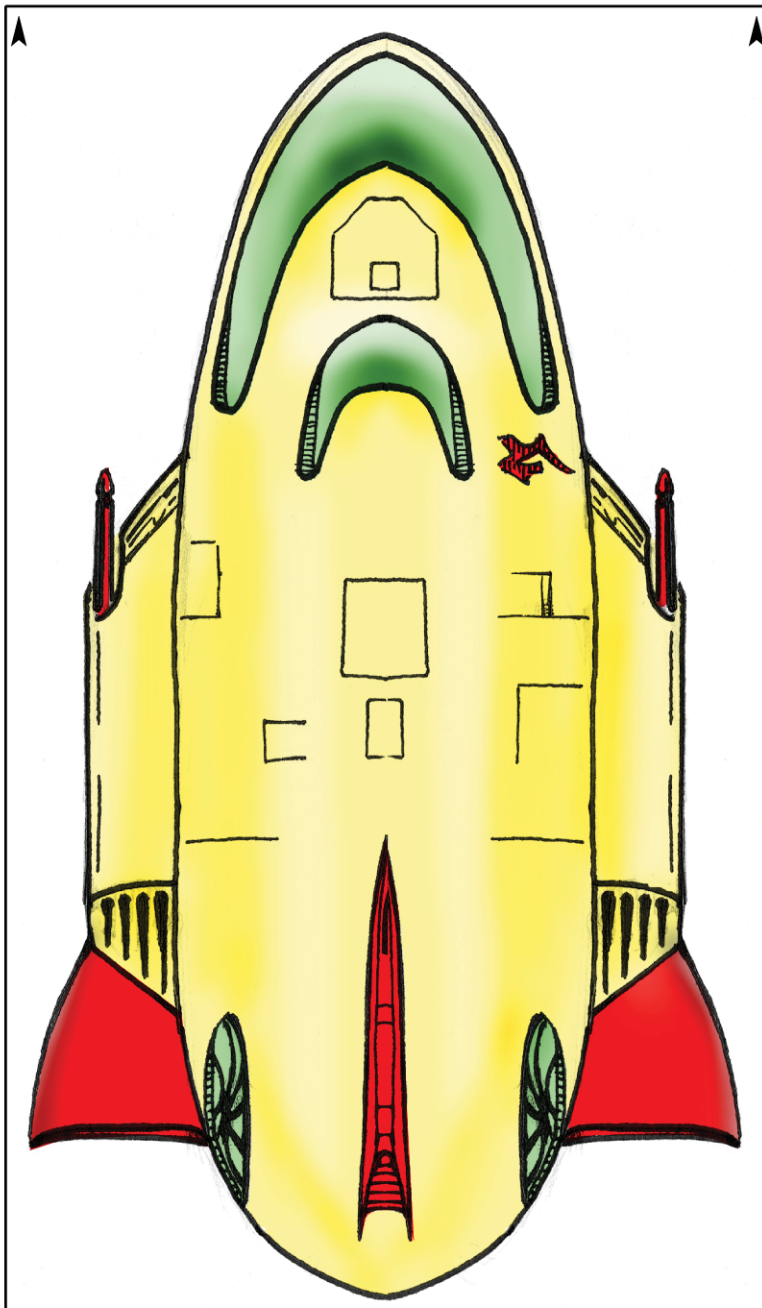
WILL YOUR HEROES SURVIVE THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM CIVILIZATION?
HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM HOPE? SEVERAL MILES FROM AIR?
DON'T MISS THE EXCITING CONCLUSION AS THE EVIL TYRANT SHALEL
MUSTERS HER LOYAL FOLLOWERS TO CRUSH AN UPRISING LED BY YOUR HEROES
AND THEIR NEW-FOUND ALLY... A REBELLIOUS PRINCE IN EXILE!

WRITER/CARTOGRAPHER
KEN CLIFFE

ARTIST
JAMES BISHOP

EDITOR
JACK HERMAN

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SCOTT BIZAR



AQUIN ATTACK CRAFT



AQUIN SOLDIER AQUIN SOLDIER AQUIN SOLDIER AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER AQUIN SOLDIER AQUIN SOLDIER AQUIN SOLDIER



PRINCE KALM SHALEL GENERAL MOKAR



MALIK AQUIN CAPTAIN AQUIN CAPTAIN



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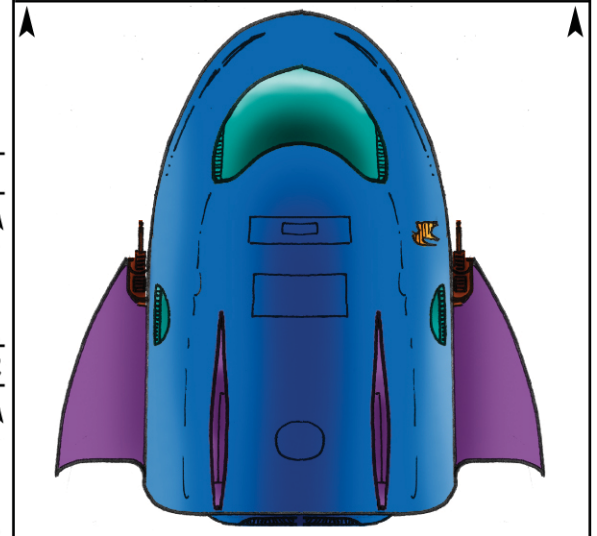
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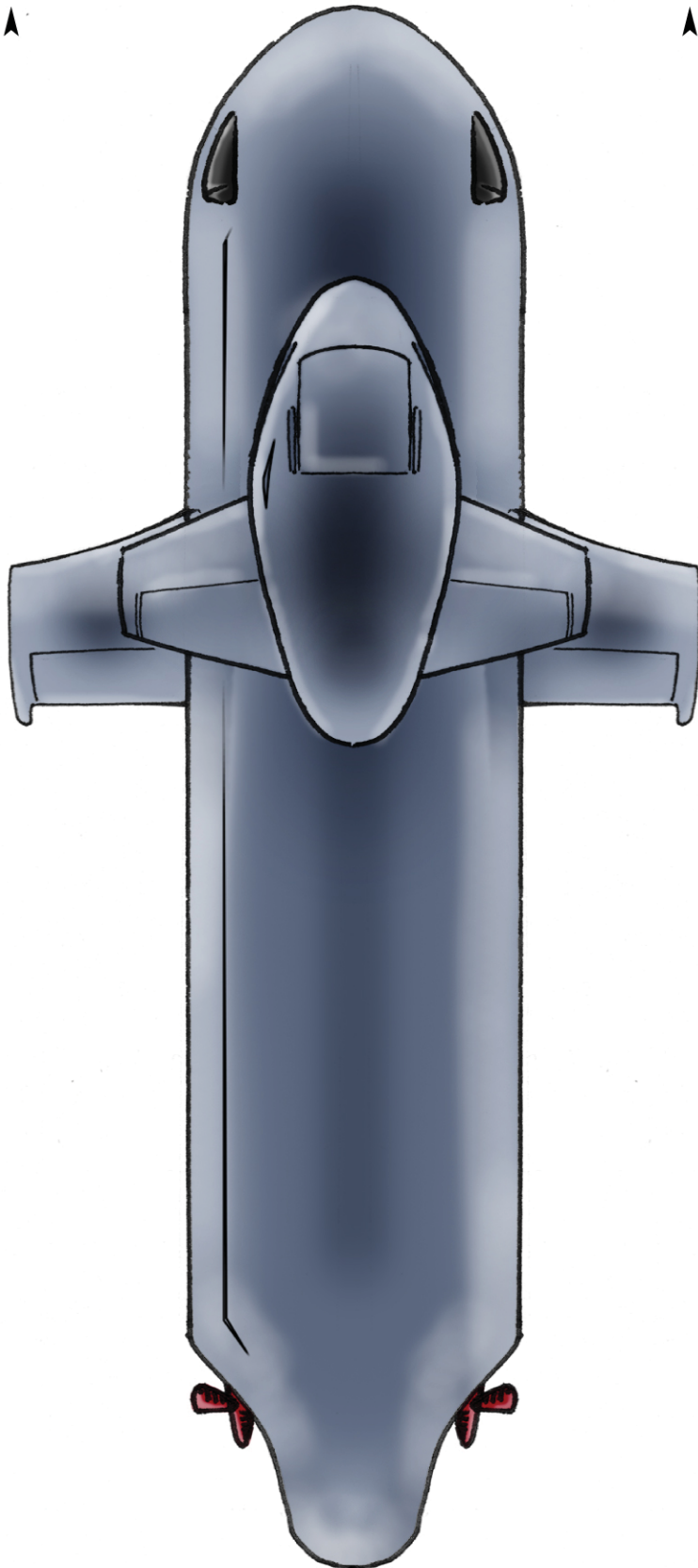
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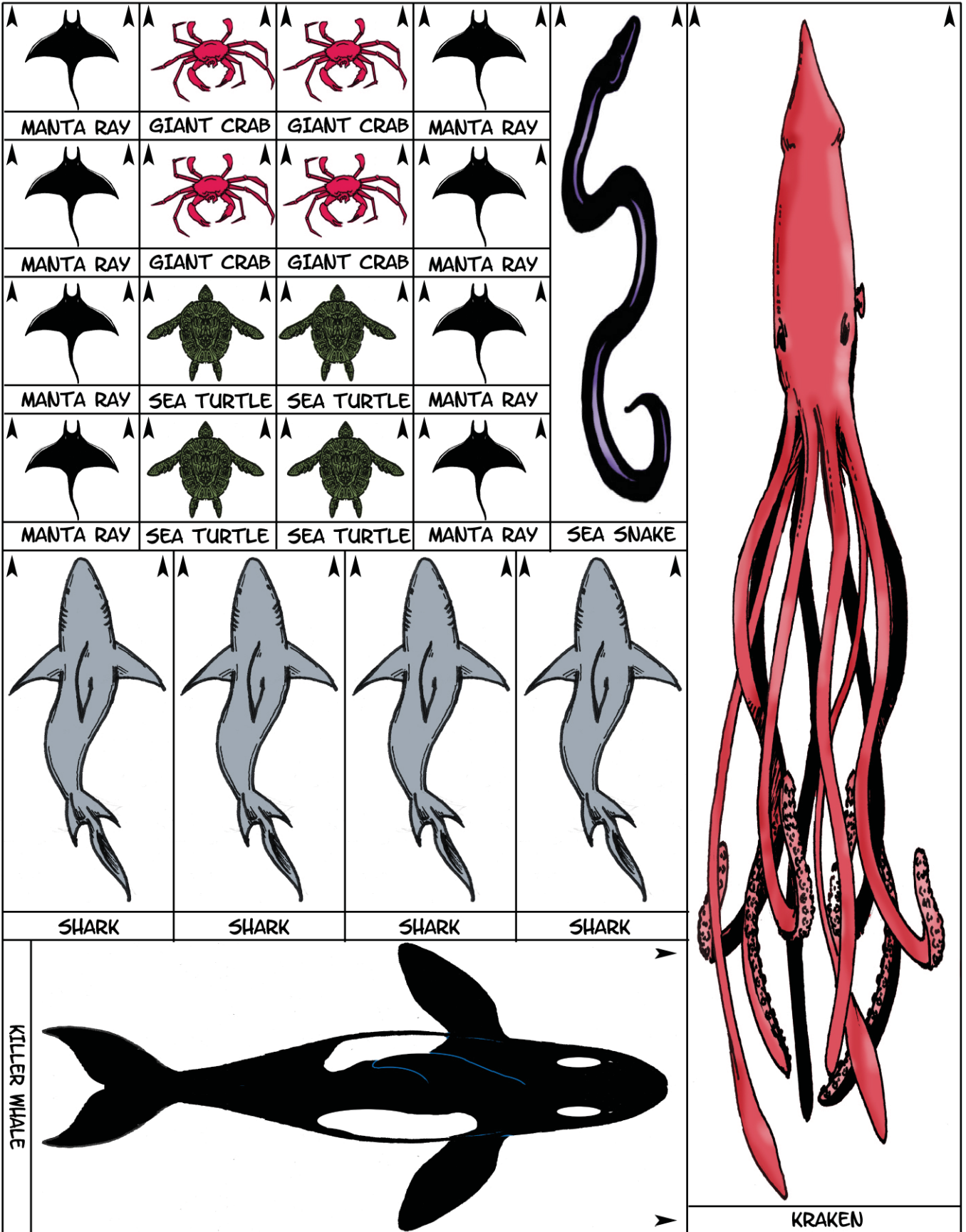


SHALEL'S PERSONAL SUBCRAFT



ADMIRAL FATHOM'S SUBMARINE

		
ADMIRAL FATHOM	MERMAID	AQUIN CITIZEN
		
AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN
		
AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN
		
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AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN
		
AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN	AQUIN CITIZEN
		
AQUIN CAPTAIN	AQUIN CAPTAIN	AQUIN CAPTAIN
		
AQUIN SOLDIER	AQUIN SOLDIER	AQUIN SOLDIER
		
AQUIN SOLDIER	AQUIN SOLDIER	AQUIN SOLDIER

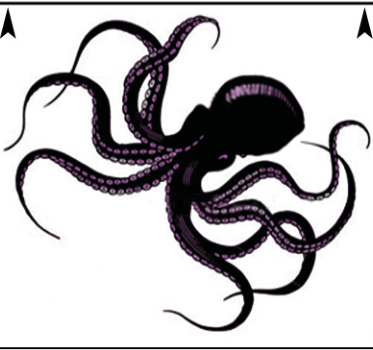




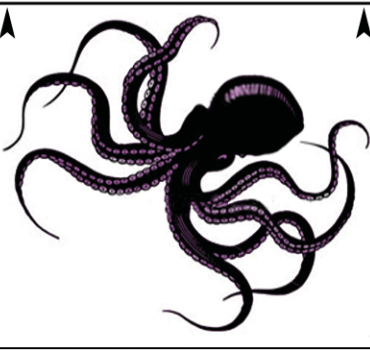
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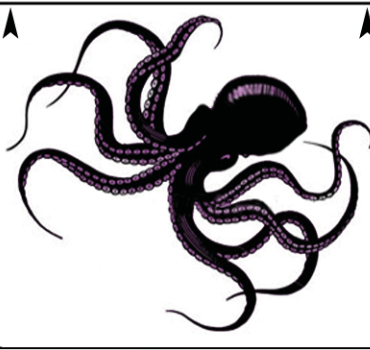
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OCTOPUS



OCTOPUS



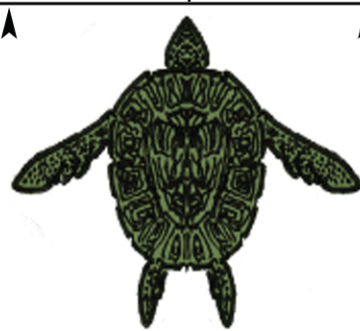
OCTOPUS



SQUID



SQUID



GIANT TURTLE



GIANT TURTLE



EEL



EEL



EEL



EEL



AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER



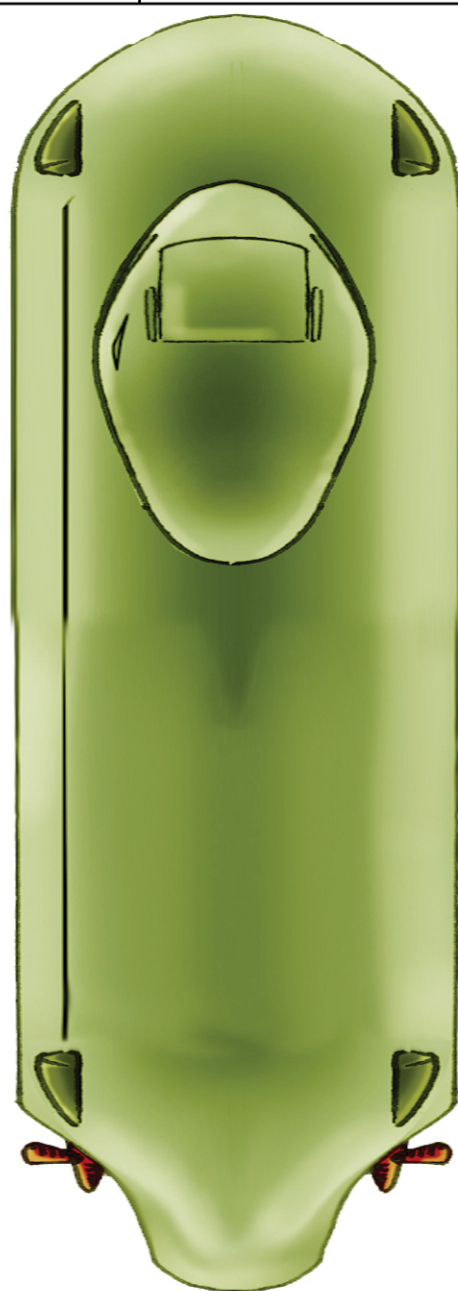
AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUIN SOLDIER



AQUARIUM FACILITY SUBMERSIBLE

DANGER In the DEPTHS ISSUE #2

A VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES™ ADVENTURE

written by Ken Cliffe

illustrated by James Bishop



PO Box 1082
Gilbert, AZ 85299
www.fantasygamesunlimited.net

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Danger in the Depths marks the second of the adventures published by FGU in 2010 that comes from the original “pipeline” of adventures we had ready for publication in the late 80s. It is written by Ken Cliffe, who had already written **Enter the Dragon’s Claw: HONOR, Super-Crooks & Criminals, Organized Crimes, and Alone into the Night**. We also have at least one more book from Ken in the works for **Villains and Vigilantes**.

When this book was written Ken was still living in Canada. He later connected with Stephan and Stewart Wieck and joined them at White Wolf, where he is still working and living in Georgia. Today Ken also runs his own game company specializing in the production of 54mm scale historical miniatures and rules for the same. You can check out what he is offering at www.allthekingsmentoyssoldiers.com. I can only say that, as a long-time miniatures player, I applaud Ken’s dedication to the less profitable end of the game industry and wish him the absolute best in his venture.

Danger in the Depths is simply so long an adventure or campaign that it was written originally as “Issue #1” and “Issue #2.” Due to the large number of counters also necessary for this complete campaign, we have decided to offer it as two books in PDF form and both will appear together in the same V&V GIANT when available in actual book form. Clearly, they cannot be played separately and are one campaign, but sheer length requires a two volume format.

So, without further ado, we welcome you to Part Two of **Danger in the Depths** and wish your player-heroes luck in their efforts to aid Prince Kalm in liberating the people of Aquina from the tyrant Shalel.

As editor, I would especially like to thank James Bishop for going above-and-beyond the call of duty in creating multiple pages of color counters for this two issue adventure. Several of these are almost generic (military, police, fire department) and James has agreed to place these on the FGU web site for free download so that players will have easy access to these useful counters and can print as many as they might need.

Scott B. Bizar, Editor-in-Chief

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CONTENTS

COUNTERSTRIKE	3
Open Sea Encounter Tables	4
Trench Encounter Tables.....	7
AQUINA AT LAST	9
Map of Aquina	10
Malik the Magnificent	11
Arena Map	12
Entering Aquina.....	13
Key to the Palace Maps.	14
Map of the Queen’s Lower Chamber	14
General Mokar	15
Map of the Queen’s Bed Chamber.....	16
Map of the Roof	16
Victory.....	16
THE ORIGIN	17
AQUINS	18
Soldier Stats.....	18
SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERS.....	19
Prince Kalm.....	19
Queen Shalel.....	20
Admiral Fathom.....	21
Mermaid.....	22

SYNOPSIS

The player-heroes were brought to the West Coast to help deal with a rampaging creature or super-villain (at the GM’s choosing), or even on vacation or personal business. An aquatic visitor landed on the beach and was closely pursued by other aquatic beings intent upon his capture or death. These pursuers were (hopefully) blocked from their goal by the player-heroes and the rescued visitor/refugee fell unconscious before being able to explain anything.

Soon after these events, the airwaves (both television and radio) were mysteriously seized and used to send a message to all from a being claiming to be Queen Shalel. The Queen called the visitor a rebel against her undersea empire and demanded his return immediately from the surface dwellers. She said she would demonstrate her power shortly at an inoperative oil platform off the coast.

The player-heroes should have gone to the oil rig and had it evacuated. While there, the rig was attacked by a Gigantic Squid, which was controlled by an Aquin scientist hidden nearby in an undersea craft (who may or may not have been detected by the player-heroes).

Queen Shalel then threatened to seize the “rebel” visitor by force and the military evacuated the area around the original landing beach and the area where the visitor was being cared for (still unconscious). True to her word, the aquatic Queen sent forces to invade the coastal city.

The invasion was launched by human mercenaries under the employ of Shalel and under the leadership of a super-villain known as Natas. While his mercenaries, known as “Mermen,” landed at the beach and were opposed by the military, Natas himself went to attempt the capture of the “visitor” from his place of refuge. It is hoped that the player-heroes assisted in the protection of the visitor and, perhaps, also in the defense of the beach from the Mermen invasion force.

Issue #2 picks up the action immediately after the invasion is stopped in its tracks and the coastal city begins to return to normal with citizens permitted to return to their homes.

ISSUE #2

COUNTERSTRIKE

After the defeat of the invasion organized by Shalel of Aquina, as occurred at the close of Issue #1 of **Danger in the Depths**, life returns to as close to normal as possible in the coastal city. The Aquin stranger will finally awaken from unconsciousness. Player-heroes will be alerted immediately by a soldier or a nurse, as will be General Grant. Upon arrival at the hospital or aquarium (whichever place is being used to care for the aquatic stranger) the Aquin will be seen climbing out of his tank, his attendant attempting to restrain the Aquin. As soon as the stranger sees the heroes, he will speak, rather shakily but with determination.

"Surface dwellers, I am Prince Kalm, the rightful King of Aquina. With your might, we combined can rescue my beloved people from the tyrant Shalel!"

At this point the players will no doubt demand some more information from the Prince, specifically to do with his peoples' troubles. It is already known that Shalel is Queen, but then little else has been revealed to the surface world up to this point. In fact, the players probably aren't sure what Aquina is. The GM knows that this is the undersea city of the Aquin people. The background information Kalm gives will be something like this:

"My father and his father before him and his father before him have all formed the royal family line of the generations. As a son is born under a King, he by right is heir to the throne of Aquina. My father, King Manor, was both a powerful and benevolent leader of the people. Under him Aquina was happy and prosperous.

Unfortunately Manor grew senile in his old age. In the years he spent as King while in his senility, the royal court and myself advised King Manor to step down from the throne. But each time he was so asked, he became angry and his paranoia grew. It was sometime during this period that a servant girl won over the King's favor. Spies had told me that this woman seduced and tricked the King into falling in love with her. The witch's name was Shalel! Against our advice, Manor married this woman. Shortly after the wedding the King grew too weak to act on his own and every command that he gave was actually one made by Shalel. Finally, in the end, Manor passed on one night after feasting. I suspected Shalel of poisoning my father, but before I could take any action the royal guards grabbed me from my own home and threw me into the palace dungeon. From what I understand, Shalel became a tyrant after I was imprisoned. Plots and uprisings against the Queen were numerous, but each was soon crushed by the royal guard.

It was one such group of freedom fighters that managed to free me. My best friend led the group but was killed in a terrible fashion upon my escape. Stealing a ship, I escaped to your world where I knew help was sure to be found. You see, we Aquins have studied the surface world for many years. The presence of powerful men such as yourselves was astonishing to discover as no such people exist in Aquina. It was through our observations that most of the surface languages have been mastered, such as your English. That is besides the point at this time. Soldiers followed me and were never far behind. It was they who landed shortly after me and, with luck, you managed to assist."

If this tale of woe cannot convince the player-heroes to help a downtrodden people, nothing will. Should the players want to know more about the Aquin race in general, see the section entitled "The Origin," which is still to come. If and when the players decide to go to this undersea city, the Prince will demand that he be allowed to go along. Should the players refuse him, they will tactfully be reminded

that none of them knows the location of Aquina.

Besides, very few Aquins favor Shalel and her reign, but follow orders out of fear. A symbol of freedom like the Prince could quickly stir the people of Aquina, raising rebellion out of them. He also has a few friends in the right places who could greatly assist in his re-entering the city.

As far as a means of transportation is concerned, there are many ways to get a ship to take the group to the city. If they haven't all been destroyed or taken in escape, the ships used by Aquin guards and the Prince at the beach could be used.

Should enough ships have been captured, the group could use those of the "Mermen" and Natas for the same purpose. Any combination of these craft could be used as long as each player-character has a position within a ship, including the Prince. Going to the government or other agency would produce nothing since a specially designed craft is needed to survive the rigors of deep oceanic pressures.

Some company or even the military may already have such a craft. It is up to the GM as to whether this vehicle would be lent out or if it actually could survive entering the depths of the Mariana Trench. The group of heroes might, in fact, already have a ship of their own which could withstand the journey. Modification may be necessary for some craft, especially in the way of structural hull points. The period required for modifying a craft is three days per Structural Point needed to increase the hull's Structural rating to at least 17. A period of at least one week must be spent for the installment of another engine or the modification of the old/original engine. Any other changes which need to be made should be given a time period in which they can be completed. Such things as airlocks will be of particular importance once in the ocean. These time periods are not cumulative, as the longest time period should be the amount of time spent fixing up or building the ship. This time period could be modified based upon the number of workers being used and the level of technology in your campaign world. Characters of enormous size or those with similar disadvantages will have to be provided for in the ship modifications or construction.

Another alternative to getting to the city would be to use the player-heroes' powers or a combination thereof. These would, of course, have to provide for the entire group and for the Prince. Heroes with Flight and a second protective power such as Life Support or Adaptation could travel underwater, but at a reduced speed. To determine modified traveling speeds, refer to the Appendix and the end of Issue #1. Basically, Wings are useless underwater unless otherwise specified in their creation or construction. Characters with Water Breathing have got it made. They may be considered to survive ocean pressures without difficulty. Should any power have a charge or time limit that the character is using to survive underwater, that limit must be carefully kept track of since the journey the group will take is a long one. It would be terrible to have a character with a water breathing device run out of charges for the device at the bottom of the ocean.

If absolutely none of the above choices is possible for your player-heroes, Prince Kalm will then be able to help out. He knows the location of a secret surface study lab that the Aquins have used to study surface men. The lab will not be too far away and has a ship that should be able to carry every member of the group. One of the researchers at the lab is Kalm's friend so getting the craft should not prove to be too difficult. The ship's stats are as follows:

UNDERWATER VESSEL

Weight: 7000 Passengers: 2 + 8
 Cargo Cap.: 5000 Speed: 60"/90"*
 Hit Points to Disable: 35 To Destroy: 140

* The higher speed is flight speed in the air. Submerged speed is the lower and is also 52 knots.

The vehicle has no weapons but can sustain pressurized travel. At the entrance there is an airlock which will allow passengers to exit and enter the vessel without endangering those inside. All bulkheads have 20 Structural Points. Inside there are also five life support suits made to Aquin standards, which could be modified to sustain humans underwater. Since the interior of the ship is always filled with air, Aquins inside must wear these suits to survive. Thus, in the voyage, Prince Kalm must wear one of the life support suits. Player-heroes wearing suits underwater will have to be careful which powers they use while in the suit. Should a suit be damaged, so is the character's lifeline.

Characters who plan to travel on their own underwater but have no way of breathing can wear mini-air filters which extract air from the water. These devices cover one's nose only and they cause minimal encumbrance with no inhibiting side-effects. The devices will be supplied to each player-hero by the military or any other group chosen by the GM. The breathing devices will allow the player-heroes to breathe while in the undersea city of Aquina. For the effects of breathing without assistance, see the Appendix.

No matter how the characters begin their voyage, Kalm will direct the ship to the Mariana Trench. The Mariana Trench is an extremely deep underwater feature which has been measured to a depth of over 35,000 feet. There is, however, one area which is actually deeper. The Trench itself is located close to the island of Guam in the Pacific Ocean, near the Philippines. The extent of the Trench itself is not very large in terms of ocean floor area. Approximate distances from the most likely potential campaign countries to Aquina are as follows:

American Coast: 6500 miles or 5645 nautical miles
 Canadian Coast 6750 miles or 5862 nautical miles
 Australian Coast 2750 miles or 2388 nautical miles

Any campaign country which does not contact the Pacific, in which this adventure may be set, will result in the GM having to relocate Aquina to some other relatively secluded underwater location. These listed campaign countries are obviously not the only locations from which a super-hero group might operate, but they are surely the most likely with Pacific coastlines. If the GM decides to relocate Aquina, its new distance from the campaign country will have to be determined in order to calculate travel time and allow for rolling undersea encounters.

Kalm's first action in piloting the ship will be to set his course into the ship's guidance system. In doing this, he is assuring the arrival of the heroes at Aquina should anything happen to him (the Prince). For the most part, the voyage to Aquina will be peaceful and uneventful. For every day of travel, a random encounter roll should be made. A roll of "1" on 1d20 will result in an encounter while underwater. A second roll on 1d20 will determine exactly what type of encounter has been made. Passive encounters such as a manta ray sitting on the ocean bottom have not been included since these are common and allowed for by any roll over "1" in the initial encounter roll. This roll for encounters is only for the open sea using the chart provided. Note that encounter rolls once in the Mariana Trench are different and will be explained afterward, at the appropriate time.

The threat posed by encounters in the open sea can be negated by flying over the ocean until the group reaches the Trench, at which time they would have to submerge. Do not automatically assume that the

group is opting for this form of travel, let them make the choice and tell you (the GM). It is also assumed that the ship(s) being used are going to travel for twenty-four hours a day by using shifts on the helm amongst the characters. To determine the distance traveled in a single day, simply multiply the current speed by 24. Portions of days traveled are considered full days for purposes of encounters. To determine the entire length of the journey in days, find the total distance to be traveled and divide it by the number of miles traveled in one day.

When a successful encounter roll has been made, and the exact nature of the encounter has been determined, a Ferocity save on 1d20 is made for the creature encountered if applicable. If the rolled number is equal to or lower than the Ferocity of the creature involved, it will attack (based upon hunger, temperament, etc.). If more than one ship or hero is present, the creature will attack one randomly. Player-heroes inside ships can enter the airlock and then enter the water to defend themselves. Here is a rule of thumb that can be used to determine the effects of depth on an exposed human that the GM should use at all times when exposed heroes could be affected. Pressures at depths of up to 2000 feet can be survived by a well protected human who has a base at that depth to which he/she can return. Exceeding this depth without some form of protective power will cause the exposed character to take 3d10 points of damage per 1000 feet below the 2000 foot limit per hour. Furthermore, temperatures fall well below freezing at a depth of 1000 meters or 3280 feet. Unprotected exposure at this depth will also do 1d12 of cold damage per hour.

OPEN SEA ENCOUNTER TABLE

Number Rolled	Creature Encountered
01-02	Octopus, Large
03-04	Ray, Large
05-07	School of Fish, Large
08	Sea Snake
09	Sea Turtle, Large
10-13	Seaweed Bed, Huge
14-16	Shark, Large
17	Shipwreck
18	Squid, Large
19-20	Whale

Feel free to modify this list as you see fit. Since encountered animals and creatures cannot be imprisoned, earned experience should be half the value of the animal is actually worth. Some, on the other hand, will grant no experience for being chased away, such as the huge school of fish. If and when the player-heroes return from Aquina, rolls for encounters should be made again for the journey home.

OCTOPUS, LARGE

Weight: 2700 Agility: 4
 Ferocity: 8 Hits: 22
 Accuracy: -1 Damage: 1d4
 Power: 42 Movement: 16"/75" (bursts)

1. Body Power: The creature can make eight attacks, each tentacle having suction cups which cause a hit victim/target to make a successful Strength save on 1d20 to escape their grip.
2. Body Power: Black ink can be ejected in panic situations covering a 3" radius. Those in the area act as if in Darkness Control. Ink will disperse in 1d6 turns.
3. Invisibility: Camouflage abilities allow these creatures to hide on ocean bottoms. Treat this like Invisibility without the +1/-1 to hit modifiers since no movement can be made. When being attacked from an invisible octopus, intended victims receive a Detect Danger roll (i.e. sonar picks up the approach of the creature).
4. Natural Weaponry: +2 to hit, +4 damage when attacking with beak. An attacking octopus is most likely looking for food. If excess damage is taken by an octopus (15 points), it will flee, spraying ink.



tentacles. Victims caught in a long tentacle (taking automatic damage per turn) are passed to a short tentacle to be passed on to the beak and consumed. This pass allows another Strength save to escape.

Should a squid take $\frac{1}{2}$ or more of its Hit Points in damage, it will escape, firing ink in the act. An attacking squid is usually in search of food.

WHALE

A variety of four different types of whales have been provided for use as the GM desires.

Blue Whale

Weight: 120 tons	Agility: 1
Ferocity: 3	Hits: 960
Accuracy: -	Damage: 4d10 ram
	3d10 tail
Power: 82	Movement: 60"

Grey Whale

Weight: 55 tons	Agility: 2
Ferocity: 3	Hits: 440
Accuracy: -	Damage: 3d10 ram
	3d8 tail
Power: 70	Movement: 70"

These mammals are basically non-aggressive. Any attack will be one provoked by a passing ship or other annoyance. Attacks will be in the form of a ram or tail slap. Damage taken that equals or exceeds $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whale's Hit Points will break off the attack.

Sperm Whale

Weight: 80 tons	Agility: 1
Ferocity: 15	Hits: 640
Accuracy: -	Damage: 4d10 ram
	3d8 tail
	4d10 bite
Power: 77	Movement: 67"

Killer Whale

Weight: 20 tons	Agility: 7
Ferocity: 17	Hits: 320
Accuracy: +1	Damage: 3d8 bite
	2d10 ram
	2d8 tail
Power: 56	Movement: 58"

These mammals will attack in search of food, but will break off an attack if they suffer hits totaling $\frac{1}{4}$ of their Hit Points.



If and when the Mariana Trench is reached, a different group of creatures and obstacles will be encountered. Due to the incredibly extreme oceanic pressures, animals exist here out of freakish evolution and adaptive abilities. For the most part, these creatures will be larger and stronger than would normally be expected. Although a large creature requires more heat and energy to maintain its internal temperature and movements, they are still present due to adaptation necessary to protect against extreme temperature and pressure. These creatures also have larger eyes than is normal since there is next to no illumination found at these depths. Because of this, blinding flashes gain a plus 4 to hit undersea creatures here.

Encounters are made in the same manner as described earlier for the open sea, except that an encounter roll is made for every mile traveled (there are eleven possible encounters in total). A three or lower on 1d20 in the initial roll will indicate an actual encounter in the Trench, the nature of which is determined by the following table.

MARIANA TRENCH ENCOUNTERS

Number Rolled	Creature Encountered
01	Sea Anemone, Giant
02	Crab, Giant
03	Moray Eel, Giant
04-05	Octopus, Giant
06-07	Ray, Giant
08	School of Fish, Giant
09-10	Sea Snake, Giant
11-12	Shark, Giant
13-14	Squid, Giant
15-17	Soldiers
18-19	Sea Turtle, Giant
20	Unknown

As before, most uneventful encounters have been omitted. They are indicated by all initial rolls over 3 for encounters.

SEA ANEMONE, GIANT

Weight: 700 Agility: 1
 Ferocity: 6 Hits: 3
 Accuracy: +1 Damage: -
 Power: 25 Movement: None

These creatures are footed to ocean bottoms or trench walls. Their long tentacles capture prey as they pass through.

1. Paralysis Attack: Any creature entering the tentacles will be paralyzed upon a successful hit at no PR. Wake-up rolls apply. Frozen

victims are pulled into the creature's mouth and there will take 1d8 damage per turn.

A ship entering these tentacles will not be paralyzed, but will be effected as if in a Large School of Fish.

CRAB, GIANT

Weight: 1000 Agility: 8
 Ferocity: 14 Hits: 14
 Accuracy: +3 Damage: 2d8 claws
 Power: 48 Movement: 42"

1. Armor: Covering shell, ADR of 69 on back. Body covering of ADR 38.

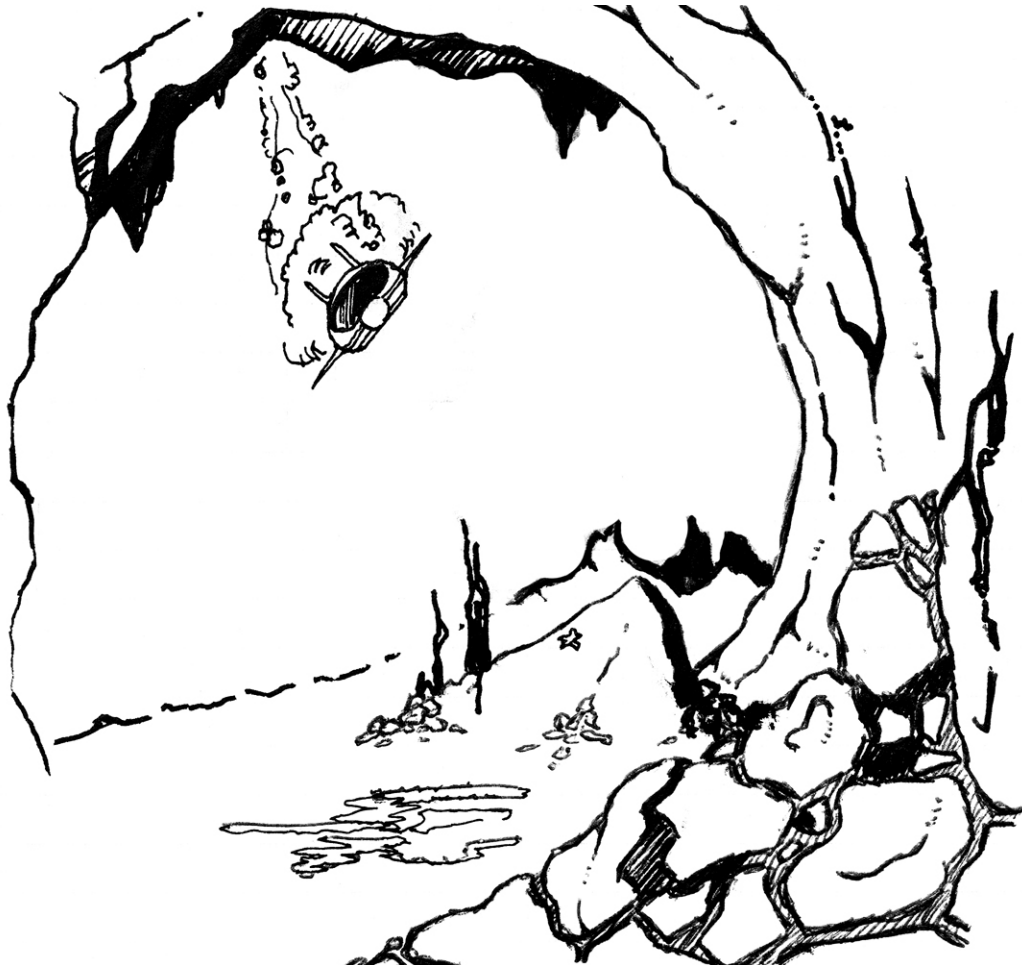
This creature is allowed two attacks per phase, as a Multiple Attack with its giant claws. A crab will usually be in search of food and will retreat once it has taken ½ of its Hit Points in damage.

MORAY EEL, GIANT

Weight: 600 Agility: 14
 Ferocity: 17 Hits: 16
 Accuracy: +2 Damage: 1d8
 Power: 40 Movement: 42"

1. Invisibility: These creatures are usually hidden amongst rocks on the sea bed. A Detect Danger roll made before an attack from "invisibility" will alert the intended victims. This power does not include the usual +1/-1 hit modifiers as no movement can be made.

An eel will be in search of food when attacking and will flee once taking ¼ of its Hit Points in damage.



or negated altogether by using one's powers such as Telekinesis, as the GM decides. Damage suffered by controls, cargo, engines and the like is calculated in the same manner as with the passengers.

The average control console has 7 Structural Points. Any damage done internally can be reduced in the ship by reducing the number of loose items present. This can be accomplished by tying everything down. Damage taken by controls in excess of Structural Ratings may bring travel to a stop or may allow continued travel in a random direction at present speed until the controls can be repaired.

AQUINA AT LAST

With Prince Kalm piloting from time to time and the heroes protecting the vessel when needed, the group should finally manage to arrive at Aquina. The location of the city reveals exactly why it had never been detected by surface dwellers before. A huge rock overhang looms over the city, somewhat like a huge cave having been carved out of the Trench wall and protecting Aquina from above (and reflecting sonar). Aquina's design is rather different from the usual comic book undersea city. Instead of having a dome to protect the city, the main part of the city is encased in a "glass" pyramid. The royal palace, easily recognizable, stands in the middle of this pyramidal area, supporting the pinnacle of the pyramid. Surrounding the main pyramid section of the city is a series of smaller domed areas, designed to provide for other city residents and their needs. Beyond the city is a huge agricultural zone where farming for the citizens of Aquina takes place, providing them with staple food supplies. For the layout of the city, refer to the map of Aquina. Since its various areas are so large, only generalizations have been provided for each of Aquina's distinct sections. Further detail about these areas has been left for the GM to create as need be.

KEY TO THE MAP OF AQUINA

The First City

This is the center of Aquina. Rather than having a dome to protect it from temperature and pressure, a transparent shield in the shape of a pyramid encloses it. This area was at one time all that existed of Aquina, but as time has passed, the population grew and it was found that a single structure could not contain the entire city. Good willed kings went to great efforts and sacrifice to build a new city, each carrying the torch of growth and progress into their own reigns. The product of their dedication is what stands today.

Eventually, only the military and the palace itself inhabited the First City, the population and industry having moved into their own domains. To the present day, this lifestyle of separated zones with their own domes has remained the custom. Precisely in center of the First City is the royal palace. Built centuries ago, this tower supports the peak of the protective pyramid. The top floors are used by royalty, the many lower floors are occupied and used for administration and military command. In the past there had been little use for the military under the great Kings, but its force was always kept at full-strength and peak performance levels. However, under Shalel the army has alarmingly doubled in size with an aquatic form of the draft or conscription. Accordingly the First City is now overcrowded and the military has begun spreading out into the other divisions of the city. Training camps, bases and other military facilities are numerous. It appears that some form of military action or invasion is in the planning!

Connected to the palace is the Aquin arena. This building has been used for recreation for the populace as well as for military training for the army. When the arena was used in the past, forms of sport and

The average set of engines will have 12 Structural Points each. Damage beyond this level will bring travel to a stop. Both controls and navigation can be repaired with the proper tools (usually carried on board) over a period of one hour per point of Structural Rating needing repair. Certain powers can speed up this process such as Heightened Speed or Vibratory Powers. Engines needing repair take twice as long per point of damage to be repaired as controls. Again, super-powers could be assistance here.

combat were conducted, but only in non-lethal form. Lately the arena of sport has become the center of violent games which are always fought to the death. Shalel has begun throwing captured opponents or rebels into the arena to face fierce oceanic beasts so as to provide an example to the people. This has led to the refusal to attend the games by much of the populace. In retaliation for this insult, Shalel has often ordered the people to the arena as spectators and used military force to gain their attendance.

The army in general dislikes the new Queen as much as the people do, but must follow orders as honor and tradition dictate. If the player-heroes are ever captured in or near the city, they will be thrown into the arena to fight the Aquin champion, Malik the Magnificent (which is only a rough translation). It should be remembered that the Aquin city, although depressurized, is still submerged and filled with water so that the PCs will have to breathe through their mini-air filters unless able to sustain themselves otherwise.

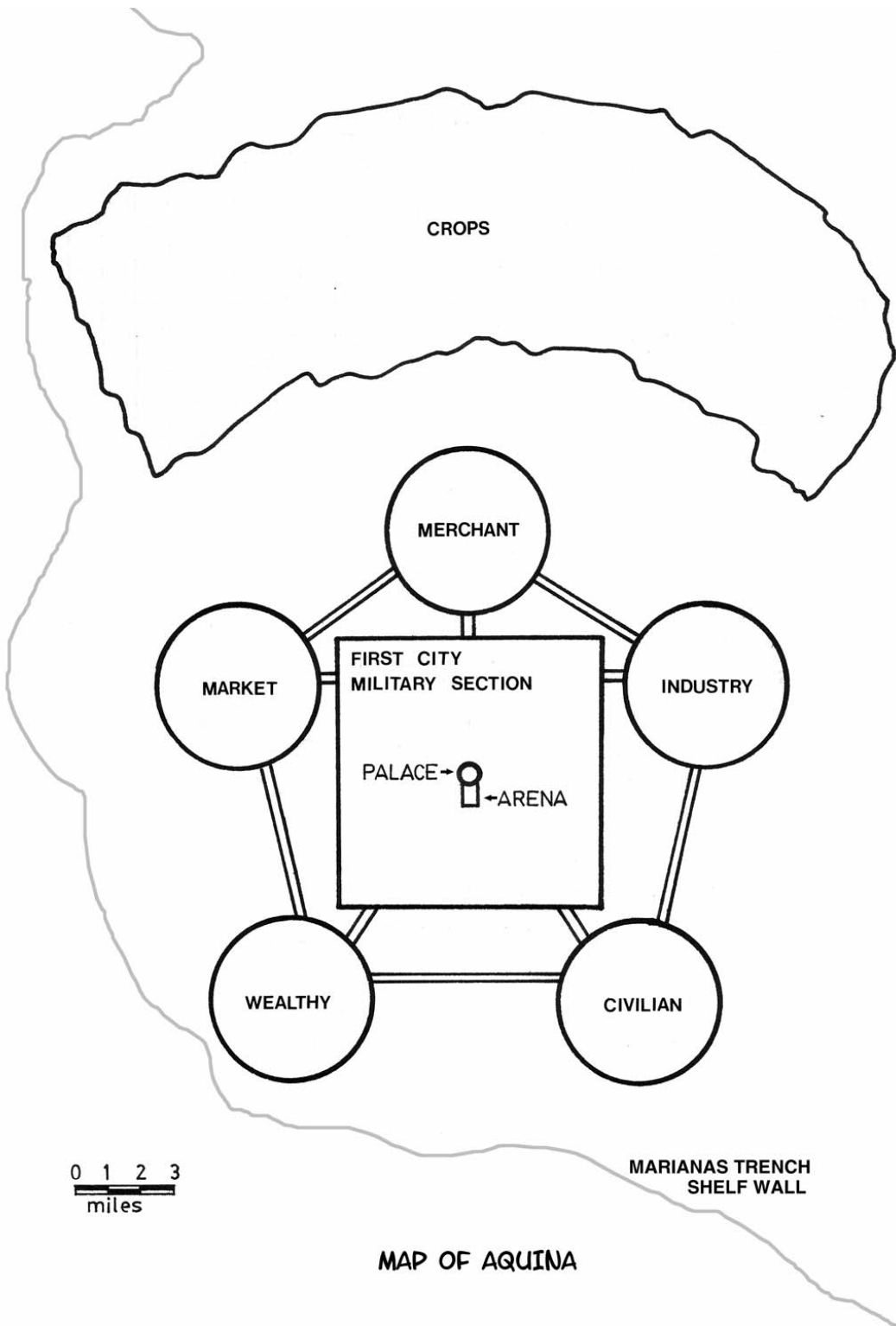
The pyramidal shelter over the First City rises five hundred feet.

The design of the arena is shown on the following map. The center area is the battlefield where the day's contests will occur. The floor is of solid earth having 4 Structural Points per square foot. The battlefield is sunk thirty feet below the stands. Covering this area is some kind of generated force field. The field has 30 Structural Points in any one spot and, therefore needs 60 points of damage done to it to puncture it as all force field damage is halved. If punctured, the force screen will repair itself in the phase following its puncture. This screen has been designed to keep combatants in the arena itself while keeping spectators out. This field is not on all the time though. As a match begins it is activated and, once a match is over, it is deactivated once again.

The two doors at the one end of the arena connect directly to the dungeon level of the palace. From these doors the combatants both enter and exit the arena. These doors are made of some material that is as of yet undiscovered on the surface and have 17 Structural Points, as do the arena walls. If a large, uncontrollable creature is to be used in the arena that day, soldiers are ordered to force it out using long, sharp spears. Each door leads to a separate chamber which both have doorways leading up into the palace, but keys are needed to open them. Each of these inner doors has 7 Structural Points.

From a palace window/terrace leading to her bedroom, Shalel watches over the games. It is she who gives the "thumbs up or down" that determines the ultimate fate of the loser of any combat.

Captured characters will immediately be thrown into the combat area of the arena, air filters and all, where the activated force field, the doors and the walls should keep them imprisoned. Once enough spectators have been forced into the stands (in about an hour's time), Shalel will signal for the fight to begin. At this point the crowd will half-heartedly cheer as the Aquin champion, Malik, will stride from his chamber into the arena. The Prince will also be thrown into the arena so he will have to be protected by the player-heroes as well.



MAP OF AQUINA

MALIK THE MAGNIFICENT

Identity: Malik Sex: Male
 Side: Neutral Level: 17
 Age: 28 Training: Strength
 Powers:

1. Aquin Body: See the section entitled "Aquins" for more information.
2. Heightened Strength: +49
3. Heightened Endurance: +27
4. Invulnerability Device: Arm bracers, 36 points
5. Heightened Expertise: +4 to hit with all HTH attacks.
6. Weakness Detection: 1" range, 1 action to perform, +5 to hit when successful.
7. Vulnerability: Malik takes double damage from negative gravity attacks made against him.

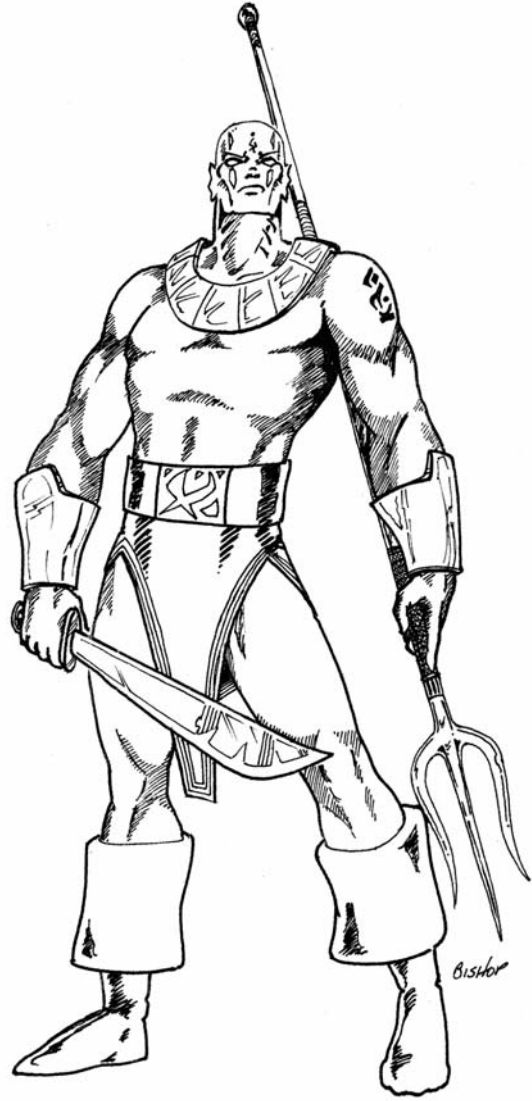
Weight: 375 lbs.	Basic Hits: 8
Agility Mod.: -2	Strength: 64
Endurance: 35	Agility: 12
Intelligence: 14	Charisma: 16
Reactions from Good: -2	Evil: -2
Hit Mod.: 27.62	Hit Points: 221
Damage Mod.: +1	Healing Rate: 8
Accuracy: +1	Power: 125
Carrying Cap.: 49,808 lbs.	Basic HTH: 4d10
Movement Rates: 222" water, 55" ground	Detect Hidden: 10%
Detect Hidden: 10%	Detect Danger: 14%
Inventing Points: 23.8	Inventing: 42%

Origin & Background: Very little is known of the Aquin called Malik the Magnificent. Nothing can be traced of his background prior to his joining the military which eventually led him to successive victories in the arena. Rumors spread by some unnamed source say that he was the son of an Aquin scientist studying the effects of prolonged exposure to high gravity. Whatever the case, Malik soon became known as "the Magnificent" when no opponent could defeat him in the contests in the arena. He became the hero of all Aquina. The most recent in the long line of Malik the Magnificent licensed products is a doll for small children.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: If you didn't know better, you would be convinced that Malik is a surface television wrestler in disguise. He uses every move imaginable and then some. His first few actions in combat will be spent determining his opponent's strengths and weaknesses. During this phase of the contest he will never evade or roll with a punch, wanting to experience what his opponent(s) can dish out. He will also detect for weaknesses at this time. He will generally judge that enough time has been spent in this way by listening to the crowd and their beginning to jeer.

After this he will wade into whoever he is fighting with fists flying. Anyone who looks or feels particularly tough will be attacked first, that person's attacks now being rolled with. To keep the fight lasting as long as possible (for a good show), Malik will often pull his punches and inform his opponent to make the hit look good. He also enjoys acting wounded or weakened so as to create a greater impact when he musters his strength and wins the fight for the excitement of the crowd.

Personality/Character Traits: Malik loves the limelight, the roar of the crowds, the thrill of the fight and the praise of women near the battleground area. This will become apparent as he turns toward the crowd every few minutes to show off his physique or to start some chant amongst the audience. Although an actor and a joker, Malik has a sensible side as well. He despises the Queen and has frequently turned down invitations to her private quarters.



If the heroes fight well against him, even if they are not victorious, Malik will help the group to escape and possibly to dethrone the Queen. If such is the case, Malik will inform the heroes of his plan during the fight and ask them to act accordingly. When the signal comes from the Queen to kill the outsiders, Malik will fake the action, allowing the player-heroes and the Prince to jump the guards later.

Should, by chance, Malik lose the fight, the force field will be turned off and the guards will rush the group. It will quickly be realized that the guards are not advancing aggressively, but in praise of the new champions. It is hoped that the player-heroes will refuse to kill Malik if so ordered. The people of Aquina will be overjoyed if they refuse to kill the Champion. By the time Shalel can regain control over her subjects, the heroes will have plenty of time to escape.

In both of the above situations, the player-heroes should have ample time to get into the palace. If need be, Malik will stay behind to handle the guards, allowing the others to go after the Queen. Either way, the group with the Prince will be able to get to the Queen's chambers.

PALACE

ARENA

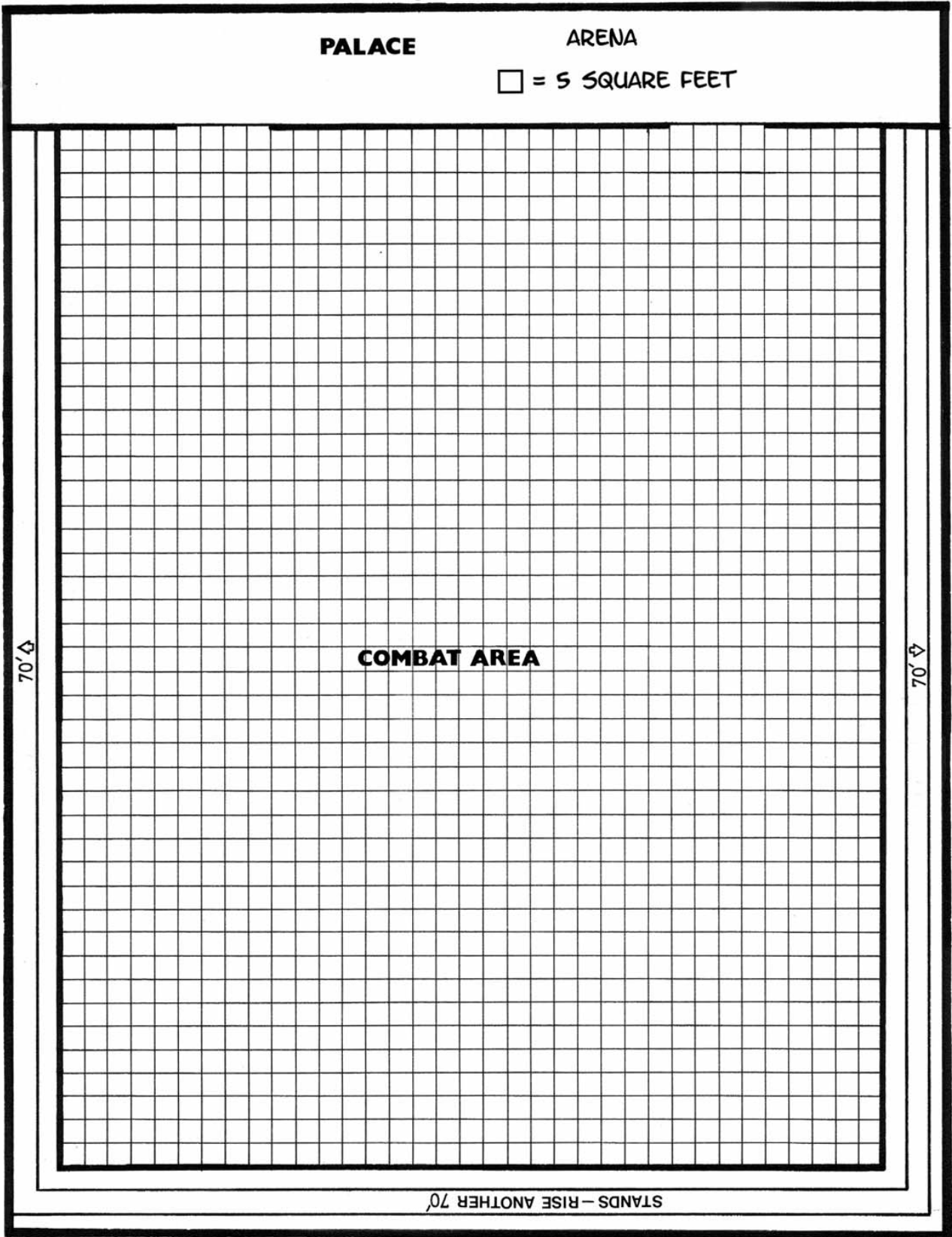
□ = 5 SQUARE FEET

70' ↕

↕ 70'

COMBAT AREA

STANDS - RISE ANOTHER 70'



Merchant Dome

This is the business section of the city. Aquin merchants and traders operate their offices from this dome. In general the characters will probably have little interest in this division of the city at the present time.

Connecting the city's domes is an enclosed walkway which spans the distance between each domed area as well as the First City. These walkways are 300 feet wide and 50 feet high with a smooth stone floor (6 Structural Points). The dome over the Merchant section rises 300 feet. It is made from an unknown, clear, colorless material that is very strong – it has 30 Structural Points. This material also covers the walkways and every other division of the city. Any puncture in a shelter would “flood” that section of the city in 2d20 minutes. Travel near a dome of the main pyramid is permitted, but combat there will be strongly avoided by soldiers and civilians who happen to be in the area. Unless the player-heroes are equally careful, they might just bring the city down around their ears.

Industry Dome

For the sake of self-preservation, the Aquin people have moved all industry into one area. Waste products are disposed of in special, highly durable, disposal units which are then entered into the earth's mantle, a process that would be greatly coveted by surface dwellers. There is a problem in that pollution put in the sea by surface man is catching up with the amount the Aquins would have already created if they did not use this disposal process. The player-heroes will probably have no immediate interest in this section of the city, but they may investigate later if successful in dethroning Shalel. The dome here is 300 feet high.

Civilian Dome

This division of Aquina is devoted entirely to the residences of the lower and middle class populace. The distinction between the wealthy and the less fortunate was not planned or intentional when these domes were built, but the high cost of living in the wealthy sector drove many to live here. Due to limited space, no individual homes are present but large, apartment-like buildings house the populace. The dome stands 300 feet high. Almost all support for removing the Queen will be found here in this section of the city.

Wealthy Dome

Again, the division of the people of Aquina was unintentional so that no animosity exists between the social groups. Living quarters here are much like those in the Civilian Dome, except that “apartments” are much larger and more luxurious here. Streets between buildings are also wider and better kept. The dome is of the standard height.

Market Dome

When Aquina stood as a single city in the First City, the market was located encircling the palace in the city's center. Since its move to a separate dome, the market is still a focal point of Aquin life. It is in this area that farmers, businessmen and industries sell their products to the people. Imagine this as a huge “mega-mall.”

Each of the five domes divisions and the First City all contain vital facilities such as hospitals, military posts (the aquatic equivalent to police), and construction crews (needed in emergency leaks in the dome where the high outer pressure water will rush in to the low pressure zone – the city).

Outside the city dome system is a fertile area used to cultivate vegetable matter for consumption. Almost all of this crop material is made up of a plant called “Kulp” which was found to be indigenous to the area when the First City was built. Not requiring sunlight to prosper,



the plant species generates vital sugars from heat energy absorbed from the earth's mantle (see “the Origin” for more details on this). This incredibly adaptive plant is high in nutritional value and forms the staple diet of the Aquin people. Farming techniques used are similar to those of the surface world, but emphasis is placed on protecting the crop from omnivorous and herbivorous feeders.

ENTERING AQUINA

On final approach to the city, Kalm will inform the player-heroes (if they haven't already realized it) that their objective is the top floors of the royal palace. This is the area in which Shalel's reign of terror over the people is carried out with special ambassadors catering to her every whim and order. As their craft approaches the city, a transmission will be heard coming over the communications console(s) of the ship(s). A voice will speak up through a slight bit of interference.

“First City to pilot. State your business in Aquina.”

Kalm will reply, “This is Rayek of the King Aquina Latone Musicians. We are to perform for the Queen and court.”

The voice will reply, “Permission to enter granted. Use docking port eight.”

This entire conversation has been staged and is translated here. The Aquin monitoring the sonar console in the city is actually a rebel on the side of Prince Kalm. It was this man's group that engineered the Prince's escape. Upon returning with support for a coup, Kalm was to give the above coded signal. Although sounding rather silly, the name of the musician's band actually acts as an anagram, spelling the word “K.A.L.M.:

Approaching the pyramid, a portal will open and then close around the ship(s) or the group. The water around them will then be depressurized for entrance into the city. Another door will then open before the ship(s) which connects to a long transport tunnel leading directly to the palace. The tunnel's walls have 8 Structural Points.

While this is happening, the sonar operator will alert his group of rebels that the Prince has returned. These Aquin men and women will quickly begin collecting in the streets (and above them) as the news spreads. Seeing this movement, other civilians will join with the rebels. In no time huge crowds will have gathered, all of them converging on the First City, picking up clubs and grabbing weapons on the way. Soldiers and guards will be sufficiently distracted by these mobs that Kalm and the heroes will be able to eject from the tube and travel up to the upper floors of the palace from the outside.

If still in a ship, everyone will have to stop at a set of windows which are on the second to last floor of the palace. From here, the player-

heroes may enter the palace one-by one. There is another entrance to the palace on the other side of the tower, but unless someone actually goes around the palace tower, that portal will not be used. It is, in fact, Shalel's terrace from which she observes the matches in the arena.

There is also an entrance on the roof of the palace, but players will again have to actively say they choose to go up there to seek entry. Once in the palace, the group can work their way toward the Queen in her bed chamber (see palace maps).

Meanwhile, outside, the crowds will have moved into the First City and are being held back by soldiers. A few cries of the Prince's return will be heard and no sooner said than most soldiers will join the mob. By the time they reach the palace, the mob will number in the thousands, all chanting for the fall of Shalel.

KEY TO THE PALACE MAPS

Queen's Lower Chamber

This is the first of the levels in the palace tower that is used by the Queen herself. It is the first that player-heroes moving upward from the arena will encounter and is probably the level through which player-characters entering from the outside of the tower would first enter as well.

It can be entered by a stairway from the lower levels, or through windows on this level in the "meeting assembly." These windows are large enough to permit entry to the tower by the heroes one at a time.

Throughout this level of the palace tower walls are made of thick stone and have 10 Structural Points. Floors and ceilings are also of stone, but not as thick as the walls and have 6 Structural Points. Ceilings are twelve feet high. Doors are made of thin stone and have 4 Structural Points. The stairs are like the floors and ceilings.

MEETING ASSEMBLY: This room is used for those wishing to address the Queen and awaiting their appointment to discuss the issue

or need. Between the portals on the wall is the actual throne. The throne is secured to the floor and would require 12 points of damage to break it loose. The chair weighs six hundred pounds, but only half that weight would have to be lifted underwater as long as the lifter has firm footing or support. The throne itself has 7 Structural Points.

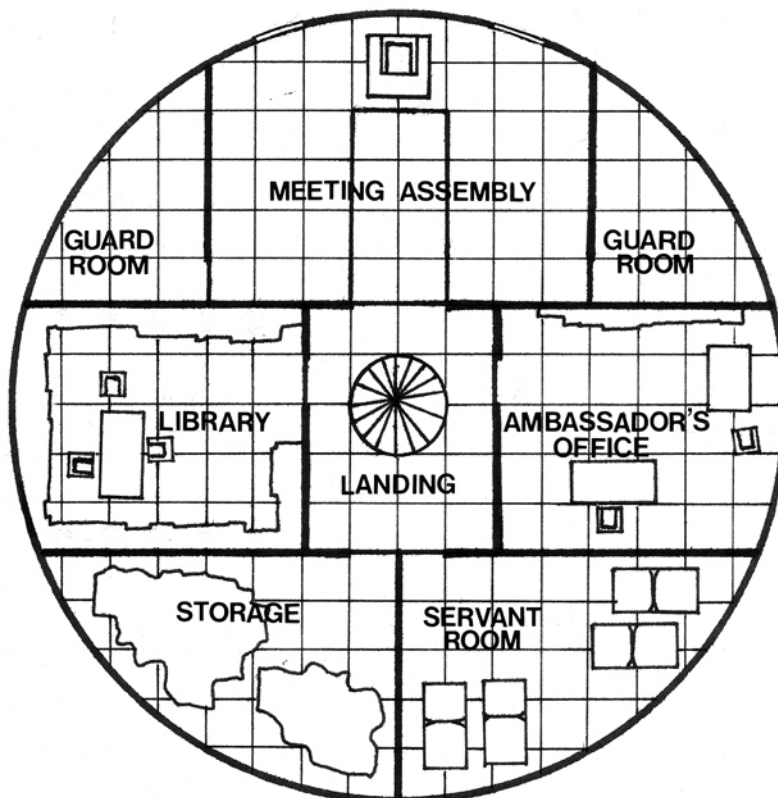
Stretching from the throne to the doorway on the floor is a cloth covering of some kind which, no doubt, is the aquatic equivalent of the typically red royal carpet. On the walls hang many tapestries of a similar material to that of the carpet. These depict Shalel doing incredible things such as commanding the seas and attacking the surface world.

In each corner of the room hangs a small cage in which swims a luminescent fish. Each such cage lights up a 2" radius. These are similar to the ones used to illuminate the rest of the city. They are hung from the higher buildings throughout Aquina and when used within a room create light equivalent to a moderately lit room on the surface. Because of this form of lighting the characters will be able to see normally in Aquina. Aquinas do not necessarily need these lights since they have deep sea vision, but the lighting does make seeing easier for them.

Should player-heroes entering the meeting assembly room make excessive noise (i.e. smash down part of the wall to enter or rip out the throne), guards from both guardrooms on the two sides of the meeting assembly will rush out and attack the intruders. The guards number eight in total. One reaction roll should be made for the entire group of guards towards Kalm. Treat the guardsmen as neutral in alignment. If the roll is successful, the guards will not attack but will join the rebellion against the Queen by going outside to join the mob. If the roll fails, the player-heroes will have to fight. Kalm is no lover of violence but will protect himself when he has to.

The windows of this assembly hall will permit a man-sized object to pass through and gain entry to the tower.

GUARD ROOMS: These are bleak, unfurnished rooms. Guards



are always present to protect the Queen. Two fish light cages hang in each of the guard rooms.

LANDING: This area is merely an accessway from the stairs to connect to all of the rooms on this level.

STAIRWAY: As the player-heroes enter the stairway to go up towards the Queen's chamber, allow each a Detect Danger roll because standing in the stairway is the evil General Mokar who is on his way to report to the Queen about the revolt. If Mokar makes his Detect Danger roll, he will attack the heroes on sight. The General has enjoyed the benefits gained by supporting the Queen and her policies and does not wish to see her overthrown.

This stairway leads both down to the lower floors and up to an entrance to the Queen's chamber.

GENERAL MOKAR

Identity: Mokar

Sex: Male

Side: Evil

Level: 6

Age: 57

Training: Strength

Powers:

1. Aquin Body: See the abilities listed in the "Aquins" section.

2. Heightened Strength: +12

3. Heightened Expertise: +4 to hit with all common Aquin HTH weapons.

4. Armor: This is in the form of the aquatic version of chainmail with an ADR of 72.

Weapons Carried:

1. Sword: +2 to hit, HTH + 1d6 damage, no minuses to damage as the weapon is designed for underwater use.

2. Spear: For throwing, +1 to hit, HTH + 1d4 damage, A/2" range.

Weight: 225 lbs.

Basic Hits: 5

Agility Mod.: -

Strength: 24

Endurance: 27

Agility: 11



Intelligence: 13

Charisma: 10

Reactions from Good: -

Evil: -

Hit Mod.: 748

Hit Points: 38

Damage Mod.: -

Healing Rate: 4

Accuracy: -

Power: 75

Carrying Cap.: 1859 lbs.

Basic HTH: 1d10

Movement Rates: 124" water, 31" ground

Detect Hidden: 10%

Detect Danger: 14%

Inventing Points: 7.8

Inventing: 39%

The General will attempt to take out the toughest looking opponent first. He will save his spear to use on those using ranged attacks against him. Any character who enters the stairwell will gain the General's full attention. The General will never surrender.

LIBRARY: This room is filled with books and tablets. Most of the stone tablets are very old having been carved by ancient scribes. More modern books are composed of a plant-like papery material. Inks are permanent, even in water. The shelves, a table, and three chairs are all made of stone, having 6 Structural Points and weighing three thousand pounds, two thousand pounds, and seventy-five pounds respectively. There are also four light cages in this room.

AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE: This room is usually used by the Queen's right-hand man. He is not present at this time (he is actually a rebel spy). The office has a bookshelf, two desks and chairs with SPs and weights like those in the Library. Three light cages are present in this room/office.

STORAGE: This room is filled with luxurious items such as skins (of large fish), stuffed pillows and fine foods. These items are stored here for the Queen so as to be easily taken to her whenever she requests or demands. No light cages are present in this storage room.

SERVANTS' ROOM: The Queen's private retainers or servants live here. Present are four simple Aquin beds (stuffed fish skins). Each weighs seventy pounds. Huddled in the corner are the four servant girls. They fear and hate the Queen and will help the rebellion in any way possible short of actually fighting. The Prince does not know any of these girls. Two light cages are present in this room.

Queen's Bed Chamber

This is the private room of Shalel. When the player-heroes burst into the room from the floor below, it will probably be empty. In the center of the room is the entryway via the circular stairway from the lower level. This entry way is surrounded by a mirror-like material through which Shalel can see those entering via the stairs, while those ascending can only see their own reflections (like the two way mirrors in surface interrogation rooms). The mirror-like enclosure is affixed to the floor and has 4 Structural Points.

Shalel's bed is easily seen from the entry. It is made up of huge pillows (dolphin hides) which are fully stuffed. Above the bed is a picture of the Queen, looking quite beautiful. The bed is encircled by a curtain which can be pulled back. It is made of a strangely translucent material which was possibly a plant at one time. To one side of the bed is a large table with a mirror at the back. A chair sits under this table. This is clearly Shalel's beauty center where she applies makeup and chooses jewelry.

Across the room from the bed is a large wardrobe/cupboard. The door is slightly ajar. Shalel's pet moray eel has been left here to protect Shalel's escape route from intruders.

MORAY EEL

Weight: 500

Agility: 15

Ferocity: 18

Hits: 16

Accuracy: +3

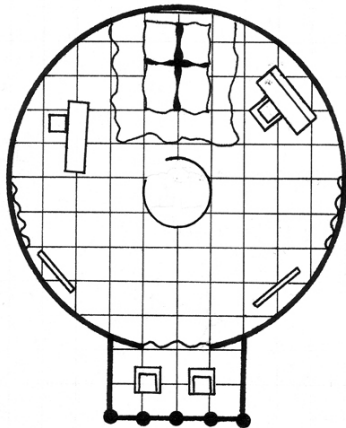
Damage: 1d6

Power: 37

Movement: 40"

The eel will not stop attacking intruders until it is totally defeated. If it is victorious it will devour the player-heroes.

Behind the wardrobe is a trap door in the ceiling that leads to the roof.



QUEEN'S BED CHAMBER

□ = 5 SQUARE FEET

Shalel has used this to escape the approaching heroes if they came from the floor below.

Around the room there are various tapestries and paintings, all depicting Shalel in heroic acts. Two large polished shells are used as mirrors. Across from the bed is the terrace from which the Queen addresses her people and watches the games in the arena. This terrace is of stone and has 6 Structural Points. It has a railing of stone as well. There are two stone seats on the terrace.

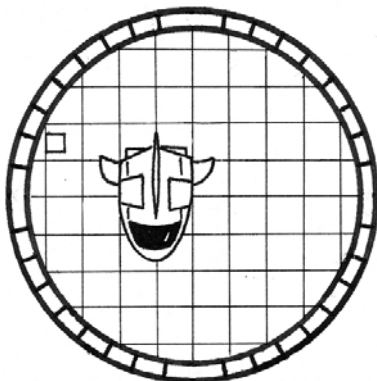
A curtain divides the terrace from the bed chamber. All furniture in the bed chamber is of stone and has only 4 Structural Points due to the lighter and more elegant design and construction. Mirrors have 3 Structural Points. The trap door to the roof has 4 Structural Points.

Note that should the player-heroes have entered the bed chamber without making noise on the lower level or by entering by way of terrace or the roof, the Queen will still be in her bed chamber.

The Roof

This area is the very top of the palace tower. Surrounding the floor area is a series of crenellations. At four points large pillars rise which contact the peak of the pyramid shelter over the First City. These pillars rise twenty feet above the roof itself.

Shalel has probably escaped to here should the player-heroes have



ROOF

□ = 5 SQUARE FEET

advanced to her room on the top floor of the tower. A private ship is kept on the roof in case of emergency like this one. Once the player-heroes have entered the bed chamber, they have five turns in which to find the trap door in the ceiling and get to Shalel before she can take off in her private ship located here. If she manages to escape, but her ship was previously destroyed (perhaps the heroes entered the palace tower by way of the roof first and destroyed this ship), Shalel will make a swim for it.

ESCAPE SHIP, VESSEL

Weight: 2000	Passengers: 1
Cargo Cap.: 50	Speed: 200 m.p.h.
Hit Points to Disable: 10	To Demolish: 40

This ship has 17 Structural hull points. Also inside the ship is an Aquin life support suit, necessary to keep the passenger alive in the waterless and air-filled interior of the ship. This craft has no airlock and cannot fly. Of course, the ship can withstand deep sea pressures.

The entire roof area is constructed of stone that has been reinforced, having 10 Structural Points. Crenellations are three feet high. The four large pillars supporting the pyramid peak each have 20 Structural Points.

VICTORY

Unless someone can keep up with Shalel, her ship will make its way to the docking bay in one minute. In two more minutes she will have passed through the docking bay and will be out in the open ocean. Catching her in the ocean will be extremely difficult for anyone except another Aquin since there is so little light. Sonar would be useless in tracking her as her ship is covered in the same sonar-proof material as the ships used by Natas and his "Mermen."

If, at any time, the player-heroes are captured, they will be thrown into the arena as previously described. The Prince will join them in this fate as he will be accompanying them.

If the heroes can stop Shalel, or at least end her reign, they will become Aquin champions. The tale of their great deeds will be passed on from generation to generation of Aquins. Giant parades will be planned with the expected banquets and feasts. A special room will be prepared for the player-heroes in which they will be able to breathe normally in pure air.

Within days of the overthrow of Shalel, Kalm will be crowned King as he should rightfully have been crowned over two surface years earlier. Once all the festivities are over (or before that if the heroes feel pressed to protect the surface world from danger), the player-heroes will have to return home, but are always promised a welcome should they come back to Aquina.

King Kalm does request that the player-heroes keep the exact location of the undersea city a secret. Although its existence is now known, only the player-heroes know of its exact location. Hopefully the heroes' code of honor will allow them to make and keep this promise to the King (and what kind of hero wouldn't promise at a time like this?). Once everything is all over with each member of the group should get a three point Charisma bonus.

As far as Shalel is concerned, she will be imprisoned in the palace dungeon if captured. Should she have escaped, the woman will no doubt be back to pester the heroes as well as Aquina. The chances are good that any further action she takes will be with some form of diabolical ally such as Doctor Aquinas. She will also be more interested in vengeance than the acquisition of power.

If the heroes tried mightily, but failed to dethrone the tyrant Queen, she will bring her final action against the surface world – war! Should things become really bad, the player-heroes might find themselves in the thick of things, attempting to defend both sides in the midst of such a conflict. This would be an interesting turn of events indeed! The possibilities of such events are left to the Gamemaster to create.

Finally, if the GM desires, Aquina and any colonies she may have established could become regular locations within your campaign universe. The possibilities here are endless as even Aquin characters could become player-characters in your group.

THE ORIGIN

Like the creation of man, the creation of the Aquin race has been lost in obscurity. However, these people do not follow anything we would call a "religion." For Aquins, science provides the answers to the questions that plague men's souls. Through this outlook, the origin of the Aquin race can be calculated.

As single-celled organisms evolved into land dwelling and air-breathing animals, those same organisms, or rather a specific species, began to adapt to deep oceanic pressures and temperatures in the primeval oceans of the Earth. So, as they did on the surface, creatures began to live and thrive in those depths. Theories claim that an area (where Aquina now stands) of the ocean floor was somehow heated by the earth's molten core due to its close proximity to the mantle. This may be proven by the fact that the plant life also lived and thrived at these depths, becoming the staple diet of most of the species existing there.

Through time this form of life evolved as did its surface counterpart. The difference was that upright, fish-like organisms developed in the depths while humans were believed to be in the Neanderthal stage. The use of tools led to tribal divisions in these aquatic "peoples." Unlike surface dwelling men, the undersea species then remained in a primitive stage of development for centuries beyond that time required for civilization to arise on the surface.

Nomadic wars over territory and food were common. It wasn't until one leader managed to gain control over all of the tribes that the Aquins began to develop. Over the course of hundreds of years the Aquins made incredible cultural advances as if to catch up with the time lost to their surface counterparts. The utilization of the mantle's heat became the key to the livelihood of many Aquins as metal became a material that could be used and forged into better tools and weapons. Along with this new technology, agriculture and architecture flourished as the last of the nomadic cultural tendencies of the Aquin people began to disappear. With their now unlimited supplies of raw materials, a civilization began to arise. However, the great oceanic pressures that constantly pressed down upon them had a major inhibiting effect on Aquin cultural development. Architecture was severely limited and it wasn't until a rare mineral was found that large scale building could go on under the protection of a solid shelter.

By the time man had entered his Eighteenth Century, Aquina, as the city had become known, had just begun large scale trade with outlying colonies and those who chose not to live in a city. From the wealth gained from this trade, larger production began. At first this was a cottage-type system, but mass production utilizing mechanical means quickly came into use.

Until the mid-Nineteenth Century (surface date), Aquina, though still a small city, prospered greatly. This all changed when the witch-woman Dazog created a cult of great size from what had been a tiny, insignificant group. Leading this cult against the reigning monarch, a devastating war took place amongst the Aquin people. The royal army finally seized victory, but at the price of thousands of lives. Dazog was never found. Shortly after this victory, the King, who had been suffering from an illness contracted during the war, died and left his throne to his son, Prince Farrel.

Farrel became King and managed to rebuild Aquina. Reestablishing the population proved to be more difficult than the physical reconstruction of buildings and the city. The war had left many males incapable of siring children as the evil witch Dazog had worked her magicks to destroy her enemy's future. Scientists and medical researchers eventually found a solution and population growth was again achieved.

Within fifty surface years the population of Aquina had tripled, the young being born as eggs, not immediately breathing on their own as mammalian children do.

Six decades after becoming King, Farrel followed his father in death and was replaced by his son, Manor. The pressures to equal the successes of his father's reign were a heavy burden on the new King. Many became discontented with Manor's inability to equal the heights achieved by his father's reign. This became more pronounced when Manor became senile and, in this state, was tricked into marrying Shalel.

Unknown to all, Shalel was possessed by the spirit of the witch-woman Dazog, who had, in fact, died during the great wars. Shortly after murdering her husband, Shalel came to hold total power. Inspired by the spirit of the witch, the Queen began a terrible reign of terror. The only hope for salvation for the people of Aquina was the Prince, Kalm, but he had been imprisoned by the Queen when she saw him as a threat to usurp her power. Enormous taxes were levied on the people which began to impoverish the city. Violent acts and murder were conducted on the streets against anyone who spoke against the Queen. Even private conversations with friends quickly proved to be unsafe.

The economy and industry collapsed once slavery was reinstated after millennia of freedom. It was after two years of imprisonment that rebel groups finally managed to free Prince Kalm. The future has yet to be written.

The recovery of Aquina after Shalel is (hopefully) defeated will be quick based on the Aquins' renewed enthusiasm for their King and land.

Present Aquin culture has changed very little since its origins. Science and reason are primary facets of common belief and philosophy. Scientific examination and experimentation is conducted under difficult, but highly regarded conditions. Since the watery world in which they live greatly inhibits experimentation, most experiments have to be carried out under conditions of atmosphere rather than in water. So, the experimenting scientists must wear life support suits to be able to complete their researches. Such suits circulate water over the wearer's body in a thin layer which is continually recycled.

Surgery is conducted in much the same manner as experimentation, the patient being removed from water and sustained through a water bath over his or her gills.

Since the dark wars, science has progressed immensely as it often does after wartime. In comparison to modern surface technology, Aquin science is marginally more advanced.

Industry and production still operate with the utilization of ancient techniques except for in the forging of steel and other production systems where methods are now faster and safer. The earth's mantle is still used to supply a limitless amount of energy for these new techniques of production. This energy source has been taken for granted by the majority of the population, it being used to heat every building from huge factories down to the smallest apartment dwelling. The depressurization of water from the exterior of the city has also become a common occurrence when at one time Aquins would have marveled at the ease with which this process is now conducted.

Once the city and its populace recover from Shalel's brutality, so too will the Aquin economy. Once based on the exchange of rare shells, trade is now centered on the exchange of minted coins.

If Shalel cannot be beaten, her war on the surface world will be the final blow against Aquina. Depleted of "manpower," money and energy, the city will collapse. The result will probably be the end of the current culture and level of technology and the eventual return of the nomadic lifestyle and regression to a former state of aquatic barbarism and savagery.

AQUINS

Based on their evolutionary pattern and habitat it can be said that the average Aquin is much different than the average human. The following is a list of powers, abilities and differences between the human and Aquin races. It is suggested that these additions become the basis for all Aquin characters.

1. Heightened Strength: +8
2. Heightened Endurance: +10
3. Lowered Agility: -3
4. Armor: Type A, ADR of 15. This is due to slightly scaly skin. Ignore weight modifications as these have already been made, see power #9.
5. Heightened Senses: Deep sea vision.
6. Body Power: Webbed feet and hands. Calculated movement rates are doubled in water and halved on land.
7. Water Breathing: Aquins must breathe water to survive, but spend Power Points, take damage and heal as the common human would do on land, while in the water.
8. Communication: Aquins may communicate underwater with no interference using the noises and sounds of their language. They may also speak other languages without difficulty underwater where humans could not do the same.
9. Increased Mass: Aquins have 1 ½ the mass of the average human. Weights should be multiplied by this amount.
10. Body Power: Immunity to oceanic pressures and temperatures.
11. Vulnerability: Aquins cannot survive out of salt water. After E/3 turns (rounded down) convulsions begin which put an end to all other actions when out of water. After E turns out of water an Aquin will die.

Some of the abilities listed above may be modified to reflect a more powerful or weaker character since the above outlines only a common Aquin. The listed abilities plus increased or decreased ones are not cumulative.

The following is a statistical description of the common Aquin soldier. Use this description for all soldiers encountered. Obviously not all soldiers are exactly identical, but for the sake of simplicity these stats can be used for all.

AQUIN SOLDIER

Identity: Aquin Soldier Sex: Variable
Side: Variable Level: 2
Age: Variable Training: Variable

Powers:

1. Aquin Body: See the section on "Aquins" above for more details.
 2. Armor: A chainmail-like suit, ADR of 60.
 3. Flash Grenades: Two are carried per soldier. Attacks are made as blinding flash as Light Control in a 3" radius (underwater), 5" radius on land. A/2" range (rounded down), these are usually used against attacking sea creatures.
- Weapons Carried:
1. Trident: +2 to hit, HTH + 1d6 damage, A/2" range underwater.
 2. Dagger: +1/+2 to hit, HTH + 1d2 damage, A/2" range underwater.
 3. Net: +1 to hit, no damage, entangles victim on a successful hit, 8 Structural Points, A/2" range underwater.

Weight: 255 lbs. Basic Hits:6
Agility Mod.: -2 Strength: 18
Endurance: 20 Agility: 8
Intelligence: 10 Charisma: 10
Reactions from Good: - Evil: -
Hit Mod.: 2.46 Hit Points: 15
Damage Mod.: - Healing Rate: 3
Accuracy: -2 Power: 56
Carrying Cap.: 999 lbs. Basic HTH: 1d10

Movement Rates: 92" water, 23" ground
Detect Hidden: 8%
Inventing Points: 2

Detect Danger: 12%
Inventing: 30%

To determine if an attack on an Aquin soldier has penetrated both worn and physical armor, two rolls against ADR are made, the first against the worn armor and the second against the natural armor. The first armor type to make its roll absorbs the damage. If both rolls fail, the attack has done damage to the soldier himself. Soldiers found wearing life support suits like those on the beach, have a duration of 10 hours in their suits systems before a new supply of water is required. Armor cannot be worn with a life support suit.



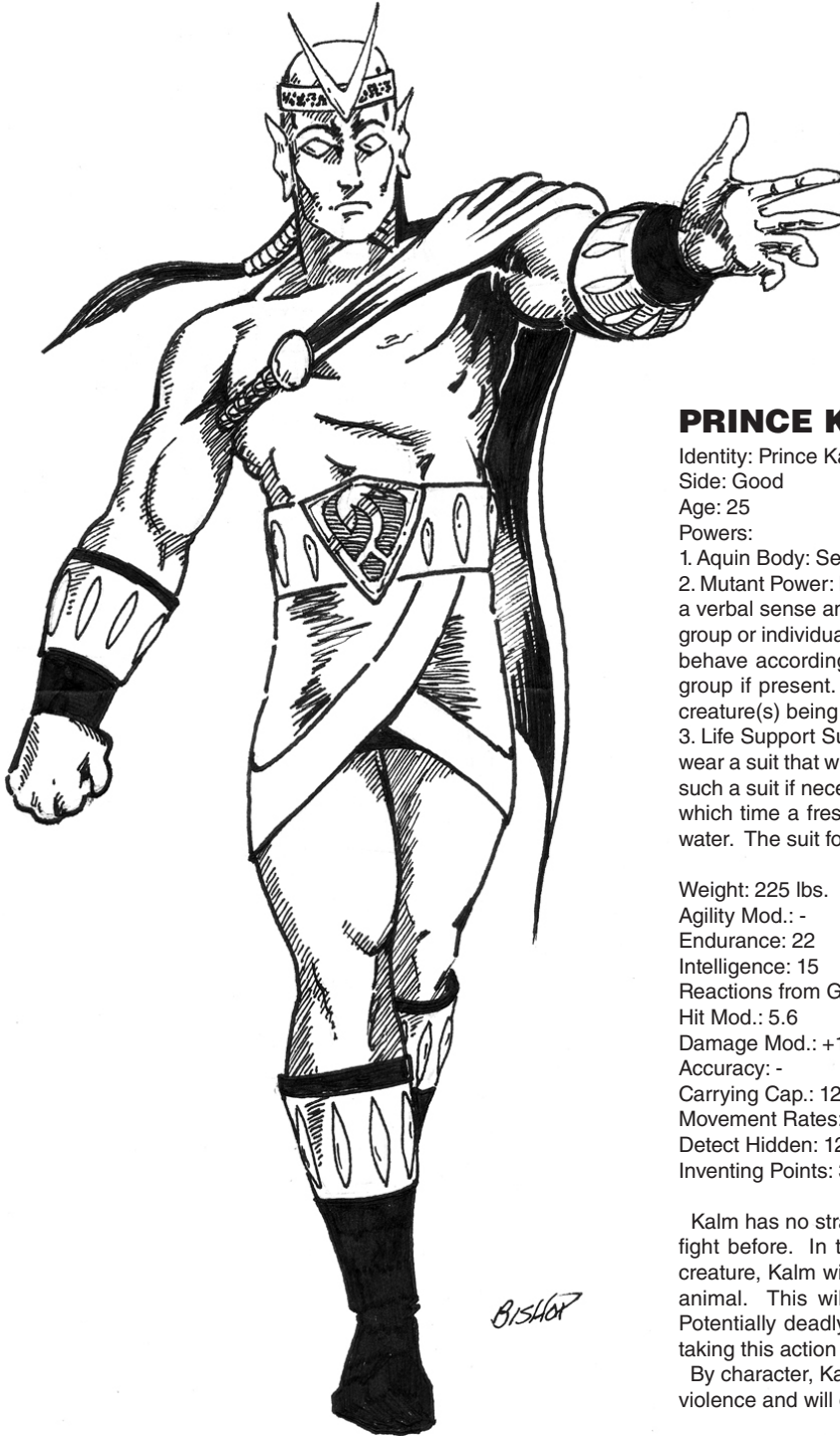
Encountered patrols are made up of four soldiers and one officer. Officers follow the statistics listed above but also carry energy pistols: +2 to hit, 1d10 damage, A x 3" range, 15 charges with no adverse effects due to submersion in water.

One member of each patrol will always carry a huge horn which can be blown to alert other patrols of danger or to let other patrols know one's location. It must be remembered that sound travels much further underwater than it does on land.

As stated previously, Aquins are blue and slightly scaly skinned. Like humans, the color of their skin can vary based upon one's point of origin. Color changes in skin are usually different shades of blue or possibly shades of green. Body hair may or may not be present on an Aquin, but males over the age of forty years never have a full head of hair. Aquin eyes are slightly larger than those of a human, including their pupils which are larger to allow more light to enter.

An Aquin breathes through a set of gills on either side of his neck. Their mouths are still used to chew food, though canine teeth are more pronounced than in most humans. Webbing is present between fingers and toes and ears may or may not be pointed.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS



PRINCE KALM

Identity: Prince Kalm

Side: Good

Age: 25

Powers:

1. Aquin Body: See "Aquins" above
2. Mutant Power: Kalm has the ability to speak with oceanic animals in a verbal sense and understand their sounds and noises. To lead any group or individual creature, they or it will make one Reaction Roll and behave accordingly. The one roll will represent the will of an entire group if present. To do this, Kalm must be in sight or sound of the creature(s) being communicated with.
3. Life Support Suit: While traveling with the heroes, Kalm will have to wear a suit that will circulate water over his body. The army will provide such a suit if necessary. The suit will have a charge of fifty hours after which time a fresh supply of water must be put in to replace the old water. The suit follows normal Life Support rules.

Weight: 225 lbs.

Agility Mod.: -

Endurance: 22

Intelligence: 15

Reactions from Good: +2

Hit Mod.: 5.6

Damage Mod.: +1

Accuracy: -

Carrying Cap.: 1289 lbs.

Movement Rates: 108" water, 27" ground

Detect Hidden: 12%

Inventing Points: 3

Sex: Male

Level: 2

Training: Charisma

Basic Hits: 5

Strength: 21

Agility: 11

Charisma: 16

Evil: -2

Hit Points: 29

Healing Rate: 3

Power: 69

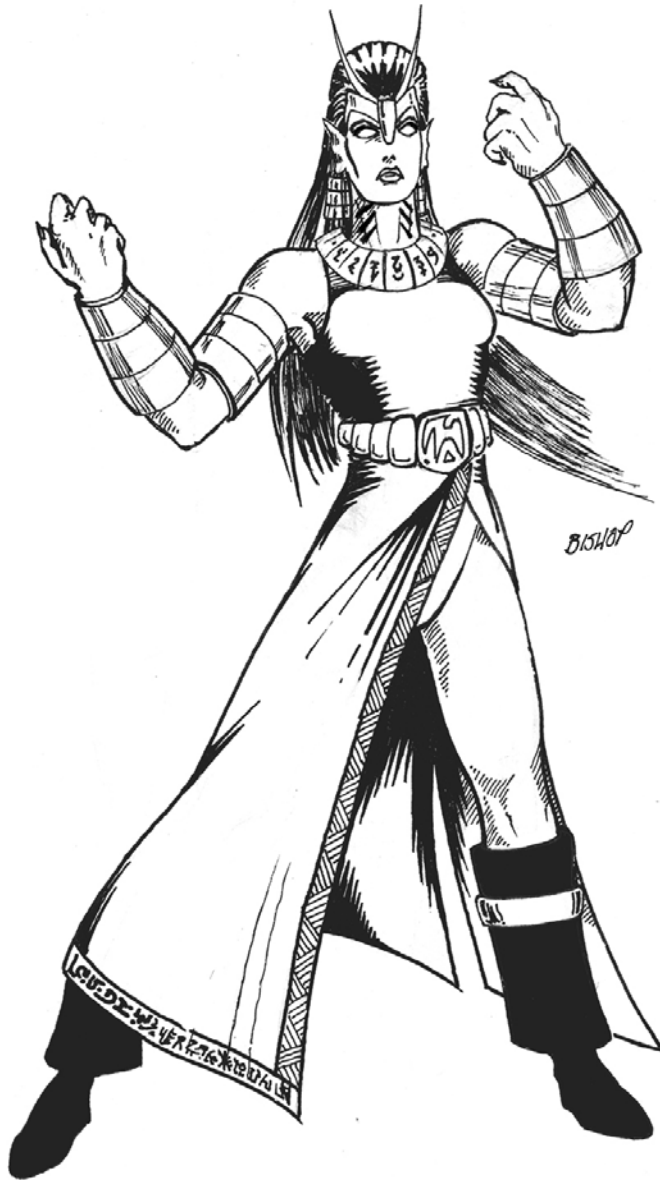
Basic HTH: 1d10

Detect Danger: 16%

Inventing: 45%

Kalm has no strategy in battle since he has never been in an all-out fight before. In the case of a ship being attacked by an undersea creature, Kalm will exit the ship if possible and try to reason with the animal. This will only be done if the creature is a major threat. Potentially deadly creatures attacking will cause him to refrain from taking this action (i.e. sharks).

By character, Kalm is quiet and rather shy. He also hates the use of violence and will only use it when absolutely necessary.



QUEEN SHALEL

Identity: Queen Shalel
 Side: Evil
 Age: 30
 Powers: None at this time

Sex: Female
 Level: 3
 Training: None

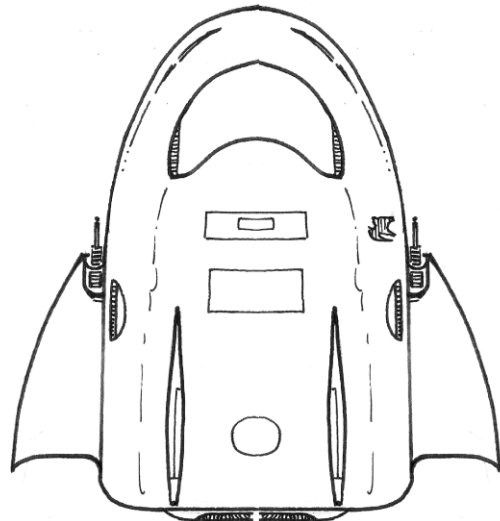
Weight: 180 lbs.
 Agility Mod.: -
 Endurance: 17
 Intelligence: 17
 Reactions from Good: -4
 Hit Mod.: 4.83
 Damage Mod.: +2
 Accuracy: +2
 Carrying Cap.: 595 lbs.
 Movement Rates: 100" water, 25" ground
 Detect Hidden: 12%
 Inventing Points: 5.1

Basic Hits: 4
 Strength: 17
 Agility: 16
 Charisma: 25
 Evil: +4
 Hit Points: 20
 Healing Rate: 1.6
 Power: 67
 Basic HTH: 1d8
 Detect Danger: 16%
 Inventing: 51%

Since the soul of the evil witch-woman Dazog inhabits the body of Shalel, she will eventually be able to harness and use magical energy.

Shalel has a pet moray eel whose stats can be found in the description of Shalel's bed chamber in the palace map key.

In the event of a fight, Shalel will always run. In character Shalel is evil, malicious, untrustworthy and scheming. Only equally rotten villains would ever be caught dead teaming up with her.



SHALEL'S PERSONAL SUBCRAFT

ADMIRAL FATHOM

Identity: Uncertain

Side: Good

Age: 40-55

Powers:

1. Life Support Device: Provides sustenance and protection from pressures and temperatures. Follows normal rules, unlimited charges.

a) Invulnerability: 8 points

2. Flight Device: 150 m.p.h. in air, 100 m.p.h. (87 knots) in water, 8 hour charge.

3. Heightened Charisma: +19

4. Force Field Device: Water is compressed into a solid force. The device operates from his right gauntlet. 20 shaping points, 25" range, 20 repulsion points – recharge overnight required to replenish this score. Maintenance action need not be taken. Attacks can be made at a 25" range, attacking as a Force Field, 1d12 damage, 15 shots per recharge.

Both the screen and the attack can operate out of water so long as water vapor is present in the air.

5. Heightened Expertise: +4 to hit with the force field attack.

6. Vehicle: Air-Sea Ship called the Oceana

Weight: 5000

Passengers: 1 + 2

Cargo Cap.: 1500

Speed: 175 m.p.h. air

140 m.p.h. submerged

Hit Points to Disable: 50

To Demolish: 100

The ship has 22 hull Structural Points and can withstand deep sea travel and pressures. Inside is a small airlock and three diving suits. No weapons are built into the ship.

7. Voice Synthesizer: This device allows Fathom to speak clearly underwater and be understood.

Weight: 210 lbs.

Agility Mod.: -

Endurance: 17

Intelligence: 18

Reactions from Good: +6

Hit Mod.: 5.24

Damage Mod.: +2

Accuracy: +2

Carrying Cap.: 694 lbs.

Movement Rates: 660" air, 50" ground, 440" water

Detect Hidden: 14%

Inventing Points: 19.8

Basic Hits: 5

Strength: 17

Agility: 16

Charisma: 33

Evil: -6

Hit Points: 27

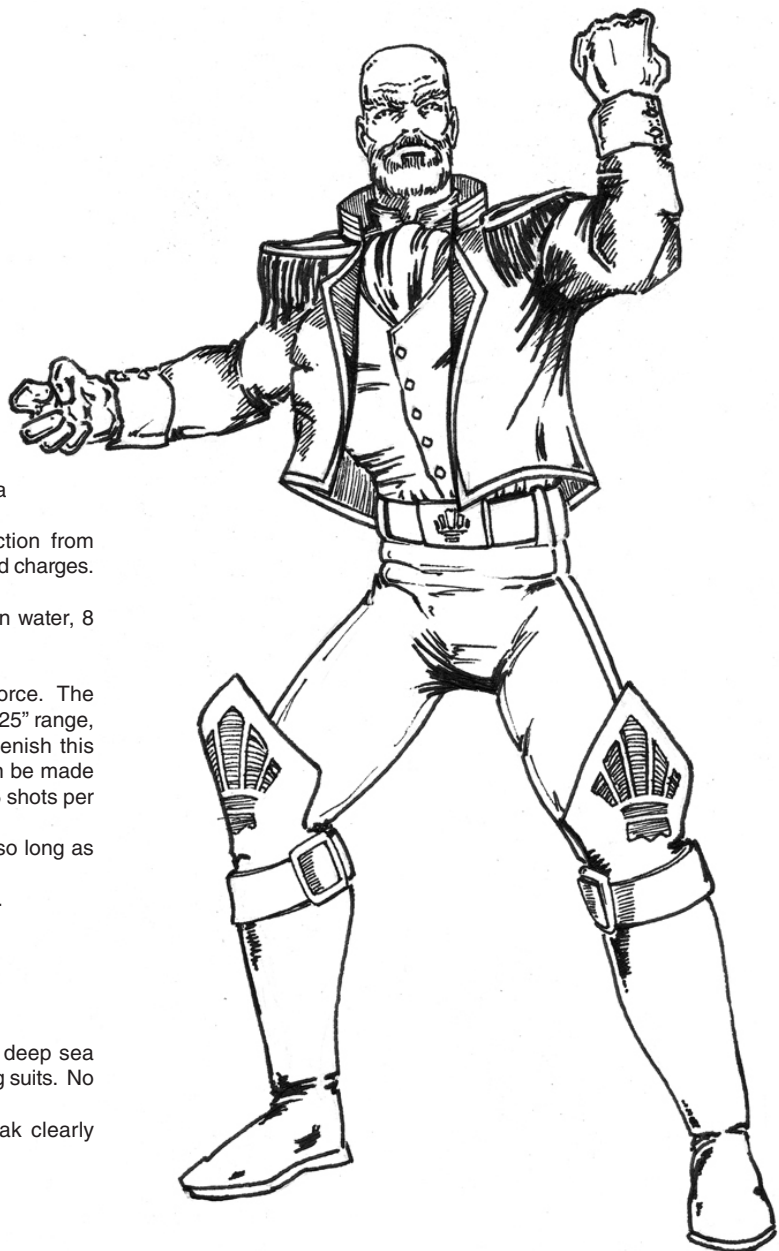
Healing Rate: 2

Power: 68

Basic HTH: 1d8

Detect Danger: 18%

Inventing: 54%



of losing his life. Specially built for this operation was an air-sea craft which contained all the necessary scientific facilities for the experiment as well as having optimum maneuverability and handling. As ordered, Ivan Timoshenko set out on his mission with the best technology available tracking his journey and progress. It wasn't until the ship made a violent change in course that Russian officials learned the man's true intent. Very soon after this violent course change, the small ship disappeared from sonar completely.

Military searches lasted for weeks without any success in finding the traitor. Even Russian agent Red Raven could not find the ship or the man. The search was reluctantly called off with more than one official's head rolling, so to speak.

When the crew of Timoshenko's sub was questioned, no one could have guesses where their former commander could have gone. They didn't need to guess as they actually knew where their commander had gone but were protecting him out of loyalty. Only short months earlier, the sub on a routine mission had visually spotted a large

Origin & Background: From the few experiences and encounters had by people and countries with Admiral Fathom, only a little can be assumed as to his background.

Seven years ago the commander of a Russian nuclear submarine, an Ivan Timoshenko, was instructed to conduct tests on the effects of radioactivity on sea life. American agents discovered that Timoshenko was opposed to these experiments but that he followed orders for fear

undersea cave. It was strange that no sensors could pick up the location of this cave. Crews sent out to investigate found that some odd mineral was retarding sonar signals. Ivan Timoshenko ordered his men not to breathe a word about their discovery to anyone.

As his original crew guessed, Timoshenko did escape to the undersea cave where he remained for weeks, rationing out what food supply he had carefully. During this time he also utilized his technical ingenuity and constructed devices which he deemed would protect him against Russian approach. Little more is to be gained from files, but Timoshenko somehow survived and flourished. It is believed that it was his love for the ocean which led the man to remain in the sea rather than to defect. Soon afterward a man calling himself Admiral Fathom came to the rescue of an American factory under supervillain attack. After defeating the culprit, Fathom even remained long enough to point out how the factory could reduce waste dumping into the Pacific. As the years passed, many more of these appearances occurred, even in Russian territory. The Russian government, suspecting Timoshenko, was now forced to pardon the ex-officer due to worldwide appeals.

Today Admiral Fathom continues to patrol the world's waterways. If there's trouble, he can be counted on to be there. It is also rumored that the Admiral has an undersea base somewhere.

Combat Tactics/M.O.: The Admiral usually tries to take a potential opponent by surprise to get in a few attacks edgewise. His first action will always be to set up a force screen and on subsequent actions will fire water blasts. If flight can be used to gain an advantage, it will be used to the fullest, especially if he can remain just within range of his water blasts. On occasion the Admiral has led stupid or unimaginative opponents into the water where he definitely had the advantage. Admiral Fathom never takes the Oceana into combat.

Personality/Character Traits: Admiral Fathom appears to have a great love for all the world's oceans and their creatures. To those who abuse or waste the oceans' waters he is short-tempered and sometimes violent. This does not mean to say that he attacks coastal factories, oil tankers and others who damage the ocean. He actually tries to assist them and encourage them to be more efficient or careful in not polluting the seven seas any further.

Unknown to Admiral Fathom, one sea creature has become intrigued by and has eventually fallen in love with his virtues and personality. This creature is a mermaid; her stats are as follows:

MERMAID

Weight: 130

Ferocity: 5

Accuracy: +2

Power: 52

Powers:

1. Telepathy: 160" radius, thought scan costs 1 PR and 1 action to perform; 16 minds in a mental switchboard, 1 action to set up, 1 PR per turn; 1 PR per creature tracked per hour; mind probe has a range of touch, takes 1d6 turns to perform and costs 5 PR. See rules for more details, p.17. This power only works with undersea creatures.
2. Body Power: Immunity to oceanic pressures and temperatures.
3. Heightened Senses: Deep sea vision.
4. Body Power: Communication underwater can be made without distortion.

Agility: 17

Hits: 5

Damage: 1d6

Movement: 117"



For use in this adventure, Admiral Fathom is provided as a tool with which to back up the characters when they are in trouble. Feel free to enter this character into the plot at any time except in Aquina itself. Kalm knows of Admiral Fathom's existence and will immediately recognize him on sight. If desired, Fathom can join the player-heroes in the fight against Shalel, but will stay around only as long as necessary. His mermaid secret admirer may be introduced through numerous fleeting glances underwater as she follows her lover. If the group with Fathom gets into serious trouble, this mermaid could enter the scene, making things that much more interesting.