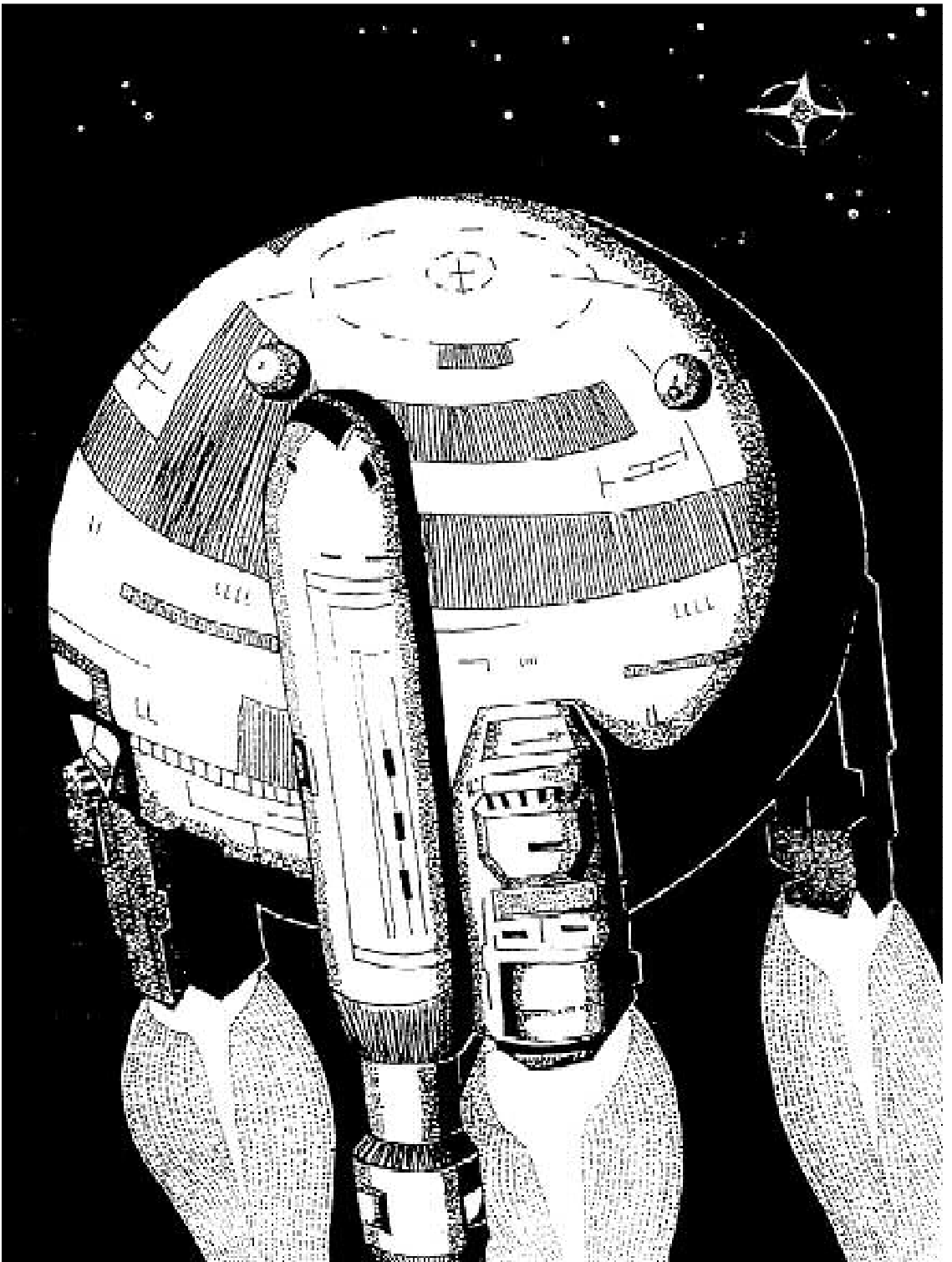


Signal-GK

#3



*A Cry for Help—
A Call to Adventure!!*

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Legends and Lore of Dagudashaag Sector

By Ishmaga Ershuk Extract from Chapter 6 - The Malaach Conspiracy.

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The Joker's Tower

Nox has always been a mystery planet. When it was first discovered in -9021 the atmosphere was heavily tainted. This appeared to be caused by industrial pollutants, yet no sign of planetary civilisation, past or present, could be found. None that is, except for the 1,550 metre high mound on the Gradaach plain.

The original survey team left with the mystery unsolved. A Vilani colony was established in -8350. Subsequent exploration of the Mound discovered it was a magnetic anomaly; it affected magnetic compasses within a 6 Kill radius. The Mound had definitely not been formed by any natural geological action. Was this a remnant of the Ancients? There was nothing to connect that race with this mystery, either then or now.

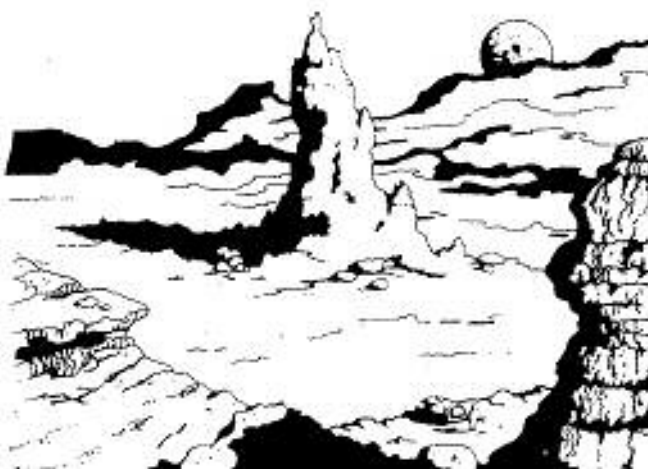
Research teams attempted to drive probes into the base, they broke! Whatever it was composed of was as tough as diamond. After some of the soil had been cleared away, it was discovered that the actual mound was composed of a unique, dense crystalline structure almost black in colour. Could there be the remnants of an advanced civilisation beneath it? Actual exploration of the exterior was complicated by the fact that the caverns at the peak were the home to a large colony of Noxian Spiders. Could they have been the mounds creators? They are, after all, the highest known pinnacle of Noxian evolution. Neural Activity Sensors however revealed them to be non-sentient.

Before the researchers could continue, members of the team began to vanish. In one extremely well documented case, a worker had just detonated explosives in the futile hope of breaching the crystalline structure of the mound. It, like all subsequent attempts, failed. He was seen to step forwards and then vanished in midstep. The body was later found in the caverns at the top of the mound - dead. The body was physically undamaged; death was caused by a massive cerebral haemorrhage. These disappearances always seemed to occur after an attempt was made to obtain samples. Despite attempts to use robots to do the actual mining. People up to 10 several kilometres distant still vanished.

Later surveys were made using densitometers with no success. Each reading came out different.

In -1203, an entomologist from Ushra, Kevin Saulteen, discovered that the Noxian Spider was actually capable of spinning weak crystalline substance that they used to bind their victims. He subjected the substance to intense radiation and found that it caused the structure to compact. At last the mystery of the tower's construction appeared to have been solved. Or was it?

Saulteen later estimated that it would take the radiation of a supernova exploding at ground level to harden the spider's web into the superdense crystal of the Tower. He also estimated it would take 23 billion spiders working for 2,000 years non-stop to produce enough initial webbing to create it. Nor did the theory explain the disappearances or inability to take accurate sensor readings. Although scientists seem to have accepted Saulteen's explanation there has been no official answer as to why the spiders would have built what we now know as Joker's Tower.



What is more unlikely? That a non-sentient species, such as the spiders, created the Tower, or that it was created by a highly evolved race, now extinct? Like so many of Dagudashaag's mysteries, the Tower only makes sense once we accept the existence of such a race in the Sector's pre-history. This race I call the Malaach....

The Lundqvist

The "Lundqvist" was the name of a Donosiev-class IISS survey ship that has become infamous in Ushra subsector. The vessel was lost in the Kaagashgiir system in late 1106. The exact circumstances of its loss have remained a mystery. The vessel had been dispatched to the rescue of a navy courier the "Allaouun" which has lost power soon after jumping into the system. Contact with the vessel were lost as the ships slipped behind the large gas giant Bakuk. Twenty-five minutes later only the Lundqvist emerged from the shadow of the gas giant: a garbled distress signal was broadcast claiming that the ship was under attack from 'invisible' forces. The captain of the vessel was almost totally incoherent - there were screams in the background and the sounds of fighting. Psychologists analysing the recordings of the incident concluded that the officer delivering the

message was bordering on the insane. Fear, panic and extreme agitation were the principal emotions prevalent on the recordings.

The Lundqvist then drifted back into the shadow of the gas giant and again contact was lost for the final time. An IN cruiser (awaiting the arrival of the courier) was dispatched to investigate, but on arrival at the gas giant no trace of either vessel was found. A system search was initiated but to no avail.

Three weeks later following this mysterious and tragic incident a vessel giving the transponder code of the Lundqvist was picked up in the Antioch system. Within seconds of the transponder signal arriving at a ground-based tracking station, a garbled distress message was broadcast on the emergency frequency. Before anyone could react the message was cut off abruptly. No sign of any vessel could be found. Examination of the ground-base broadcast recording log identified the distress message as identical to that sent out at Kaagashgiir. Seven more weeks passed before there was a repeat of this second incident at Tethys (1114). There was a major difference however - only after the initial excitement of the appearance of the Lundqvist did system authorities note that a free trader which was heading insystem had disappeared. Its last known position was only 500,000km away from the location of the mysterious transponder signal, 15 minutes before that signal.

The media throughout the subsector got hold of all the details (and made a few more up besides) of the mysterious ship and the (apparently) linked disappearances of trading vessel. The Lundqvist was dubbed the "Ghost Ship of Ushra". Further detection of the distress message (always the same) and further inexplicable losses of merchants has set the whole subsector to panic - traders and travellers alike. The popular tale is that the appearance of the "Ghost" or "death" ship the Lundqvist is a paranormal sign that some innocent vessel will be lost. The panic has led to a slump in freight and passenger transport, as well as the number of ships that will travel in certain regions of the subsector (especially in the Tethys Triangle, extending between Lambda Cygni, Hakukuk and Ushra). Those that are willing to fly their vessels through this area can command high prices. Insurers are now asking higher premiums from even the major carriers as the list of lost vessel grows longer.

To date no-one is able to cast any light on the incidents: the Bureau of Parapsychic Phenomenon at Shakhamish University (Gush 2716) are offering a prize of Cr.750,000 for positive proof of the existence of a parapsychic cause for the loss of the ships. The Polytechnic of Argiluu is offering half a million credits for proof that the whole sequence of events has been due to a more rational cause.



Referee's Information:

The whole story concerning the Lundqvist and the missing ships is one of piracy, betrayal and murder. The Lundqvist is still in operation by its original crew plus two members of the navy courier crew.

The original incident at Kaagashgiir was planned by the captains of both the vessels. The two captains had a friendship that went back many years. The captain of the courier was given the task of carrying a load of government gold: some MCr. 40 worth. He passed this information to his friend with an idea to steal the gold. The Lundqvist's commander approached his crew in a round-about manner and received a positive response. The courier's captain did not receive such an enthusiastic response from his crew and thus decided to act on his own.

The courier's captain sabotaged the courier's power plant which exploded shortly after emerging from jump. The Lundqvist was in a convenient position to be the first on the scene. The scout ship sent over a team on the pretext of assisting the courier's rescue but in fact set about eliminating the crew and transferring the gold to the Lundqvist. Part of the struggle was accidentally recorded by the Lundqvist's scanners and re-broadcast to the rest of the system, which inadvertently added to the authenticity of the message.

In the shadow of the gas giant the Lundqvist, its crew and the gold jump out system before any vessels could get anywhere near the incident site. The courier had been sent on a collision course with the heart of the gas giant in an effort to eliminate all the evidence of the theft. The Lundqvist made the journey to Antioch (1117) where it refueled at an icy comet on the outer fringes of the system. It broadcast the 'distress' message just before the vessel jumped to confuse the authorities.

The Lundqvist's crew enjoyed the easy pickings to be had from robbery/piracy and decided to undertake it in and around Ushra subsector. The Lundqvist currently operates out of a hollowed-out asteroid in the Undim system (0914).

CONTACT: THE MALAACH

OVERVIEW

The Malaach (or Shassahrhi, as they referred to themselves) are an extinct race native to Hhrassahr (Undim/Ushra). They were exterminated at the hands of the Ancients, around approximately -350,000 because of their savage and warlike manner.

They were descended from carnivore/killer stock which, independently, achieved a Tech 18 society prior to their extinction. Their artefacts and ruins, found throughout Ushra and in parts of Pact, Old Suns, Khandi and Mimu are currently believed to be the work of the Ancients.

The term "Malaach" is a Scanian word meaning "Messengers from Beyond" and was, generally applied to all extinct races that had achieved a technologically based society. In 1115 Professor Ishmaga Ershuk, author of "Legends and Lore of Dagudashaag Sector", used the term to refer to a specific race which he claimed originated in Dagudashaag and was responsible for all the Ancient artefacts found in the Sector. It is his theory that the Ancients were not a single race, but an amalgamation of several races, which had achieved a similar high technology level at about the same time. This, he claimed, accounted for the variety of sites. He further claimed that it was the Malaach that transported humans and Droyne to Dagudashaag.

His theory, while well received by the general public, was later discredited by the Academic population.

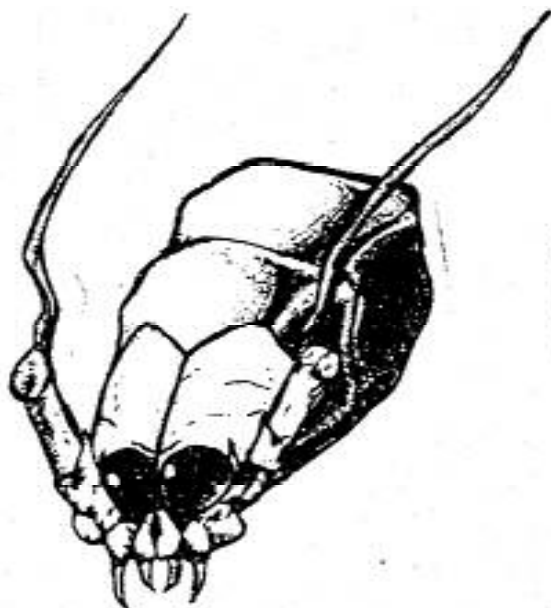
DESCRIPTION

The Malaach stood up to 1.5m high and varied in length (depending on sex and age) between 2m and 6m. They had an outward appearance similar to a hybrid Scorpion/ Noxian Spider except they had sixteen limbs in total.

LIMBS

Manipulation: The Malaach used six, multiple-jointed limbs, each ending in a single bony "hook" for manipulation. These limbs were clustered together in two groups of three, located either side of the chest cavity. When not in use these limbs folded up into two shielded sacs on the chest. Each cluster was capable of working independently or together to act as "hands". Fine hairs on the base of the bony "hooks" gave additional grip.

Locomotion: They had a further eight limbs which were used as legs. These were angled upwards like a terran spider and were aligned symmetrically along the abdomen region. Each leg was segmented. A delicate coxa attached the limb to the abdomen. This was protected by an armoured trochanter. To this was attached a powerful femur and a long, slim 'tibia' made of four distinct parts. The leg ended in a large pad. The front pair of legs were used as weapons and ended in two large, curved claws which also gave traction in icy environments. The middle two sets of limbs were primarily for locomotion and each limb ended in multiple small claws and fine hair.



Male Cranium



Female Warrior, Nest Rshi

The rear pair of limbs was extremely powerful, and enabled a Malaach to spring on to its victim from a distance away. In the low gravity environment of Hhrassahr, Malaach could achieve leaps of up to 12m in distance and up to 3m in height.

Pincers: Each Malaach had a powerful pair of frontal pincers which were located beside the chest sacs. These pincers allowed the Malaach to grab and hold its prey. They were extremely well armoured.

Tail: The Malaach also had a segmented armoured tail, which ended in a poisoned stinger. This stinger carried a powerful acid which it could inject into its victims. Females carried their tails above their heads, in a similar manner to terran scorpions; while the male carried theirs curled beneath their abdomen.

SENSORY APPARATUS

Movement: Hairs attached to the legs at the tibia were connected to vibratory sense organs deep within the abdomen. These allowed the Malaach to sense movement resulting from air current disruption.

Scent: Unlike true arachnids, the Malaach had a pair of sensory antennae mounted on their foreheads, which allowed them to “taste” for air-borne scents.

Sight: Also mounted on the forehead were two transparent membranes which protected three pairs of eyes clustered together. Each eye was capable of independent function, and as a result, a Malaach could keep track of several objects at the same time. The lower pair of eyes supplied bifocal vision, the middle pair give long distance while the upper set sensed deep into the infra-red spectrum.

Hearing: The Malaach were completely deaf beyond their ability to sense movement caused by sound. This may have been one of the chief factors that led to the development of their empathic/telepathic method of communication.

STRUCTURE

External: The Malaach primarily had a structure consisting of head, main body and abdomen. This was covered in strong natural armour formed from bonded hair. Much of the external structure differed, both from sex to sex and in the latter centuries of their existence, from Nest to Nest.

Internal: Unlike arthropods, the Malaach had an internal skeletal structure. The external shell was formed primarily as defence. They had a honeycombed bone structure, which formed round the internal organs, shielding and cushioning them. The body was filled with foam-like phlegm which prevented internal damage of the organs caused by blows. Their size dictated near mammalian organs, including a circulatory system and twin hearts, bellow-like lungs, a sensitive nervous system and two brains.

The hind brain, located at the base of the abdomen,

controlled movement, the stinger and all involuntary responses. While capable of functioning independently on a purely instinctive level, it was normally controlled by the fore brain located in the head. This controlled the deliberate responses of the hind brain, the senses, the manipulatory organs and the pincers. It should be noted that the male fore brain was up to four times larger, and much more developed than the females. Of the four sexes only the Males and Breeders developed true intelligence. The females had an empathically linked hive mind instead.

The rest of the anatomical detail varied according to sex: see below

REPRODUCTION

The Malaach had four sexes.

Females: Females, including Queens, can reproduce asexually by laying eggs, which can only hatch into other females. Females lacked the womb needed to reproduce sexually. They were the racial warriors and grew to about 3m in length from antennae to stinger. The shell consisted of natural armour plating covered in small spines. This armour showed a great deal of variation, not just between Nests, but between individuals born of the same batch. The eye clusters were protected by a bristly eye turret mounted at the top of the head, just in front of the antennae. They had elongated faces, ending in small mandibles which contained a poison sac. To the rear of the abdomen they had a small egg sac. Unless controlled, they could lay up to 100 eggs each weighing about 1kg, in a year.

Females were non-intelligent though highly instinctive and would always act to preserve the sanctity of the Nest. They shared an empathic hive mind with the Queen, which almost bordered on the telepathic ability of the Males. Females lived for up to a hundred years though due to the races warlike nature, few survived to old age.

Female eggs hatched after a 48 (standard) day incubation period (though it was possible for them to stay in a form of suspension for up to several years before hatching) and spent the first 3 years as two limbed larvae. The adults left the mindless larvae alone and seemed to have had no parental instincts towards them. They survived outside the Nest living on the castouts. They were extremely carnivorous and were even known to attack and eat injured Males. After 3 years and up to 20 moults later, they swarmed back to the Nest. There they underwent chrysalis for a period of another year. During this time the larvae were converted into the Female form and burst forth. Generally newly metamorphosed Females were totally feral until the Queen made empathic contact with each one and “impressed” it into her service. As soon as they left the chrysalis they were capable of producing eggs themselves and frequently did so.

Queens: Queens were the result of live births from

another Queens' womb. The embryo as a result of witnessing a psychic birthing trauma [PBT] while developing inherited certain active hormones which resulted in the Female Nymph metamorphosing into a Queen during the pupae stage. Only one Queen could exist in a Nest at any one time, though several "Princesses" and "Nymphs" could exist sheltered and protected by the Queen. Queens grew to about 5m long and had a womb below and to the rear of their egg sac. Only sexually active Nymphs (Princesses) were immune to the desire to protect the Queen and were shielded against the Queen's powerful empathic transmission, which she used to control the Female warriors. Indeed, they themselves would try and impress newly developed Females to their cause.

Queens were fertilised by both mates and the Breeder. Males produced fertilised eggs in the Queen's egg sac while Breeders produced Male (generally twin) offspring in the Queen's womb. Psychic echoes caused by PBT release resulted in the involuntary release of certain active hormones into the womb which altered the embryos. In the case of twins the PBT frequently resulted in the death of the weaker embryo. The altered embryo changed sex to Female but, instead of being born as larvae, they remained in the womb for a period of 360 days. The Queen then gave birth to a miniature Female Malaach known as a nymph. For the first 10 days, the Nymph was extremely vulnerable as the plate armour hardened. The Breeder, in an attempt to preserve the status quo would try to kill off all but one Nymph.

The Queen however, would attempt to protect them by keeping them close to her at all times. At 3 years the Nymph entered a chrysalis stage during which time it would shed its stinger, its main defence against the Breeder, as well as its armour. It grew in size and developed a womb. When it left the chrysalis state the "Princess" was capable of using its empathic ability to try and prevent it being killed. Within a year it would become sexually active and would attempt to steal the Breeder. At this point it would enter into a death duel with the existing Queen. If it won, it would kill all its sisters and eat their corpses. Queens were capable of breeding for 36 years and, like all females could, survive for up to 100 years. Most Queens, if not all, were killed by stronger, younger offspring.

All Queens were capable of carrying a live offspring and laying eggs fertilised by the ordinary males at the same time.

PBT: The Queen's empathic emissions caused psychic overload in certain species. The psychic feedback from this overload caused the "male" embryo to alter sex through the Queens' involuntary release of hormones into the womb. This overload (PBT) was always terminal for the other species used.

Males: All males were capable of fertilising a Queen but only the Breeder could produce live offspring which metamorphosed into other Queens and Breeders. Males were generally about 4m long, had relatively light armour and had a much smaller, though much more flexible, tail which it normally kept curled up. Males were born from fertilised eggs after a 230 day gestation period. A Queen generally laid a batch of about 10 each time and it is believed that they could lay up to 1,000 a year. Each hatchling emerged as a miniature male, fully functional, and with their intelligence already awakened by mature males in the Nest. Young males were protected deep within the Nest and intensively educated.

They took part in their first Funeral feast (known as the Ceremony of Knowledge) at about 2 years old when they were fed ancestral RNA. The RNA disseminated throughout the Malaach body at death, penetrating into the muscle tissue. Eating the meat of Malaach males meant consuming small quantities of RNA. This resulted in the young males suffering a fevered period, of up to 5 days while they assimilated the inherited knowledge.

Thereafter the male was capable of assimilating information, through RNA transfer, within hours. A small percentage of males proved incapable of partaking of RNA transfers and were killed in the hope of breeding this regressive trait out of the Nest. Those who survived this period were classed as Hsarh or "Minor Intellects". Over the next 4 years the Hsarh grew physically and intellectually as they assimilated more and more RNA transfers. At age six they were classified and established into a Hhairh or "Guild", where they stayed and interfaced until they died. At death they joined the ancestral RNA.

Males were the only intelligent aspect of the race and communicated by a type of telepathy which allowed them to "tight beam" their ability.

They could choose to "speak" to either individuals or entire populations.

They generally survived for up to 300 years as they led a pampered life protected by the females. They used their psychic abilities to relay simple messages to the females.

Breeders: Breeders were live offspring created by the interaction of a Queen and an adult Breeder. Each Breeder was born as a live offspring, in the Queen's womb and had a normal gestation Period of 250 days. Breeders were born as miniature males. Like the normal Male offspring. At about 2 years old, when they underwent the Ceremony of Knowledge, they entered a chrysalis period which lasted for about a year. When they emerged they had lost their stinger and armour and had instead formed a thin skin. Their sexual organ had also changed. On the tip of the penis small downward facing barbs appeared. These barbs, during penetration,



Female Larvae

caused the Queen to involuntary retract the opening to the egg sac and allowed direct fertilisation of the womb. These offspring were always male unless the Queen partook of PBT during the first 200 days of pregnancy. Breeders were protected until they were about 8 years old, at which time the oldest Breeder offspring fought the current Breeder in a duel to the death. This was to ensure that the strongest survived to pass on its genes to the Nest.

BACKGROUND

Prehistory: The proto-Malaach began its existence as a small hunter-carnivore on Hhrassahr about -1,000,000. Its most dangerous enemy was other Nests of proto-Malaach. It was the threat from its own cannibalistic species that started the evolutionary defence race. It was unlikely that the race would have ever developed intelligence were it not for a single specific incident, the Hasharli Comet. In -750,000 the comet's tail entered the Hhrassahr atmosphere, irradiating the surface. Many species died out. Several sub-races of proto-Malaach also went down the road to extinction. One species, the Shassahrhi, survived though the radiation altered the race. Over the next 500 years the bad and infertile adaptations died out. The Malaach increased in size and grew powerful armour to protect it against radiation. The most unusual adaptation was the creation of Queens and Breeders. A single Malaach female line developed a womb as well as its egg sac. It remained a useless adaptation until a female bred with a Male born with altered genitalia. The pain of intercourse caused her to close the mouth of the egg sac and allowed sperm to reach her womb. The offspring of this was the first Queen. She was capable of emitting an empathic projection that caused the entire Nest to try and protect her. She initially bred only males which were in her partner's genetic image - the first Breeders.

PBT was discovered purely by accident. A Hrhas (a type of large grub) was killed in the Queen's presence. This resulted in an empathic fit of pure ecstasy for the Queen. She responded by releasing an echo which was extremely addictive to the whole Nest.

This Psychic Birthing Trauma resulted in further Queens. The Nest soon brought more and more Hrhas to the Queen so they could feed their empathic addiction. When the male parent died and was consumed, the males in the Nest discovered themselves suffering a fever. The females were unaffected. On awakening, these males discovered that they now "remembered" the experiences of the dead male. Several Malaachs went mad and killed themselves but enough survived to carry on the assimilation gene. Each of these Malaach was able to pass on their RNA skills and memories to future generations through their corpses. The first true Malaach Nest was established. One side effect, was the loss of the normal Malaach female to lay fertilised eggs. By -600,000 the only Shassahrhi Left were the Malaach. The constant assimilation of parental RNA had led to true intelligence. This intelligence was increased by the ability to eat the memories and skills of dead Malaach.

The race remained aggressive and the planet was in a constant state of war. It was this need for offensive advantages over its kin that led to the invention of technology. Each Nest remained independent but the knowledge they discovered could be passed on merely by the capture and assimilation of any male inhabitant. Through the Ceremony of Knowledge their children would instinctively learn all the knowledge of the previous generation.

The second racial crisis took place in -500,000 when the Malaach, who had no idea of conservation, killed off the last Hrhas. Other species were tested in order to provide PBT, but none proved successful. In the end the race was reduced to using Malaach males under torture to provide the PBT. However, this was not a very successful solution. Males were able to screen themselves so only willing volunteers could be used. They had to be young and often several were required to create sufficient PBT. To make things worse, the Queen frequently aborted.

Another solution was needed and fast. In an unprecedented move Nest Hsrha hosted a peace conference between all the major Nests. After the initial distrust was overcome, all Nests present agreed to temporarily work together to find a solution.

Nest Rhari were experts in genetic adaptation and they explored that angle, resulting in several variant species in the passing. Nest Hsarh were experts in rocket technology and Nest Hsrha in chemical warfare. Between them they developed a viable rocket, which was capable of reaching orbit. Examination of meteorites proved that life almost certainly existed on other planets.

During the next two hundred years technology advanced rapidly from chemical rockets to cryogenics and generation ships. The first generation ship was dispatched to Tethys. Each ship was, by necessity, a full Nest as no male was willing to depart without a Queen. It was this inability to colonise without viable Queens that was the main brake on the Malaach's ability to colonise Dagudashaag.

During this period, although many of the guilds co-operated with each other, the Nests still warred. At least one Nest was destroyed by nuclear weapons before the guilds banned that form of warfare.

Within fifty years of the first generation ships being dispatched. Nest Rshi chanced upon the principle of the Jump drive. The first ship found itself in Deep space (at 1015). Additional jumpships quickly allowed the Malaach to establish a deep-space Nest capable of refuelling ships. This totally self-sufficient Nest was handled by the Hrashr, a minor, relatively unaggressive Nest. Ships were sent to Laruu, Tethys and Nox.

On Tethys they discovered the proto-Hamaran. Samples were immediately tested by the shipboard Queen. This proved that the Hamaran were capable of supplying the needed PBT. The crisis was averted.

Later, when the generation ships finally arrived, they found that the planets were already colonised by Malaach. Within a hundred years Jump 2 ships were establishing Nests on most planets within the subsector.

Most Nests, aware of the risks of keeping their entire clan in a single Nest, or even planet, started sending their Princesses out with a segment of the clan to create affiliated Nests on other planets. Some stayed close to the parent Nest. Others immediately set themselves up as independents. One lesson the Malaach had learnt was not to trust a single gene pool for their much needed PBT. They sent out scout ships - small Nests - to try and discover other sources. At least one ship reached Mimu and brought S'mrii to Ambrym/Pact. For the most part, the Nests were established in the Ushra and Old Sun's subsectors.

The Malaach developed functional teleport devices. They Used this both as means of transportation (of non-living material - the Stepping Disks killed live material in transit) and as a weapon. Stepping disks were generally set up several metres underground to create portals above ground. Anyone stepping through such a portal was instantly killed and their corpse transported to the Larder where their RNA could be extracted. Artificial replication of RNA meant that the knowledge of a single individual could be passed on to an entire Nest. Banks of RNA were established in case of a racial disaster.

They hadn't yet solved the problem of organic transportation when the Ancients entered their sphere of existence. This was the first truly advanced race the Malaach had discovered. Their initial reaction was to sample them for their PBT potential. Unfortunately they proved highly acceptable. The initial expedition was led by one of the Ancient's Grandchildren.

The Ancients immediately declared war and, in a period of less than seven years had completely obliterated the Hhrassahr Nest. The final solution, after destroying Hhrassahr and several other major settlements, was to create a virus that corroded the Queens' womb. The Malaach were dead as a race yet Nests kept on fighting to the end. Several Nests were never discovered due to the racial tendency towards secrecy and defence. It didn't matter, the virus still reached them and killed them off. The Ancients then set up base in several of the Malaach Nests, stripping them of whatever was useful.

HOMEWORLD

The Malaach home world, Hhrassahr, was in close orbit (0.2 AU) around the primary star now known as Undim, a K7 V. The star has a mass of 0.54 and a luminosity of 0.5 with only three orbits occupied. Undim has a small M4 D companion in orbit 5 which had two gas giants in orbit around it.

Hhrassahr itself was a small world, 4,411 km in diameter with a thin oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. The gravity

was 0.3g with a hydrography of 32.5% and a surface temperature of 103°C.

Beyond, was the small gas giant now known as Pela with what was then three satellites. The Malaach colonised all of them but only on Shsr was a full Nest established. The Ancients vaporised this moon so that the ring, now known as Amber, in orbit around Pela is all that's left. Beyond that was the gas giant now known as Tafri with its eight moons. In orbit five was Taya, the dwarf companion, with its two small gas giants.

Hhrassahr was an extremely fertile world until the Malaach stripped it bare. It orbited Undim every 44.56 standard days and completed a rotation every 30.15 hours.

GOVERNMENT/CULTURE

Hhrassahr was a balkanised world. Each Nest provided for itself and was in a constant state of war with every other Nest. Only the Grand Guild of Union, which coordinated the racial survival of the Malaach during the Hrhas crisis and once more during the Final war, could be considered to have been a world government.

Most Nests were governed by a representative of each guild within the Nest. Since each science and academic pursuit was represented by their own guild, this council was of ten made up of 500 representatives. The Breeder was also present, but only had priority in matters relating to the welfare of the Queen. Only males were represented of course.

This council was slow to act, so, in matters military, total control was handed over to the Guild of Honour, usually represented by the oldest Breeder Prince. In practice, each guild made decisions for themselves and only came to the Nest Council when a matter was too large for a single guild to decide or where the future of the Nest was concerned.

Each Malaach male had the chance to rise to the top of their guild. At six years old each male was tested and assigned to the Hhairh or Guild that they were best suited to. Although technically a male could refuse, to do so meant utter exile. A fate beyond comprehension to the gregarious Malaach. Upon entering a Hhairh each male was assigned a teacher. This teacher had total control over them, even down to the matter of life and death. A Malaach could only "graduate" once they proved their superiority over their teachers; whether by intellect or assassination. The outcome was the same. Each male amassed prestige by the number of "students" they had under them. Once a male won free he was able to subdue students of his own. Only by having, and successfully subduing more students than the current

guild leader (or by assassination as before) could a male rise to the top. Only the Breeder was exempt from this. His duty was the preservation of the Nest, through creating more Queens and Breeder Princes.

Each Nest was designed differently but most followed a similar pattern. They were generally built underground. Most consisted of many low tunnels, interconnecting with the female nursery areas. Deep below in perpetual darkness was the Queen's dome. This was a large cavern at the heart of the Nest site where the Queen resided throughout her life. Her eggs were raised in the chambers either side and, in the level above, were the male Guild chambers. On the surface was the agricultural fields tended by the females, with male overseers, and the industrial zones, which, by tradition were established a distance away from the main Nests. In the later part of their history, just as some Nests bred special variations into their race so some Nests became individualised in design. The high, termite-like mountain, known as Joker's Tower on Nox was one such, as is the now collapsed spiral caverns on Folly. Each Nest had its own starport and system defences. After the final war, most bases were simply collapsed by implosion. Only the special construction of the Joker's tower resulted in it being left standing as a silent memorial to a race now utterly forgotten.

COMMUNICATION

The Malaach were utterly deaf beyond the ability to sense movement caused by sound. The mates were able to communicate between themselves by telepathy. The females were near mindless creatures that were connected by the ability to feel projected emotions. Each female, when it came of age, was "impressed" by the Queen. This was not a conscious ability, but merely the need to feel secure. The Queen radiated raw emotional energy which the female desired. In order to maintain this link it would do anything. This was the basis of the female hive mind. The females protected the Queen (and through her, the males). While the Queen made sure they also participated in her emotive feasts. The males did develop a written language though it was rarely used. Knowledge was passed on, from generation to generation, by RNA transfer. New concepts could be expounded by telepathy. The written word was used mostly for ceremonial or memorial purposes.

THE MALAACH TODAY

The Malaach established Nests throughout many subsectors but only a few have been discovered. The Malaach Nest/Ancient bases on Besayes and Ambrym in the Medurma station (which was discovered by Dr. Rothery), the Joker's Tower on Nox, a Nest on Ushra which is currently under investigation by the Navy, a Nest on Kaurga which is being investigated by KaurCorp, and the spiral caverns on Folly. Few believe that these Nests were created by a single race. Many remain undiscovered including the remnants of the Malaach homeworld, the Undim belt. Many bases were collapsed or utterly destroyed but there are at least two undisturbed Nests that still exist in the Ushra subsector, on Argiluu and Cimmeria.

Strange as it may seem, the Malaach still exist today. The Noxian Spider is actually descended from a dwarf race of Malaach which survived through the female line only. Centuries of adaptation to an alien environment has resulted in the changes to the physical appearance but it still retains the possibility of a genetic throwback to Queens though there are no males left living to recreate the Malaach race.

Scenario Plots

While it is not recommended that the Malaach be resurrected as a full race there are several possible adventure plots available.

1. Aliens. The PCs find a Malaach base either in deep space or on one of the planets mentioned later. By entering the base they activate the life support and accidentally release either adult females or hatching eggs cryogenically preserved. These are not intelligent and should be played as mindless monsters. For added horror allow one of the frozen adults to be a Queen with her ability to kill by psychic means. A male may also be used but remember to play him as an intelligent yet vicious killer. Under no circumstances should a viable Malaach Nest be allowed to survive undamaged by the Ancient's plague.
2. Artefacts. The PCs find functional Malaach artefacts or many to activate one of the Malaach defences. The Teleporting Stepping disks or an organically grown Tech 18 starship are obvious possibilities.
3. Documents. The PCs discover a Malaach base and find one of their recording tablets. Through deciphering this, and through mummified remains, the PCs discover that the S'mrii or Hamaran may have been artificially enhanced by the Malaach as part of their scheme to breed better sources for PBT. This may seem to be verified by the fact that both races have ancient stories of a "demonic" race which resembled scorpions. Regardless, there really is no proof that the Malaach actually enhanced these two races. It would however explain the Hamaran's unconscious fear of displaying psychic abilities.



Modern Day Noxian Spider

PORT OF CALL: USHRA

USHRA 1016 A625943-G Hi In 9331m M4V

Primary: Sangis. Spectral class M4 V, mass 0.114 sol, luminosity 0.0136. Sangis is a UV Ceti-class flare star. Particulate radiation and electromagnetic pulse effects pose a definite navigation hazard within 8 AU.

Cocchinus: Brown Dwarf. Mean orbital radius 0.41 AU. Period 284 standard days. Diameter 324,640 km (201,630 mi). Mass 3,995 terra (0.012 sol). Density 0.25 standard. Rotation period 6d 22h 3m. Axial inclination 2° 17'45". Luminosity 0.000052 sol.

Ushra: Mean orbital radius 1,613,120 km (1,000,134 mi). Period 3d 14h 37.8m. Diameter 10,201 km (6,376 mi). Mass 0.486 terra. Molten core, density 0.96. Mean surface gravity 0.765g. Rotation period 3d 14h 37.8m (Tidal Lock). Axial inclination zero. Eccentricity 0.02. Energy absorption 0.789

Surface atmospheric pressure 0.14. Composition nitrogen-oxygen mix with silicate/metallic particulate taint. Warning: Combination filter-respirator required. Hydrographic percentage 47.4%. Mean surface temperature -32.8°C. Maximum hotside temperature 135.8°C. Minimum coldside temperature -153°C. Native life - primitive leafed plants and arthropods present. Total system population 9.32 billion.

Satellites: One. EdenHome, orbit 7, 35 km. Co-orbital planetoid cluster, leading Trojan Point (ClusterOne) Co-orbital planetoid cluster, trailing Trojan Point (ClusterTwo) Massive artificial construct. Ushra-Cocchinus libration point.

Primary cities: Orbitals - Ilium Orbital... 232 million, Starport A; Athene Orbital... 120 million, Starport A; Aeneas Orbital... 88 million, Starport A; Diomedes Orbital... 45 million, Starport A; Grav - Pallas Grav... 2.3 million, Starport B; Ceres Grav... 1.2 million, Spaceport F; Europa Grav... 800,000, Spaceport F; Dione Grav... 610,000, Spaceport F; Aurora Grav... 450,000, Spaceport F; Aphrodite Grav... 11,500, Spaceport F (Access Restricted); Surface - Ilium... 1.765 million, Starport A; Athene... 869 million, Starport A; Aeneas... 557 million, Starport A; Diomedes... 434 million, Starport A; Jason... 116 million, Starport B; Sparta... 12 million, Starport A [Authorised Imperial Military Traffic].

World Government is a Representative Democracy, with enfranchisement being broadly on a meritocratic basis. Duke Edward Amekaa Simalr acts as a constitutional monarch. Social Outlook: Progressive, enterprising, unaggressive, neutral, harmonious, aloof. Legal Profile: Personal 3-42255. Technology Profile: GF-GGFGH-GGGG-GG-L

Population Breakdown: 81.2% Humaniti, mixed, Imperial. 9% Humaniti, Vilani. 5%, Aslani. 3.5% S'mrii, 1% Ziadd, 0.3% other minor races.

STARPORT PROCEDURE

Landing Pattern: *"Ushra is a one-way system on a grand scale"*. Imperial Spaceways Regulations lay down strict guidelines on the Jumpspace exit points of vessels travelling to Ushra. The vast majority of civilian vessels are confined to the low-radiation zone in which Ushra orbits, between the bow shock of Cocchinus' magnetosphere and the brown dwarf's outer Van Allen radiation belts.

Navigation outside this radsafe zone by vessels without EMP hardening and Vermont shielding is extremely hazardous.

Incoming traffic is required to enter the system within an ellipsoidal region roughly 100,000 km across (the Primary Civilian Jump Arrival Point. PCJAP), downorbit of Ushra's trailing planetoid group, Cluster Two. Traffic co-ordination is handled by the Imperial Fort Authority Traffic Control centre on EdenHome.

Any deviations from traffic control instructions in crowded cisUshran space are dealt with by Imperial Naval forces.

Traffic intending to head for Ushra itself is usually required to make a stopover of not less than 24 hours at ClusterTwo, which serves as a bulk-freight depot and "marshalling yard". Once Customs and Safety inspections have been passed, a ship is given Stage One Inward Clearance, and permission to proceed to Ushra. Once in Ushran orbit, almost all civilian ship movements are handled by ground computer. Ships docked at orbital berths are enclosed in 'Varmont Cages', active electromagnetic shields to protect against any stray stellar radiation. In the case of ground landings, a window is usually allocated within 30 minutes of the request.

Once landed, ships must await Stage Two Inward Clearance. Ushran Health and Immigration approval is a lengthy and involved procedure and can take up to 12 hours, depending on the documentation held by the traveller (see later).

Starport Facilities: Ushra's port facilities are second to none. All major ports are equipped with tractor/repulsor ship-handling systems, to speed movement from landing pad to berth. All orbital and surface ports except Sparta Down have civilian extrality zones - Sparta is an Imperial military enclave under the administration of the Imperial Naval Officer

Commanding, 188th Fleet Logistics Headquarters.

Ilium Down has 135 berths, with other major ports having a minimum of 60 berths available. Current traffic levels are about 137%, but 35% is “through traffic”, berthing only at the Cluster freeports. Ushra’s ports are capable of constructing and repairing starcraft to Tech 16 standards.

Search and Rescue (SAR) facilities within the radsafe zone are well-organised and efficient. However, vessels in difficulty outside the zone are likely to face hefty bills for the privilege of being rescued. Varmont-shielded SAR shuttles cost. Numerous independent traders have suffered bankruptcy as a result of a spacial misjump into the Ushran system. Better check your insurance for comprehensive SAR coverage friend.

Ilium Down has a 4 star INDISS rating.

Port Costs: Refined Fuel Cr.375/tonne. Unrefined Fuel Cr.35/tonne (add Cr.60/tonne in orbit).

Wilderness refuelling from Ushra’s coldside is not permitted except in emergencies.

Berthing Costs: Cr.260 for the first 4 days. Cr.200 per additional day.

Power to Varmont Cage: Cr.80 per thousand tonnes displacement per day (orbital only, must be paid in addition to berthing costs).

Warehousing Costs: Cr.10/tonne per week. Security Costs: Cr.35 flat tax per week.

Shuttle Costs: Cr.8/tonne of cargo. Cr.40 per passenger.

Transfer visa to grav city: Cr.40 per person. Cr.4 per displacement tonne of craft.

All major Ushran ports and urban areas are connected by subterranean hypergrav links; gravitic vehicles which travel at hypersonic speeds in evacuated tunnels. A typical 1000km journey costs Cr.50, and takes around 12 minutes.

SYSTEM DATA

* Primary Sangis MW UV-Ceti flare star
0 Segre F1 10363-G N Research. Interdicted.

* 1 Cocchinus Brown Dwarf
2 Circler HR00100-G Research
5 Motandis H4C2000-0
8 ClusterOne A000721-G N Mining.
8 Ushra A625943-G N Hi Ni Subsector Capital.
7 EdenHome FS00364-G N
8 ClusterTwo F000622-G N Mining.

2 Empty Orbit .

3 Empty Orbit

4 Byzantium Y230000-0

5 Carthage Large Gas Giant

20 Hannibal F6A4454-G Research. Mining.

6 Alexandria Y000000-0

7 Rome Small Gas Giant

Regulations - The Ushran government has imposed comprehensive restrictions on the import of live plant and animal specimens, to protect their newly

terraformed regions from contamination. Veterinary clearance papers should be obtained from the Ushran Consulate at the port of departure. Travellers are not permitted to bring their own personal communicators for use on Ushra, as all the microwave frequencies which are able to penetrate Cocchinus’ broad-spectrum roar are monopolised by the Imperial Navy. Efficient personal beamcast communicators are available locally.

Currency - Ushra uses the Imperial Credit. No limits are set for import or export.

Health - ALL travellers to Ushra are required by planetary law to undergo a genetic examination, usually in the form of a simple blood test. The traveller then has the option of carrying the results of this test as a GenomeCode Card (GCC), a holographic card carrying the subject’s entire genetic code, or as implanted IStrips (see later). Presentation of a GCC from a previous visit, or a valid Idex will speed the process, but does not eliminate the need for the test.

Languages - All Ushrans are fluent in Galanglic. Minority Languages include Vilani, NeoTrokh, Sfuizia (S’mrii), and Terran German, Greek and Spanish.

The CoRing (CoOrbital Ring Complex). A massive artificial structure occupying the gravitational libration point between Ushra and Cocchinus, the CoRing is a hoop approximately 1,800 kilometres in diameter. The CoRing’s perimeter is clustered with solar arrays and frequency up-convertor systems, which turn the brown dwarf’s feeble infra-red emission into visible light. Electrical energy and visible light are then beamed to Ushra’s populated areas to supply its agricultural and industrial needs. From many points on the world’s surface, the CoRing appears as a “diamond ring” superimposed on Cocchinus’ ruddy face.

A VISITOR’S GUIDE TO USHRA

Ecology - Ushra is a world of fire and ice. Tidally locked to the superjovian gas giant Cocchinus, Ushra receives sufficient infrared radiation to create a narrow zone of habitable temperatures between about 20° and -100° of the terminator. Water boils at relatively low temperatures under the planet’s tenuous atmosphere, giving rise to the Mare Fervens or “Seltzer Sea”. Intense “slick storms”, where moisture nucleates around dust

< SEARCH > SYSTEM INFORMATION ...

Segre: A research facility administered by the Imperial Navy Technical Services Branch, and strictly off-limits to civilian traffic. Massive co-orbital stellar arrays supply the installation’s power needs, but the nature of Segre’s research has not been made public.

> Supplemental: INDISS/MST 146-1115 USHRA: Dr. Kaskia I’mrui of the UIIAT Stellar Neutrino Research Bureau has protested to the Sector Admiralty regarding the “intense, broadband neutrino radiation” being produced by the Segre installation, which he says is interfering with his research.

particles, and rains out as a muddy slurry, are a frequent occurrence in the temperate zones.

It is theorised from palaeontological data that Ushra was once a pleasant, habitable world with liquid oceans covering much of its surface. By some 10 million years ago, however, the world was already well on its way to senescence. Its rotation had slowed almost to the point of tidal locking. It was at this time that a rogue planetoid is believed to have entered the Cocchinus system from interstellar space. It was broken up by the tidal forces from the brown dwarf, and gigatons of metallic debris rained down on Ushra's surface. Much of the world's atmosphere was blown into space, and the upper layers of the crust were pulverised. Ushra was decimated as a haven for life, but left with truly immense reserves of valuable metals.

Population - The majority of the population are Solomani of North American and European extraction - Caucasian/Hispanic is the most common racial types. Travellers to Ushra note the striking fact that there are no human natives who can strictly be described as ugly - many of them share the same bland, smooth-skinned good looks. This is a direct consequence of the genetic policies described later.

Culture - At various points in Ushra's history, its primary star Sangis has undergone episodes of intense activity, pushing back Cocchinus's magnetospheric bowshock to within Ushra's orbit and bathing the mainworld with intense doses of particulate radiation. Other cultures would burrow deep under, to escape this hazard, but the Ushrans approached it in an entirely different manner. Shortly before the onset of the Long Night, they made a racial decision to use genetic engineering to give them greater radiation resistance. This meant that subsequent generations would have to be produced in vitro, in shielded artificial wombs, where the necessary changes could be carried out with maximum precision. All citizens were sterilised upon reaching adulthood. When they were judged fit to take care of children, each partner would provide a cell sample. The genetic material would be combined and any errors corrected using molecular machines. The result was a population which was totally free of genetic disease and which steadily became more resistant to radiation.

Ushrans frequently need to have their DNA checked, a "baseline" genetic profile at birth, to monitor for any

Radiation Hazard

Particulate radiation poses a hazard on the surface of Ushra. Unprotected individuals will be exposed to (D6 x 5) units per day (See Travellers' Digest #15).

The accumulated radiation dose would generally be fatal within a month. Varmont--shielded habitats reduce the dosage to (D6 x 0.1) units per year.

progressive damage. To speed this, all citizens must carry a GenomeCode Card, which carries a holographic encoding of their entire genome.

Workers in hazardous areas, such as outside the city bubble-habs, or in Ushran orbit, bear two implanted holographic strips, or IStrips, one along each cheekbone. The left encodes the subject's baseline genome, while the right is a radiation detector, which holds a complete record of all radiation exposure over the last 30 standard days.

Psychology - Ushrans are classical philanthropists, deeply interested in improving the living conditions of their fellow sophonts. The major interstellar relief agency Medicins Sans Frontieres is based on Ushra, and gains much of its funding from the population. Ushran efforts have brought greater freedom and democracy to many surrounding systems. This would be all well and good were it not for their attitude towards genetic purity. To put it bluntly, the Ushrans are bigots. They have a deep-rooted fear of people with such horrifying genetic disorders as red/green colour blindness, myopia (short sight) or protruding ears. This is encapsulated in the Ushran dialect word for foreigners - 'glitches' - people who are somehow damaged. Travellers are not likely to encounter any problems in the major urban areas where offworlders are common. In outlying areas, such as the Rimwall district of Jason however, it is not unknown for traders to refuse to serve people with visible "defects".

Government - The Third Democratic Republic of Ushra is a representative democracy, in which the Duke of Ushra is a constitutional monarch. Enfranchisement is decided broadly on a meritocratic basis - it is usually necessary for a citizen to pass an examination in history and political science before being allowed to vote. At the last Assembly elections in 1114, the enfranchisement rate was about 77%.

The lower house, or Republican Assembly (814 seats) is elected on a "first past the post" basis, and is the primary legislative body. The upper house, or Republican Council (332 seats) is elected by proportional representation and has limited powers of veto to control the extremes of the Assembly.

The government (the executive body) is drawn from the party which has the greatest number of seats in either house. The Chief Executive (the senior minister) must come from the Assembly. The monarch is a mere rubber stamp for the legislature, and has no effect on it. The judiciary consists of professionals outside the normal law-making procedure - Ushra has the system of common law, which means that Judicial judgements are in fact law, and are referred to as case law.

The two primary political parties on Ushra are the Free Democrats and the Commerce Party. The Free Democrats advocate the use of trading incentives and tax breaks to encourage the development of democracy and free market economics in surrounding systems. The Commerce Party calls for the advantages of a "stable

economy” - meaning one divided between a small number of large corporations.

Unsurprisingly, there are a number of small splinter, or extremist parties on the Ushran scene. The Concordance of Purity and Reason has come alarmingly close to holding the balance of power in the Republican Assembly in recent years. Few days pass in the Assembly without a verbal (and sometimes physical) free-for-all between the representatives of the Anshulaam Ushrani (Party of Ushran Unity) and the New Earth Republicans. The NER have been accused of being the political wing of the Red Eagles, infamous Solomani terrorist group.

POINTS OF INTEREST ON USHRA

The Cities of Ushra:

The following is extracted from “*An Icer’s Guide to Dagudashaag*”, by Iyn Sallis Makila-Selwyn-Tobermory, Medurma, 1112.

“Ushra - it’s a nice place to visit, but I sure as hell wouldn’t want to live there. Turns out the government gives the people two choices - you can live underground or live on the surface and be charged for the privilege. The ol’ Revenue Service cops your creds to run the grids round each habdome which stop us grilling a delicate shade of purple. Still, I’m not sure why they bother - the “sunlight” they get from that orbital hulahoop ain’t much different from the colour of your average glowtube. Go outside the inhibited areas, and can’t hardly see your hand in front of your face without IR specs. Welcome to sunny Ushra!

“Still, it’s pretty in places. They’ve gone to a lot of trouble to bubble terraform large sections, if you like green, growing stuff. Check that its public access first - Naasirka and Arkayne corpsuits have bought a lot of it. They seem to like nothing better than sitting cross-legged in the middle of a wood in a kilocred genusilk shift, thinking aesthetic (or is that ascetic?) thoughts. Takes all sorts.

“There real people on Ushra. You’ll find them on the margins of the main habdome areas - they’re the ones who couldn’t hack it with the corps. They build their own domes, see, out of plazfoam, then tap the city power to run their compressors and antirad grids. Take guts ‘cause any day the could be washed away by those mega flash-floods they have, or raided by the feds. You want some cheap tech, some Alikasch muscle, or just want some action - that’s where you go. There’s a great bar on the Diomedes Margin, called the Bremsstrahlung, gets a lot of heavy action out of Sparta. Gets my Official Recommendation!

“Another thing - watch where you’re going in the corp suburbs. Couple of years back. I had a dispute with a Vargr over his ancestry, and got a broken nose for my trouble. Turned out that the ships quack was a Vargie as well, so it never got properly set. I kinda like it now - its me. I’m no grossout, but some of these Ushran suits

were looking at me like I was munching boviurger in the middle of a veggies’ convention. Gives me the creeps ...”

New Galveston

Ushra exports considerable quantities of terraforming equipment to the rest of the imperial Core. In 976, a consortium Led by the TerraTech corporation decided to construct a showpiece on Ushra, to demonstrate how profoundly the world’s hostile environment could be transformed. Twenty-five square kilometres of arid wasteland south of Ilium City were covered with a huge pressurised bubble. By the Imperial Millenium, the project was complete - an accurate reconstruction of the City of Galveston, circa 2150, Terran Dating, complete with, eight square kilometres of the Gulf of Mexico. New Galveston is now an exclusive suburb for the corporate elite of Ushra and is home to the reknowned Drexler-Randall Museum of Solomani Heritage.

Aphrodite Grav

Oldest of the roving gravitic cities of Ushra, Icarus Grav came to the end of its active life as a mineral dredging , and refining centre in 1047, and was purchased by a consortium headed by MacKhan Entertainments LIC. Renamed Aphrodite Grav and outfitted as a “multipurpose Leisure complex”, the city has become a byword for debauchery and excess surpassed only by ‘*The Gilded Lily*’ at Nimluin/Bolivar. The city has been forced to retreat to Ushran orbit on a number of occasions when the legality of its operations have been in doubt - most recently during the re-examination of the Kanumaar-Bruning legislation in 1115.

Sociologists have written numerous papers on the cathartic value of Aphrodite Grav to a “repressed and hidebound” society such as Ushra’s.

Ectogenesis Centres

The Ushran policy of artificial reproduction has required the construction of huge under, centres where embryos have their DNS checked and corrected and arc nurtured in artificial wombs for the full term of their gestation. The Venerable Clifford Markham, prelate of the Church of the Brethren and famous explorer, first visited in Ectogenesis Centre in -522. The book he wrote about the experience ‘*Huxley’s World*’, triggered a full-scale war between the Ushran Empire and the Medurma Pact. The centres are now generally off-limits to offworlders.

Bootstrapping

All immigrants to Ushra must correspond to the world’s standards of genetic health. This involves treatment with a tailored retrovirus which corrects minor genetic disorders, a process called bootstrapping. The Ushran government finances this through an “investment” of Cr.10,000 in non-redeemable bonds, which each prospective immigrant must make.

University of Ushra Institute of Advanced Technology

The Free University of Ushra at Athene is one of the foremost seats of advanced learning in the Third Imperium.

Founded as the Republican Military Scientific Academy in -1440 the University has since grown to number some 40,000 permanent teaching staff and 200,000 students. The university is acknowledged as a centre of excellence in many subjects, both arts and sciences, but is particularly well known for its historical/sophontological studies and its research in physical

UIIAT, a specialist science and engineering research centre was formed in 741 with the aid of generous funding from Arkayne, Naasirka and the Imperial Naval Technical Services Branch. Speculation is rife about the nature of new weapons systems being developed within the walls of the institute.



science and engineering. One of the greatest claims to fame of the Engineering Faculty is its formation of OrbiTower Corporation, the design consultancy which drew up the plans for Dagudashaag's first beanstalk on GateWay/Argi.

The Gantz Fields

For centuries, the mineral resources of Ushra have been tapped in two ways - by conventional mining and by gravitic dredging of the metal-rich sands of the hotside deserts. In 1098, Drexen Corporation introduced a radically new method. Nanomachines are sprayed on an

area of desert, and begin to bind the sand particles together in a silicone gel. The nanos thin begin to spin monocrystalline fibres of the desired metal, giving the effect of an area of silvery grass. The fibres can be "harvested" by robots without affecting the operation of the nanos.

The method is still experimental, but companies such as ICE arc viewing it with concern. The technique has not been without its problems - the fibres tend to break during storms, forming a windblown chaff or "Gantz Fog" which blocks sensors.

Mirmegamna - The Fourth City

Eplaar seni Mirmegamna kediish, zau gin Kansui irgim imaa uur urna kauur. I siirkha nagap ush aashepmashler ukir shagu, kamne, aki laam uni gagii, kheshi dud garensud igi. Irbu agdar mash ishim in...

"Their minions returned to Mirmegamna, and they proclaimed unto Leader Kansui that their wrath(?) was righteous. Lo, and in a blanket of not-stars(?) was the city enfolded, and left became right, and before became behind, bringing much terror and death. Melted and twisted were the bodies of those who..."

Translation of Old High Vilani text found on a fragment of in optical disk in Chi Palappa Desert, date d 170 c.-7,100. From a recent paper by Prof. Andreaas Andersdorp, Dept. of Palaeolinguistics, University of Ushra.

The mystery of Chi Fourth City of Mirmegamna must rank as one of the most compelling of Dagudashaag's many legends. Scholars are still undecided as to the city's fate or even whether it existed at all. Prior to the original colonisation of Ushra by the Vilani at about -7,550, the bureau responsible for this area of space, Naasirka, drew up detailed plans of the colony sites. These included four large urban settlements on the planet's hotside called Sharlak, Shaaukdur, Kishur and Mirmegamna. The first three have survived the ravages of time and the elements extremely well: Shaaukdur continues to be occupied to the present day. Of Mirmegamna there is no trace whatsoever.

The reason for this is unknown. As far as can be gathered from Vilani colonial record, some kind of interregnum occurred between -7,200 and -7,150, when Ushra's civilisation was shattered and access from outsystem rendered impossible. The next reliable records from -7,030 make no mention of the city of Mirmegamna; a city with a projected population of two million people has disappeared.

The current favoured theory involves an episode of bombardment by asteroids straying from the Cluster zones. Indeed, several impact craters have been found which date to approximately the right time, and the episode has become known as the Mirmegamna Late Bombardment Phase. However, no fresh impact craters match the position of the city according to Vilani maps. The position corresponds instead to the flat and oddly

fractured area of terrain in what is now the Palappa Desert, close to the border of the Naval Interdiction Zone surrounding the modern city of Sparta. No anomalies are evident, but various suggestible individuals have reported strange sensations when standing in the area.

Dr. Nathaniel Bar-David of UIIAT has performed a finite-element analysis of the geological strata in the area and suggests that the fracture pattern is consistent with a "massive uplifting force, imposed from vertically above". Dr. Bar-David is an engineer and his results have been ridiculed by the geological establishment. Other, more conservative scholars subscribe to the theory that Naasirka suffered a funding crisis during the colonisation of Ushra, and that Mirmegamna was never built. The theory is not inconsistent with the documentary evidence.

HISTORY

There is no evidence that the Ushran system was ever settled by the Ancients. Many have commented on the prevalence of asteroidal debris in the system, but this seems to be entirely natural, a result of the presence of the brown dwarf Cocchinus.

Ushra was first visited by a Vilani survey vessel in -9,022, which noted the world's mineral riches, but nearly perished as a result of an electromagnetic pulse from Sangis, the primary star. The system was ignored until Naasirka took an interest in developing the area in -7,600.

It took almost a century of charting the system's magnetosphere ebbs and flows with automated satellites before Naasirka felt safe in beginning colonisation efforts. The infant colony was almost snuffed out in -7,200. An asteroidal bombardment over at least 20 years shattered links between the settlements and prevented ships from landing safely. However, the damage was repaired, and the colony continued to grow, its capital at Shaaukdur. The world became regional capital of the Vilani province of Dagudashaag, until that honour passed to Khandi/Khandi in -3,986.

The arrival of the Solomani in -2,075 was somewhat more peaceful than at Medurma. The Terrans simply ignored the Vilani, rather than massacring them outright. The Republic of Ushra was founded, with its capital at Ilium. A major colonisation programme led by American and European corporations was commenced and the world's population topped forty million by -1,870. With the progressive collapse of the Rule of Man government, Ushra and Argiluu formed a mutual defence association in -1,760. Budget restrictions had meant that the Solomani could not duplicate the massive gravitic structures of Vilani cities, relying instead on pressurised domes protected from radiation by active electromagnetic shields. The compromise started to tell - birth defects and carcinomas started to spread among the population. The crisis came to a head

with a major stellar flare in -1,604, which inflicted radiation sickness on fully 5% of the population. The Solomani applied their formidable biological knowledge, and arrived at a radical solution - cytogenetic reproduction. The move was controversial and it took a change of government before the measures could be applied. The Second Ushran of Purity -Republic was established in -1,423.

The tireless efforts of the Republican Academy had managed to keep a handful of Jump-capable vessels operational through the depths of the Interregnum. The key to resumed ship construction was provided by the Aslan who arrived in -960.

In return the Republic ceded them the system of Austin (now Lauyesyeh), one parsec to coreward on the Dagudashaag Main. Republican President-for-Life Daniel Simalr was sufficiently sure of his popular standing, that in -741 he declared the establishment of the Ushran Empire, and launched on an aggressive policy of expansionism. At its height, the Empire stretched from Shukain/Old Suns to Bradley/Pact, from Zeda/ Zeda to Rukhigu/Khandi - the largest interregnum state in Dagudashaag.

Two centuries later, the Ushrans and the Medurmans, who had common ancestors, were at war. The Medurmans were repulsed by Ushran genetic policies: particularly by their imposition on worlds that they laid claim to: Dauni/Khandi and Dehkaim/Khandi. The war was fierce and damaging. The Pact gaining control of Bradley, Campbell and Dauni. Border clashes continued for many years after.

In common with other minor states, the Empire was in decline by 20, under economic pressure from the Third Imperium, and capitulated in 83. Ushra's economy began to grow rapidly once more, with the improved trading links possible under Imperial rule, and was designated as the subsector capital of District 34 in 133, the Simalr family being elevated to the Duchy. Ushran corporations such as Arkayne stretched their influence across the entire sector and beyond.

The city of Ilium was devastated by the rebel forces of "Emperor" Karl I in 614, during the First Civil War. His subsequent defeat by Julianne Viisarikaa did much to bind Medurma and Ushra together.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

Players stop reading here!

The official history is wrong. There is a Malaach hive site in a remote pass in the Thuringen Mountains, on the interdiction perimeter of Sparta. The Purity Republic built a PD battery virtually on top of the site, but it was only discovered in 1074 by Imperial Naval personnel. The search team at first did not report the discovery to their superiors, instead plundering as many artifacts as they could to sell on the black market in Diomedes. The Navy has now sealed off the site, but a trickle of strange

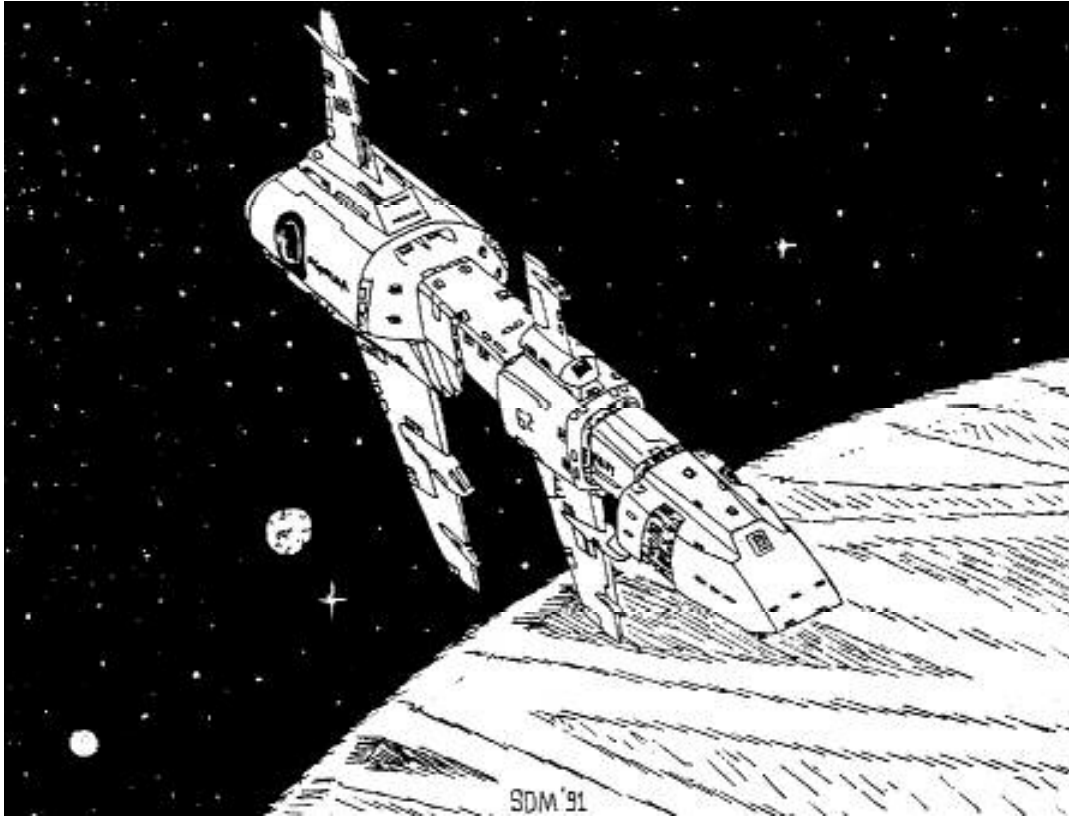
objects still reaches artifact collectors. The site appears to have been a covert base, protected by densitometer nullification, because the vast complex of hive tunnels does not match the gravimetric data.

The Imperial Navy never informed the planetary government of the base's existence. The files were only released on the personal order of Admiral McCafferty, when Ushran forces joined the Free Medurman Federation.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Stuart Machin for information on Ushra's government structure.

ALEXANDER BRAYDEN



“Alexander Brayden” class STRIKE CRUISER

Craft ID: Strike Cruiser, Type CS, TL 16, MCr.36,206.95 (less small craft)

Hull: 30,000/90,000, Disp=40,000, Config=1SL, Armour=55G, Unloaded=618,748 tons, Loaded=652,195 tons

Power: 84 12/ 16824 Fusion =2242530Mw. Total Duration=22/66 Jump Duration=8/24 Cruise Duration=12.5/37.5 (2G, no weapons or agility) Combat Duration= 1.5/4.5

Loco: 9180/18360, Maneuver=6 2700/5100, Jump=4, NOE=200, Cruise=750, Top=1000, Agility=6

Commo: Meson-System-16x4, Radio-System-16x30, Laser-System-16x30, Maser-System-16x30

Sensors: EMM package, Densitometer (25km)x3, Neutrino (1Kw)x3, EMS-A-FarOrbit-16x3, EMS-P-Interstellar-16x3, EMS-J-FarOrbit-16x3;

ActObjScan=Rout, ActObjPin=Rout, PasObjScan=Rout, PasObjPin=Rout, PasEngScan=Simp, PasEngPin=Rout; Stealth Paint, Active Stealth and Densitometer Nullification

Offence: MesonG=NBx, ParticleA=0A0, Missile=xB0, FusionG=x06, BLaser=xx8 batt S2 2 15 10 12 bear S2 2 13 9 10

Defence: Def DM=+15, NucDamper=Ax2, MesonScreen=Ax2, BlackGlobe=7 x2, Repulsor=xAx Sand=xx9 batt 5 9 bear 4 8

Control: Computer=10/fibx6, Panel=Holdynamic link x24, Special=Large Holodisplay x24, Auxiliary Bridge, Environ=Basic Env, Basic ls, Extend ls, Grav plates,

Inertial compensators, 40 airlocks.

Accom: Crew=335, 8x40 (Bridge=15, Engineer=55, Guner=56, Flight=72, Ship Troop=40, Command=10, Stewards=13, Frozen Watch=30, Medical=4) High Psg=20, Low berth=40, small stateroom=255, stateroom=60, Subcraft=100-ton craft x2, 50-ton craft x1, 20-ton craft x20

Other: Cargo=744 tons (10,038 kl), Fuel=13,369 tons (190979 kl), Fuel scoops. Fuel Purification Plant (2-3 hrs), Magazine=108,000 missiles (144 battery rounds), Batterv round=750 missiles, ObjSize=Large, EMlevel=Faint (includes stealth paint), Electronic Circuit Protection.

Spinal MesonGun=N, 100-ton MesonGun Bay=2, 100-ton ParticleA bay=2, 100-ton Missile Bay=15, 100-ton Repulsor Bay=5, Triple BLaser Turret=60, Triple Sand Turret=60, Double FusionG Turret=20

The Alexander Brayden is the largest TL16 warship built by the Ushra shipyards and is currently the largest TL16 warship in Dagudashaag. The vessel is designed to stand in the line of battle, although its fighter complement provides the vessel, with useful scouts. The class is named after holders of 2 or more SHEs. The vessel was refitted soon after completion with the ‘Helm of Athena’ stealth technology that had recently been sent by courier from Medurma/Pact. Two other vessels have been built and two more arc in build. At the moment with the experience gained with this class a class of 100,000 ton Battle Cruisers arc in the stage of being

built. These will have Meson U spinal mounts and will utilise the new gravitic effectors bays that have been developed by Arkayne. This class will be known as the "Ducal"-class, with the first vessel being called Julianne Viisarikaa, the sector duchess from the Civil War period. This was a change from the original ship and class name, Cleon Zhunastu. This change arose due to anti-Imperial public opinion in the early days of 1118. For details on stealth technology, see "Helm Of Athena" In SignalGK 2.

Designed by Stuart Machin (from an original concept by Duncan Law-Green)

INDISS

INDISS NEWS REPORT - HELLAS/ USHRA 243-111?

The Raphael Technology LIC research station on Hellas was reported to have been totally destroyed by person or persons unknown. The research station had been engaged in medical studies surrounding Klarson's Syndrome, a recently discovered genetic problem which is responsible for violent and frequently fatal reaction to most common forms of Anagathics. Klarson's Syndrome was first noticed in the Scanian race.

However, in recent years, the number of cases of Klarson's syndrome found in other human races has seen a marked increase. Early last year, Raphael Technology LIC announced a test which seemed to discover 75% of potential sufferers before treatment began.

A spokesperson for RT said that it was clear that Klarson's Syndrome was on the increase but that the last report from the station had shown that the station had made a new breakthrough in not only identifying sufferers but also in the successful treatment of the disease itself.

When questioned as to who would want to stop such research, the spokesperson refused to comment though other than to state that it was strange that "..with a cure in the pipeline, that the only research station currently studying the phenomenon should suddenly be destroyed."

>> 174-1115 USHRA/USHRA: (INDISS/MST)

Mana Gantz, daughter of Dr. Julian Gantz, a director of Drexen LIC, reported missing today. Reward of Cr.75,000 posted for information leading to her return.

TRACERS

1. SETUP

The PC's were in deep trouble. Money was running short and there was, no available cargo on planet. Their Broker didn't hold out much hope of finding them a viable cargo before the Fillaslopu, harvest which was two weeks away. In the meantime their Ship sat in dock, empty and ate into their reserves with berthing charges. They headed back to the Starman's Mission on Heartbreak Row with the devout intention of an all out attempt to get blind drunk with what little spare credit they had. As they entered the dim interior of the old run down hostel they noticed the desk clerk call them over. His voice wheezed out of his artificial voice box. "Pretty lady wa' lookin' for youse. She in bar awaitin'. Youse can miss her, onl' brunette on planet near stuff..."

At the bar sat a tall, dark haired woman, about 25 years old, slim and extremely sophisticated. She moved like a cat as she turned towards them and introduced herself. "My name is Sharik Maihagu. I've heard on the grapevine that you have some, shall we say, unusual talents. True?" The PCs grin. "I want you to trace my father... I lost track of him twenty years ago. I'm willing to pay and well..."

2. THE JOB

If the group agrees to help, Sharik will agree to pay all reasonable expenses and offers a Cr. 250,000 reward for finding her father. If pressed, she will agree to about Cr. 3,000 each if the PCs ask for an advance. Once the money is finalised she will explain that her father, Hammon Maihagu, ran out on her mother when she was very young but that she holds no animosity towards him. She's due to get married in a months time and would like to trace him so that he could be at her wedding. The trail is not totally cold as her father IDEX-registered and she was able to trace him through the Brethren here to Hellas. Unfortunately he vanished two weeks ago just before she arrived. There was no way he could have known she was trying to find him so there had to be another possibly sinister reason for his sudden disappearance. She will supply the following

"Sharik Maihagu"

UPP 687A78, Age 30, 3 Terms, Liferforce 21.

Gun Cbt 3, Hand Cbt 1, Streetwise 1, Interrogation 1, Vehicle 1, Vice 2.

Homeworld: A Starport, large size, dense atmos, mod pop, wet world, mod law, avg stellar.



information:

Name: Hammon Maihagu, Age: 67, DoB: 122-1051, Born: Argiluu (1317), Profession: Computer Cryptologist, Place of Work: Elsland Advanced Security, IDEX No: A295BH-45E5

If asked about her father's current address Sharik will be extremely vague but she will state that she will try and find that out. She will also pass over a recent holocube but will appear distressed if asked as to how she obtained it.

To try and find out more information:

Difficult, Carousing, Interrogation, Int, (Confrontation, Uncertain)

Referee: Ms. Maihagu is extremely tight-lipped. She will claim to have no more information but, on an exceptional success, will state that she believes her "father" has recently remarried.

REFEREE'S SYNOPSIS

"Hammon Maihagu" is an ex-deck jockey (Information Broker) who found himself rather unwillingly, working for the Lau Yancy under the Ushran Crime Lord, Francis Harnwall. He ran, but not before grabbing computer files on Harnwall's drug distribution network. He was picked up by Ushran Internal Security and in order to prevent being sent to jail, he became a witness against Harnwall. Harnwall was sent down for twenty years but "Maihagu" was still a prime target for Yancy enforcers. The Ushran Witness Relocation Department (WRF) supplied him with a false IDEX and gave him a new start on Hellas.

Then a judge overturned Harnwall's conviction on a technicality and released him. His first act as a freed man was to order the slow destruction of the man who wrecked his drug empire. He managed to bribe a WRI official to reveal the deck jockey's new identity and

"Hammon Maihagu"

UPP 434563, Age 67, 6 Terms, Liferforce 11

Electronics 1, Hand Cbt 1, Computer 3, Disguise 2, Comms 2, Technical 2, Streetwise 1. Homeworld: A Starport, small size, thin atmos, low pop, wet world, low law, early stellar.



sent his top assassin (Ms. "Maihagu") after him. Thankfully for Hammon, he discovered that a Ms. Maihagu was booked on an incoming flight and ran. The WRI had set up two more identities for him in case of such an emergency. Unfortunately he was unable to leave a message for his new girlfriend before he left. Ms. "Maihagu" is aware that her face is well known to law enforcement officials and has decided to use the PCs as a cover.

If the PCs run...

If the PCs decide to falsify the information or run out with the expenses money, nothing will appear to happen for a few weeks. But, at their next port of call each of the PCs will get the distinct impression that they are being followed although all attempts to trap the follower will prove useless. Then, one night down a dark alley, a gang of several Yancy enforcers (a minimum of two per PC) will jump them and attempt to injure them permanently but will try not to kill them under any circumstances.

The attackers will flee rather than shoot them outright but this must never be stated only hinted at. If the assailants are captured and questioned, they will be unable to tell the PCs why they are being hunted.

To gain information from the Enforcers:

Difficult, Interrogation, End, Int (Confrontation, Uncertain)

Referee: Only the suspect can use End & Int as a DM. Up to 3 interrogators may participate at any one time. They may combine their skill as a +DM but only to a maximum limit of 8. If the task succeeds the suspect must throw on the Mishap Table. Those performing the interrogation select how much dice the suspect must roll (up to 3D). The damage is applied equally to Int and End.

Interrogation will reveal that the thugs know nothing except to state that a major power in the Yancy, a Francis Harnwall, ordered the attack. The orders were to hurt them but not "bless" them with a quick release. Yancy talk for prolonged torture. Thereafter, the characters will be followed by Yancy hitmen who are under strict orders to cripple but not kill. The only way to get rid permanently of the hunters will be to personally confront Harnwall at the Yancy Citadel, KizMashumba, Argiluu.

3. THE HUNT

Should the PCs decide to try and find Hammon Maihagu, there are several possible starting points. They have his business address, his IDEX number and date of birth and a recent holocube.

Referee's Note:

To gain useful information or to find out where to go next:

Routine, Carousing, Skill (Confrontation, Uncertain)

Referee: The unnamed skill is one appropriate to the conversation or setting (suggestions are: Legal,

Streetwise, Admin, Leader). The referee should set up a rather long time increment for this task. It takes a lot of conversation to gain useful information. To deliberately pump for information increase the task difficulty.

Insist on the PCs rolling to determine after each failure. Difficult, End + Int

CREDIT CHECK

A check on his credit rating (at any bank) will reveal only that he is a moderately wealthy man with a good credit history. If they took over the clerk's shoulder at the screen as he calls up the information they will learn that his last transaction occurred exactly two weeks ago. No further information can be obtained in this manner.

REPORTED MISSING

If the characters decide to report Hammon Maihagu's disappearance to the local police they will have to fill out several, lengthy forms.

At the end of which they will be informed by the Desk Officer that although a report will be circulated, because there is no suspicion of foul play and Mr. Maihagu is an adult in full control of his faculties that no other action can be taken. He will then take the forms over to the computer and pass them over to another officer who will inform them that Mr. Maihagu has not been arrested or hospitalised but beyond that she can give no information as his IDEX is tagged as Extremely Confidential. She will remark that Maihagu must be an extremely important person to rate that.

ELSLAND ADVANCED SECURITY

EAS is situated in a large business park on the outskirts of the city. Guards are everywhere the alarmed metal grills over all the windows it is obvious that the site is extremely secure. To the side of the building are a pair of large waste disposal, skips. One contains shredded paper only, the other, marked "Non-Confidential" is filled with paper for recycling. If the PCs search the skip they will discover a couple of papers that should have been shredded. The papers are: a memo which shows the personnel manager's name is Tara Shagami and an old interview card that will allow up to three of them access to the personnel manager's office.

Should they go straight to the front desk without the card the receptionist will refuse to let them see anyone unless they have an appointment. If they try to sneak past him, security guards armed with body pistols will intervene. If they ask for an appointment to speak to someone, the receptionist will offer them an appointment for next week at the earliest. Play him as a "more than my job's worth" type, too scared to be willing to accept a bribe. The PCs will need to use subterfuge in order to gain any information. The receptionist is extremely tight tipped and will only give information if he believes that it was for Hammon's own good.

The referee should award the PCs with a visit to Hammon's office if they successfully convince the receptionist. Some successful ploys include indicating that it is in Hammon's financial interest that he be found quickly, or that there is medical reason why he must be tracked down. Attempts to convey the idea that they successful, but any attempt to actually claim to be police will result in security being called.

If they gain the receptionist's confidence he will tell them that Hammon was rarely at work as he was on secondment to the Ushran Security Council and had been for the last six months. He generally only came into the office about once a month and the rest of the time he accessed the equipment from home. He can tell them that Hammon lived at 156 East Level 5 with his wife, Angelina. If asked, he will state that Hammon's been working for them for several years but only recently moved to this particular office. He will also tell them that Hammon was a widower who recently remarried. He will also confide that Hammon is often to be seen drinking at the Ramases Club on East level 3.

If they manage to get to visit his office they will find an immaculate office, obviously little used. If they manage to distract the receptionist long enough to do a quick search they will find an alphanumeric list taped under the desk drawer, on the desk is a small holocube of a beautiful women in her late thirties and an empty envelope with StarFlight Travel emblazoned on the corner.

To identify the list as Idex numbers:

Routine, Int, Admin 1 min (Unskilled OK, uncertain)

Referee: Success means that the PC's recognise the list as a series of unrelated Idex codes. Exceptional Success will result in the PC's realising that most people use their Idex codes as Communit numbers.

D185HG-23K8, S934JD-36V6, L099HG-18L5,
L765DR-82D5, K439GL-68J1, Q834VC-50S2,
M273FX-73L2, G916FD-29D1, G792SX-96H9,
A931WV-32I6.

If they obtained and used the appointment card (the receptionist will not check the date) to gain access to Ms. Shagami, the personnel manager, they will again have gain her confidence. Attempts pretend to be police or private detectives this time will result in them being immediately shown the door. If they succeed Ms. Shagami will pull out Hammon's employment reveal the following information.

Hammon was apparently born and educated on Hellas. He married 36 years ago and his wife died about three years ago. No children. He remarried last year to an Angelina Greenaway, 38 and lives at 156 East Level 5. He was hired by their head-office three years ago but due to an apparent clerical error, she only has records dating back to last year when he was moved to this, office while working on secondment for a Government Department, she is unwilling to state which. He is in perfect health.

The file does contain a copy of his gene code, there is

also a copy of his infrared body map as used by the Centre's security if the PCs think to steal it.

STARPORT

If the PCs visit the starport with Hammon's holocube they will discover that staff don't really look it their passengers. None of them will recognise the cube. A computer check on his Idex will reveal that not only hasn't Hammon left the planet in the last few weeks, he has never been off-planet in his life. If they think to check out the tramps and hawkers that infest the starport they will eventually find a Hari Krishna disciple who was proselytising in the Main passenger lounge on Terminal 7 two weeks ago. If the PCs buy a copy of his religious mem-clips, he will remember someone resembling the picture in that terminal that day. A check on ship's leaving that particular day will reveal only four passengers carrying ships departed with male passengers:

1. The Van De Greistock, a subsidised merchant heading for Nox.
2. The Kunta Bunduki, a 1,000 tonne passenger ship heading via Nox to Ushra.
3. The Fa Tsan, a free trader heading for Kikaduum via Adele.
4. The Lady Lovecraft, a subsidised merchant heading to Nafud.

TRAVEL AGENTS

If the PCs decide to check out the travel agents (or if they discovered the envelope in his office) they will eventually discover that there is no sign that he has left the planet (an exceptional roll will reveal that he has never been off-planet in his life) but that he had booked tickets with StarFLight Travel to visit Nox next year. If the characters have a copy of his gene code taken from his medical files they can cross-match it against all travellers leaving the planet in the last three months.

To convince the Clerk to allow them access to the Passenger Manifest:

Difficult, Admin, Legal, Int (Confrontation, Uncertain)

The computer, however, will refuse to give any information other than to confirm that someone has left two weeks ago unless the PCs insert the person's full name and/or Idex.

Hammon's code will give an "incorrect answer" reply. If the PCs have the list and have realised that they are Idex codes they can input them but again without success. Checking the back issues of departures will reveal four passenger ship's left that day.. See above.

4. A FRIENDLY VISIT ...

If the PCs obtained Hammon's home address from his work place they will find a small but expensive and well-furnished apartment. His wife, Angelina, is a beautiful, 30 year old. She will take some time to answer and will be extremely reluctant to open the

door. Throughout she will use the door vid unit. If the PCs explain that they are looking for Hammon on behalf of his daughter she will appear confused and mutter something about “but he hasn’t got a daughter??” If they describe their employer she will appear frightened but will quickly agree that yes, that’s his daughter from a previous marriage. She will claim that she doesn’t know where her husband went, what department he worked for, etc. If the PCs ask her to confirm anything about her husband she will quickly agree even if it contradicts something else she said. If the PCs make up something totally false she will agree that is true also. If confronted with a contradiction she will burst in to tears and switch the door ‘phone off. No amount of hammering on the heavy security door will elicit any response. If the PCs call back the next day they will learn from one of her neighbours that she’s gone away for a few days. Angelina will also cease to exist. She will comment in passing how this one at least lasted a few months.

If questioned, she will reveal that Hammon lived with a succession of beautiful women but had seemed to go stable with this one for the last few months. If the PCs ask if he was ever married, she’ll burst into laughter at the thought.

5. CONFRONTATION

If the PCs realise that Hammon’s official background is at odds with the details supplied by his daughter they mag decide to talk to her again. She will meet them at the public square. Standing nearby will be several well built men and women, obviously augmented.

If they confront her with the inconsistencies she will initially plead innocent. She will claim her story is the true version and she doesn’t understand how his official story got altered. She will offer them Cr.10,000 each to keep working on the case and to call her immediately they found out any more information.

If they try to push it she will admit that her father is an “unusual” man but will refuse to comment beyond that. Any attempt to threaten her will result in 1d6 enforcers jumping to her aid. Should the PCs decide to get out at this stage, go to “If The PCs Run...”

6. THE RAMASES CLUB

If the PCs visit the Ramases Club on East Level 3 they will discover an exclusive gambling club. The stakes are high, lowest bet is Cr.100 and the drinks cost about Cr.50 a glass. In the background is a live “entertainment” session. Showing the Holocube around will result in the PC being quickly expelled from the club. Subtle questioning of the barmaid, however, will reveal that Hammon was a big spender. He liked variety in his women, but over the last few months had taken to living with one of the “exotic” dancers, Pippa. She thinks she remembers him talking about visiting the Joker Tower at Nox but for some reason, and it

definitely wasn’t shortage of money that he never went off-planet. She doesn’t know where Pippa lives now.

If the PCs check with the doorman he will not remember Hammon but will realise that the barmaid is actually confused as it is actually another regular customer, a teacher at the local school, who’s always wanted to visit the Tower.

7. THE LIST

If the PCs have Idex list in his office they can run a credit check on the list of Idex codes, which will reveal that all the people listed are high credit. No further information is available without names.

If the PCs check the Commnet index against the numbers they will find that, like most people, these individuals use their Idex codes as their contact numbers. Calling them will reveal a motley looking bunch of villains. None will give any information and at least one will threaten to do grievous bodily harm to them should they come near.

While they are trying to find that information, they will spot a small advert stating that Daya Crua, an “information broker” (deck-jockey) is available for hire.

8. INFORMATION BROKER

Daya is a Lancian who makes his living obtaining computer-based information for others. A free-lance hacker. He will want to know why they want to find Hammon and if he thinks that there is a chance that they mean to harm Hammon he will refuse to help. Depending on how much sympathy they manage to obtain he will charge between Cr.2,500 and Cr.10,000 for the information. He can check the following information if asked. Note if any of the PCs have computer or Comms skills he will willingly accept assistance and reduce the overall fee by 10% per skill, level.

To access computer files:

Varies, Computer, Comms, Edu, 3 min (Fateful)

Referee: Each task has a different difficulty level. Note that although PCs can add their Computer or Comms skill to Daya’s (up to a maximum of 8) only Daya’s Edu score is acceptable. On an exceptional failure the hack has been discovered and the local police informed. The PCs should determine in which order the search should be carried out.

8a. THE LIST

Daya will recognise them immediately as Alphanumeric Idex codes. Each will seem perfectly normal except that cross-checks <ROUTINE> on any data prior to three years ago does not exist. There are no birth or marriage certificates, credit sales, records of education, etc. The people appeared out of no-where three years ago with an untraceable background.

8b. HAMMON'S CREDIT TRAIL

<DIFFICULT> Shows that an Ushran Government Department WRD, has been lodging Cr.2,000 per month into Hammon's account since it was created three years ago. He is classed as having a good credit history. There was a Cr. 300,000 withdrawal two days before he vanished and there has been no further credit withdrawal since then. The information also shows him to be unmarried.

8c. MEDICAL CHECK

<DIFFICULT> If the group have obtained a copy of his gene code Daya can run a cross-check against emigration records if they failed to obtain a copy, Daya will try to download Hammon's medical file <FORMIDABLE>. It will reveal that Hammon has received no further treatment since he went missing, he started with the doctor on the same date he opened his bank account. The file will reveal his gene code.

Daya Crua

UPP 8579A8, Age 30, 3 Terms, Lifeforce 20
Computer 3, Comms 1, Electronics 1, Vehicle 1.
Homeworld: B Starport, small size, thin atmos, low pop, wet world, no law, avg stellar.

Crosschecking against emigration <DIFFICULT> could take several hours unless the PCs remember the Travel agency. Cross-referencing the search with StarFlight Travel ticket holders within a one week period will produce an exact match with a "Achmed Connors"...

Achmed Connors, born 155-1051, Argiluu IDEX: K184VF-65L0

Single, works for Ushran Department WRD, a member of the Church of Ascension, he left for extended leave two weeks ago heading for Adele on board the Fa Tsan.

8d. ACHMED CONNORS

WRD's (a sub department of the Judicial department) computer is heavily guarded <IMPOSSIBLE>, the local Church office isn't <ROUTINE> and reveals no trace of Achmed Connors having ever undergone the Rights of Passage. Since every adult practicing or otherwise had to undergo this ceremony this seems to confirm that the IDEX is, to say the least, inaccurate. A credit and or registration check <ROUTINE> reveals no substance to his history prior to three years ago... If the PCs think to run a similar check on Hammon, his previous records



will reveal no birth registration, no education. Hammon did not appear to exist before three years ago.

8e. ANGELINA

<SIMPLE> An IDEX check will reveal that she was Angela Greenway until she married Hammon last year, yet, a search of bank records, medical records etc. <DIFFICULT> will reveal that all were registered on the same day three months ago. There is no birth registration or marriage registration prior to that. There is a marriage record but the record was entered in to the system only three months ago. A cross-check with her medical gene code <DIFFICULT> will reveal her to be a 25 year old, registered exotic dancer named Mary-Anne Phillipa Marsden (Pippa). There is no credit trail since she left under either name.

8f. WRD

<IMPOSSIBLE> If the PCs try to find out what the WRD department does they will alert the police who will trace the call.

Daya will suddenly grab his unit and bolt for it screaming that he's been traced. If the PCs grab or try and delay him as he leaves he'll inform them that he's just tried to hack into the Ushran Witness Relocation Department's files. He will only impart this if he honestly believes that the PC's will hold him long enough to guarantee capture. From the time of Daya's first warning the PCs have exactly 3 minutes to disappear before the police arrive to arrest them. Remember, the police have no idea who they are looking for.

9. ADELE

If the PCs report any of their findings to Sharik Maihagu, she will offer to cover all expenses for a trip to Adele provided she and a guest accompany them. If they agree, she will leave one of her people with them to "oversee" arrangements while she obtains her luggage. Should they attempt to take off without informing her of their destination, they will find her packed and ready standing outside their ship with two of her "guests". She will insist on coming with them. If they refuse, her men will detain them until Security arrives. At this point she will press charges claiming that they are thieves. Police will find a small diamond brooch amidst their bags. They will be arrested and charged but after two days of interrogation they will be released once it becomes clear that Ms. Maihagu has left the planet.

The journey to Adele will be uneventful, if Ms. Maihagu accompanies them, she will spend the entire voyage in her stateroom. Her "guest" will prove to be a quiet body builder type who refuses to speak about Madam. Anyone who pushes it could end up in a fight.

On Adele the PCs (and Ms. Maihagu who will now refuse to leave their sides) will discover from immigration that Achmed Connors is staying at the Blue Moon Inn. Enquiries there will reveal that Mr. and Mrs. Connor

have not been back for a couple of days but their room is booked up for the week and their luggage is still at the Inn. Ms. Maihagu and Philip will immediately book in.

Augmented Heavy

UPP C96726, Age 25, 2 Terms, Lifeforce 27

Hand Cbt 2, Gun Cbt 2, Streetwise 1, Carousing 1

Homeworld: A Starport, large size, dense atmos, mod pop, wet world, moderate law, avg stellar.

Note, "Philip" is physically augmented and his body system is immune to most commercially available tranq. drugs.

If the PCs think to check out Connor's room they will discover that his bags are sitting packed ready for a quick departure. Taped under the bedside cabinet is a fax: "Make your way to Ushra. Agent Bhalak will meet you at terminal 211." It is unsigned but if the PCs think to check out the dispatch number at the top they will discover that it was sent via secure Governmental dispatch. The room will reveal nothing more of interest, but should the PCs take their time over searching they will hear a noise outside the door. A few seconds later, Ms. Maihagu will enter with Philip. If the PCs hid they will see her place a variety of bugs in the room. Philip will eventually call out from the door, "Hurry up Shanna a maid's coming!" They will then hurry out. Should the PCs stand their ground, Ms. Maihagu will look momentarily surprised then laugh and ask them what they found. If they show her the fax she will be extremely interested. She will make a quick phone call, relaying the message to an unknown person, before closing the circuit. If the PCs ask whom the message was sent to, Philip will usher them out of the room. From this point on Ms. Maihagu and Philip will stay in the Inn.

Ms. Maihagu will attempt to get the PCs to stay out of the way but will refuse to pay them any more money until she has met her father.

Should the PCs do the rounds with the gene code and holocube:

Difficult, Carousing, Computer, Edu (Confrontation, Uncertain)

Referee: On a success they will discover that Achmed Connor has recently been to the Ushran Embassy. There they will learn the following information; (1) Achmed Connor has just posted bond for a Masui Taralak to emigrate to Ushra, (2) Hammon can be found waiting for his, receipt in a back street bar near the starport.

At the bar they will eventually spot a disguised Hammon in the rear booths. At first he will refuse to admit that he is either Connor, Taralak or Maihagu. If they try and bodily take him, the barman will threaten them with a shotgun. He will be totally uncooperative unless they mention that they are with his daughter. At this, Hammon will burst into tears. Through the sobbing he will tell them that he has no daughter.

He will eventually confide in them, admitting he originally worked for the Yancy as an Information Broker

under a crime lord named Francis Harnwall. One day he decided to get out and turned states evidence.

The WRD (Witness Relocation Department) have him a new identity and transported him to Hellas. Unfortunately the case was dismissed on a technicality and Stone was released. He swore to get even and set about tracking Hammon down (under no circumstances will he tell the PCs his real name). Fortunately Hammon got a warning that an assassin was on the way and used a second identity set up for him by the WR to flee. His girlfriend joined him only a few days ago. If he can get him off planet he knows that the WR will reward the PCs. After all he still has information that would send Harnwall down for life. Information that, until now, he has refused to give to the "Filth".

At this point, the PCs have to decide whether to hand him over to his "daughter". She's a trained assassin who will kill Hammon and attempt to frame the PCs for the murder. Remember, it is the PCs who have been asking the questions, she has no intention of paying them their "recovery" fee.

If they decide not to hand him over, they must decide how much help to give. Should "Ms. Maihagu" or Philip discover that they helped him escape they will bring the wraith of the Yancy down upon them (see "If the PCs Run...").

Remember, they have to also get "Mrs. Connors", who is currently shopping and prevent her from returning to the hotel. Even should they manage to take the assassins out they would have an extremely difficult time explaining to the local police what had occurred. Hammon would prove more of a liability than an asset as he will claim the PCs kidnapped him and threatened to kill him so he could maintain his freedom. At the first opportunity he would escape off-planet leaving the PCs to their fate.

IF THE PCs SUCCEED IN GETTING HAMMON OFF-PLANET

A week after they arrive at another planet Hammon will send a message to the WRD, an agent will turn up and take Hammon into protective custody. The PCs will be questioned as to their involvement and how they managed to break the second identity. If they admit their methods the WR will make a report and reward them Cr. 25,000 each. Should they refuse to co-operate the WR will only cover the cost of any expenses since they met up with Hammon.

The WR will be willing to create false identities for the PCs to help them to flee from the Yancy but even if they refuse there will be no trouble. Harnwall is presently in the process of fleeing and the other Crime Lords are too involved dividing up his territory to worry about revenge.

RED EAGLES

Note: This is for referee's only! Players may only refer to the Library data found in Signal GK 1.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the evidence of modern-day life, there are very few non-governmental organisations devoted to the furtherance of political objectives through the use of force in MegaTraveller. This article concerns a Solomani terrorist group found in the Dagudashaag sector. Referees are free to use this article as the basis for other terrorist groups.

HISTORY

The Red Eagles are a pro-Solomani terrorist group that was formed in the late 800s as a particularly militant political group devoted to maintaining Solomani heritage, ideals and so on in the wake of the resurgence of Vilani culture within the Imperium. Its original name was the "Reactionary Front for the Liberation of Solomani Ideals", indeed this remains the "official" name of the group up to current day.

With the outbreak of hostilities between the Solomani Confederation and the Third Imperium in 990, the group adopted a much more violent approach. The group attacked many centres of Vilani culture and power, as well as assaulting Solomani "collaborators" in addition to attacking imperial establishments and bases. The group was used by the Confederation Intelligence Service (CIS, the original name of Solomani Security) to carry out strikes against military targets in order to draw Imperial forces from the rim to deal with terrorist acts. The group was also used to collect intelligence for the Solomani war effort.

It was at this period of the group's life that it became to be known as the "Red Eagles". A number of front members fancied themselves as both artists and experts on Terran zoology and began to paint red hawks at the scene of atrocities and for defacing imperial property. The red hawk was meant to symbolise Chi group's "bloody determination to seek out and destroy all occurrences of oppression of the noble Solomani peoples" (the hawk is known for its keen eyesight). However media commentators who did not know Terran zoology and incorrectly interpreted the shoddy artwork began to call the group "the Red Eagles". The name has since stuck.

The group continued its activities throughout the duration of the Solomani War of Liberation, and for a considerable time afterwards. However, the fervour of the members reduced in the tight if the apparent defeat of the Confederation and the "cowardly armistice of a navy lacking the political will to overwhelm the weakling lesser alien races of the upstart Imperium" (needless to say, the Red Eagles can be described as being radical members of the Solomani

Party). By 1010 only a small core of members remained active.

This small core has continued to carry out terrorist acts until the current day. Indeed, the group has been willing to claim responsibility for many acts that they have not carried out. This has had two effects. The Imperial authorities have been more determined to exterminate them, and they are much more feared than they would be otherwise.

The small core frequently draws in new members. These often come from the radical wing of the considerable number of Solomani parties that exist within the sector. However, the core of the group have few official ties with the party so they can not be linked with them and so that they can retain a degree of internal security.

This policy was temporarily set aside by the last leader of the Red Eagles, the pathologically psychopathic Kylie Two-Shadows (a Solomani of mixed Amerind-Australian stock). With her in command the group became more violent, carrying out a wave of attacks. However, she made the mistake of claiming responsibility for the assassination of the Sector Duke Raegis Viisarikaa. This led to the Imperial authorities spending all their efforts on dealing with the Red Eagles, and ignoring all other leads, including those leading to Dulinor. Because of the close links that Two-Shadows had fostered, the group was relatively easy to find, with many Solomani groups helping the Imperial efforts to prevent a backlash. This massive effort resulted in a major attack on Red Eagle base, on Sharaa in 1115, by imperial forces. Many Red Eagle members were killed, including Kylie Two-Shadows. Despite public information saying otherwise the core of the group escaped (in fact, rumour has it that Kylie was killed before the Imperial Marines entered the base).

Solomani Security knew about the upcoming coup attempt by Dulinor. They also knew that he would lack the resources with which to carry it out successfully. Solomani Security had this information because of an agent known as "Salome" who is highly placed in the Dulinor household (it is rumoured that this agent is a mistress of Dulinor). This had all the trappings of civil war. Thus, together with the other branches of the Solomani government they began plan.

Among their plans was a requirement to keep a track of fleet units and political activity in the region of space between the Core and Illeish. SolSec Were unwilling to use the Red Eagles at first, due to their irrational behaviour. However, with the raid on the group leaving it leaderless this was seen as an opportunity to mould the group to needs. This was especially true because the surviving core members had put in touch with SolSec, indicating they were willing to help the Solomani Cause in a more coordinated way. SolSec said that the new leader was to be one of their agents. The remaining Red

Eagles not wishing to return to the likes of Kylie Two-Shadows, agreed.

An undercover agent on Maiden/Pact was activated to lead the new group. Her instructions were to carry out a mainly intelligence role against both Illeish and imperial forces present in the Dagudashaag Sector. Targets of opportunity were to be neutralised as they arose, but these were not to interfere with the primary role. Additionally, specialist tasks at the behest of Solsec were to be carried out. The agent, codenamed "Black Widow", has carried out these tasks with considerable skill, as the intelligence role is not even known to Imperial Naval Intelligence (INI). She has succeeded in using the terrorist acts to cover the main role.

These acts have been concentrated in areas of high Solomani population and sympathy as many of these areas are controlled either by Illeish or the Free Medurman Federation, the group has been contacted by Lucan's forces to act as a strike team for hire. They are used by Lucan to attack targets with an emphasis on the psychological element, as military forces lack terrorists "expertise" in these areas. Solsec has permitted these to be carried out where their own activities would not be compromised, and "Black Widow" has ensured that only minor members have any involvement with the imperial intelligence agencies, to prevent the INI shutting down the organisation if they so wished.

GOALS

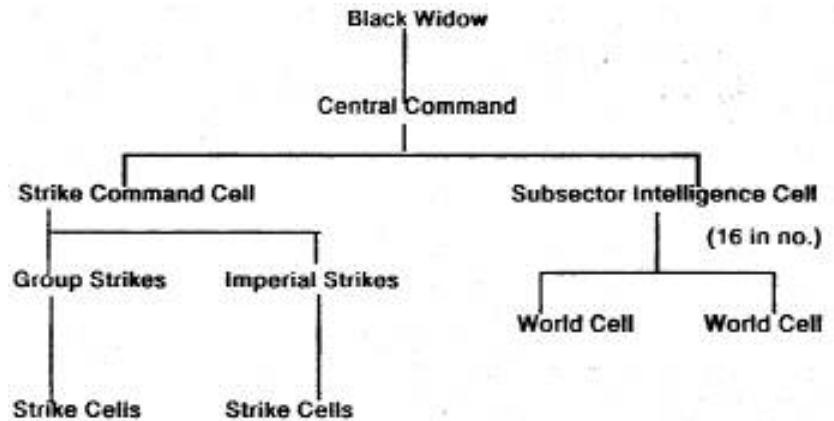
The Red Eagles have a number of official goals as well as those of their Solsec masters. The goals of Solsec have been dealt with elsewhere. The goals of the group itself are as follows:

- 1) Independence from the Imperium, and any other non-Solomani government, followed by membership of the Solomani Confederation.
- 2) Deporting of non-Solomani influences from Solomani worlds.
- 3) Prevent the destruction of those worlds by the factions of the rebellion.
- 4) Ensuring the government of the new region follow the tenets of the Solomani Cause.
- 5) Removal of all outside military assets from the region, and also ensuring that those military forces are not under the control of aliens.
- 6) Support of the Solomani Confederation's fight to liberate the worlds unlawfully seized by the Imperium and to prevent the onset of the alien-supported Long Night on Solomani worlds (i.e. removal of Vilani industry from the rim).

ORGANISATION

The Red Eagles have adopted the use of cells to carry out their separate tasks. To ensure that the primary role of intelligence is not effected, cells for intelligence and strike operations are kept separate.

Strike Cells for "Imperial Strikes", i.e. those carried out for money from Lucan, consist of the newest members. Their only link with senior members is through the use of dead drops, unaddressed mail and so on. Similarly,



this method is used to communicate with the Imperials concerning missions. If new members are felt to be useful they are inducted into the group proper. All recruits are vetted. If anyone within the group is felt to be not committed, they are terminated immediately. Recruitment is by word of mouth and only within fervent supporters of the Solomani (for example, radical Solomani parties).

A cell's size depends on its role and location. An intelligence cell on a backwater world may consist of one person. A strike cell assigned to attack a major base may have as many as a hundred.

Communication within the group is done using a series of non-existent addresses, false names, false companies and so on. These are changed regularly. The codes for messages are changed regularly. Often, words from a popular book are used (the nth word in the nth paragraph of the nth page, for example). These books are chosen for their lack of political nature (children's books are frequently used). Unsophisticated but simple and effective.

TYPICAL ACTS

As it has been stated above, most the acts of the Red Eagles are undercover intelligence operations, and thus fall outside what normally can be considered terrorist activities. However, the group may attack a number of other targets.

Those targets attacked supporting the group's or Solsec's objectives:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Naval bases and vessels. 2) Government establishments and figures. 3) Prominent non-Solomani persons, and their property. 4) Locations of strong alien culture. 5) Suspected Collaborators. 6) Communications links. 7) Anything which will give the group's non-intelligence goals prominence in the media. This is a catch-all category for "criminal" activities. 8) Any activity that would bring down the structure of imperial society. This includes anything from slandering of persons to drug trafficking. | <p>for the Red Eagles. This knowledge would result in the players being hunted by the Red Eagles, INI, as well as Illelish and FMF agents.</p> <p>What happens if they owe a favour to someone from the Red Eagles? The PCs could end up as cannon fodder on a particularly dangerous mission (the "Dirty Dozen" type). Which enemies do they make?</p> |
|--|---|

Those targets attacked supporting Lucan's objectives:

- 1) Illelish and FMF naval bases and vessels.
- 2) Illelish and FMF government establishments and figures.
- 3) Suspected traitors to Lucan within his own organisations (a useful way of getting rid of "heroes").
- 4) Anything that will spread fear and distrust within the Illelish Federation and the FMF.
- 5) Anything to enhance the standing of Lucan.

Why should the Solomani support Lucan? Simply put, this is done because he is the worst person for the job. Solsec feels that if anybody else became emperor, the war against the Solomani would be prosecuted much more successfully, to the detriment of the Solomani.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several ways in which players could be involved with the Red Eagles. Apart from those related to the targets listed above. Here are a few suggestions.

Are the PCs pro-Solomani? If so, they may be asked to join the Red Eagles. As most right-minded players would rebel at the thought of supporting terrorism (maybe they're not right-minded), or they failed the vetting procedure if they accepted, a long chase across the world/subsector/sector could result.

The PCs could be present at the sight of an attack. If they helped to stop one, they could make a number of enemies, particularly if the local media spread their names across the entire planet.

The PCs could find one of Lucan's agents carry money

A.K.A. THE BLACK WIDOW

Baroness Sirena Aleneskya (actually SolSec Lt Colonel Natasha Celeste, and leader of the Red Eagles, "Black Widow") is a member of a cadet branch of a noble family from Maiden/Pact. She is a pure-blooded Solomani, being of European stock. The baroness came to the sector 12 years ago, being from a branch of the family that lives in the Solomani Rim. She came to Dagudashaag having lost most of her close relatives in a horrific air/raft accident (this accident was actually engineered by Solec, and the actual Sirena died in it).

Before coming to Dagudashaag, Natasha had spent 12 years as an open agent in the Solomani Rim. As such, she had built up quite a reputation inside both SolSec and Imperial Naval Intelligence (INI). Unfortunately for her, this reputation was beginning to make life extremely difficult for her. SolSec recognised this, and began to plan ahead. The requirement for an agent deep inside the nobility of the Imperial core became apparent, and Natasha was seen to bear a considerable resemblance to a young noble in the Solomani Rim. After the required surgery was carried out, the "accident" mentioned above was arranged.

Her public life since coming to Dagudashaag is virtually the clone of any other young noble, essentially a life of no work and all play. As one of the many "play girls" among the nobility, she has built up a considerable friendship with Karyn Viisarikkaa prior to her assumption to the sector duchess position. Even now, Karyn values her friendship and often confides in her.

As a deep cover agent, she has sent considerable amounts of information on the nobility of Dagudashaag to Solec. Her close friendship with Karyn has meant that SolSec were able to predict the formation of the Free Medurman Federation.

As a minor noble in the sector, Sirena has had little impact on life in Dagudashaag. She is rarely mentioned in the press, and even when she is it is usually in the various supermarket tabloids as a result of being romantically linked with trivid stars, naval heroes and so on. Most of these tabloids have gone out of print due to crippling libel cases that have been brought against them.

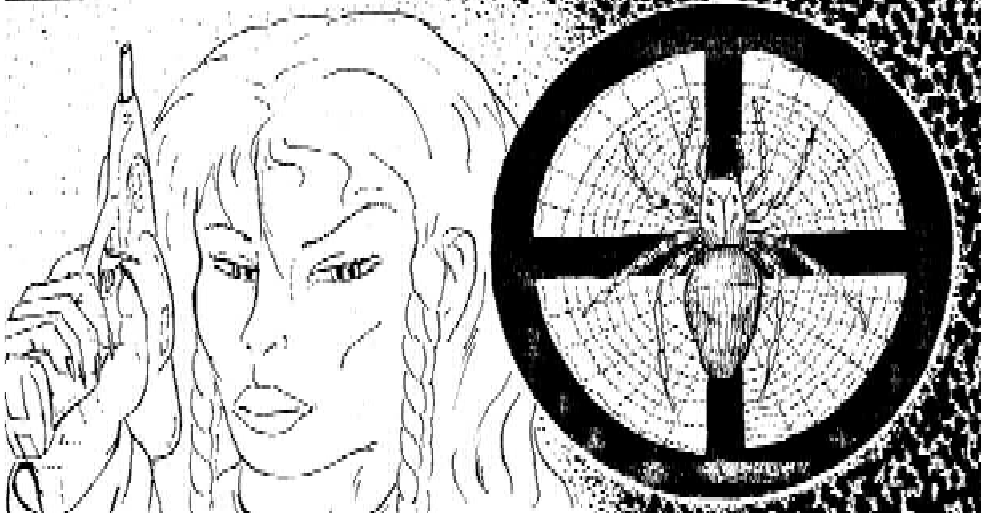
The baroness can be found throughout the sector, on shopping trips and other exercises of the exceedingly rich. She is the patron of several minor charities in Pact subsector. She can be found in almost any location, from a starport where she has just left a luxury liner to the backstreets where she can be found "slumming" with other young nobles.

Sirena is extremely attractive, and is frequently touted as one of Dagudashaag's most eligible women. Of pure European Solomani stock, she is tall (5'10") of athletic build. She has ice-blue eyes and her blonde hair is worn in the fashion of Maiden, below waist level. Born on 198-1090 (actually 276-1078), Sirena is 30 years old. She is unmarried, but has had a long string of lovers, several of whom, including the most recent, have committed suicide or been murdered. No evidence of foul-play by Sirena has ever been found, and she is held by the law-enforcement agencies as an innocent party (actually, these were people who had got too close to finding out her secret).

Her UPP is as follows:

6C9EEC (party rank 5), 3 terms, Age 30 (42)
Liaison-4, Demolition-3, Bribery-2, Carousing-2, Cbt Rifleman-2, Computer-2, Disguise-2, Handgun-2, Intrusion-2, Leader-2, Medical-2, Stealth-2, Battle dress-1, Grav vehicle-1, Laser weapons-1

Sirena has Traveller's, the "Nike", a fast yacht and Cr. 100,000 to spend. Note that Natasha has had two separate careers, as a noble and as a SolSec agent. Also, the limit on skills has not been used in line with "Flaming Eye-" and "Knightfall".



The effective UPP that is shown as "Sirena" is as follows:

6C9AAC 3 terms Age 30
Leader-1, Liaison-1, Carousing-2, Computer-1, Handgun-2,

As Sirena, Natasha shows little ability at any skill, adding to the portrayal of the spoilt rich noble. However, this attitude has developed after she was raped at the age of 15. Like all natives of Maiden, she exhibits considerable skill with pistols.

Natasha is in fact 42 years old. This difference in ages

been achieved by SolSec scientists who have perfected an anagathic treatment for persons under 30. This takes the form of a once off genetic transplant, and is only available to a small number of persons with the correct genetic make-up. Due to the treatment's limited application, only a small number of agents have been so treated. Most of these are deep cover agents, who have to undergo major training before taking their posts (see "Leyna Tirenthe" in Challenge 43 for another example).

Due to her position as a deep cover agent, Sirena/ Natasha had to effectively generate a new personality. Many aspects of her "natural" personality remain in her new one, but there is a considerable difference between the two follows. Black on the personality table is for Sirena Aleneskya and white for Natasha Celeste.

In both "aspects", Sirena/Natasha is a man-eater.

She uses her more than considerable charms to seduce men, and then discard them when she has been satisfied. As Natasha, in combat she is completely merciless, demanding the final sacrifice from her own troops and never taking prisoners, except where expedient. It is a tribute to her skills, that her followers has are more than willing to die for her.

The players are likely to meet Sirena/Natasha in many and varying locations. She could be the most lethal of foes, exhibiting no mercy as a terrorist leader. She could be the carefree noble the players meet whilst she is "slumming". Other adventure hooks include her requesting the players help against a group of men, attacking her (FMF or Ilelish agents?). Regardless of how the players meet her, she will live up to her name, "Black Widow", and they had better be prepared for her, for she is a voracious predator, be it of friend or foe.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Reserved						★		⊛			Outgoing
Impulsive			⊛					★			Planner
Moody								⊛			Emotionally Stable
Submissive									⊛		Dominant
Serious		★							⊛		Fun-loving
Expedient	★						⊛				Conscientious
Timid								⊛			Venturesome
Tough-minded		★						⊛			Sensitive
Trusting					⊛					★	Suspicious
Practical			★			⊛					Imaginative
Forthright							⊛				Shrewd
Self-assured		⊛				★					Apprehensive
Conservative								⊛	★		Experimenting
Group-dependent				⊛			★		⊛		Self-sufficient
Uncontrolled									⊛		Controlled
Relaxed			⊛								Tense

PORT OF CALL: HELLAS

Hellas 1416 A55567C-C Ag Ni 603 Im M3 V

Primary: Granahel spectral class M3 V, mass 0.394, luminosity 0.354.

Hellas: Mean orbital radius 0.21 AU, period 0.142 std years/ 52.033 std days/ 32.0203 local days, diameter 7520km, mass 0.259 terra, molten core density 1.06, mean surface gravity 0.663g, rotation period 39 hrs, axial inclination 12°, orbital eccentricity 0.000.

Atmospheric composition - thin oxygen-nitrogen mix, mean surface atmospheric pressure 0.55, hydrographic percentage 56%, mean temperature -77°C.

Satellites: Anssahl F200200-B

Government: Type 7, Balkanised, Elite council (Hellan Trade Council) with three way division - primary arm is executive. Legislative and judicial arms are composed of an elite council for each.

Population: Total 6,329,660: 97% humaniti, 2.1% Aslan, 0.9% other minor races.

Primary Cities: Kendricks-Alaal 2,236,000 , starport A; Jajuno-Diaz 890,500 , spaceport F; Keetal 695,000 , spaceport F; Honverda 573,700 spaceport F; Madni-Cruz 216,000, spaceport G; Hellas Orbital 67,500 starport A.

Social Outlook: progressive, advancing, competitive, neutral, harmonious, friendly.

Law Profile: Undivided, C-EC976.

Technological Profile: CA-DCBCE-B8CF-8A-E.

STARPORT PROCEDURE

All shipping is required to pass through Hellas High Orbital Starport prior to a surface landing at Kendricks Down Starport. Customs inspections at the orbital station before a surface landing is authorised is the norm. Fines are levied even for the smallest infractions and there are long prison sentences for smuggling proscribed items. All transgressors are treated fairly however, whatever the charge.

Special note to prospective travellers: Arms trading is illegal on Hellas, import and distribution of weapons is the sole preserve of the Hellan government. Thus smuggling of arms or ammunition onto Hellas is a serious charge; those breaking the law can face life terms. Those wishing to bring personal weapons into Hellan space must make a declaration prior to arrival at Hellas Orbital (and these must be accompanied by a recognised license.

HISTORICAL

Hellas was unpopulated until after the publication of the First Survey in 660. A follow-up survey by a research team by the Xenobiology unit of the University of Ushra in 677 identified the Fillaslopu as a potential valuable

food source. The success of the pilot farms ensured the influx of prospective farmers who set about trying to tame the frozen plains of Hellas.

Before the majority of farms were set up, the slight sulphur taint in the atmosphere was removed by an atmospheric terraforming unit (see following section). After the initial influx of prospective farmers came the various service and supply industries. Much of the original finance for the farmers came from a mix of public and private funding. The largest group backing farmers were Aslani merchants looking to diversify their holdings and acquire much sought after land. The Aslani make up a small but significant percentage of the total population (about 2%) on Hellas for it is estimated that this 2% hold approximately 22% of the total wealth. The Aslani are important and influential members of the Hellan Trade Council (see later in the section on Government and Politics) who oversee much of the day-to-day running of Hellas. The Aslani presence on Hellas has been welcomed by all who see their hand in pushing along the development of the world and its continual increase in wealth.

The world has been free of major incidence as it has only until relatively recently been colonised. The only event of note that has really brought Hellas to the attention of the rest of the subsector was the small-scale naval battle in 957 when an Aslani ihatei fleet of seven ships tried to take sections of land on Hellas. Luckily two naval cruisers (of the Ushran reserve fleet) were on an exercise and intercepted the incoming vessels. Although the two colonial ships were out-gunned they held the Aslani vessels from landing on Hellas with a minimum of combat until further colonial elements from the reserve fleet were due to arrive. The co-ordinating captain of the two cruisers kept his ships guns trained on the four colony vessels, continually manoeuvring to threaten the vulnerable ships. The Aslani combat vessels were forced to take up shielding positions in front of the transporters, afraid of firing in case the navy ships concentrated on taking out as many Aslani as possible by destroying the colony vessels in retaliation. The navy captain Hans Kaivich was awarded a Starburst for Extreme Heroism for his tactics in preventing the Aslani land and doing so without any loss of life on either side. The Aslani were later directed to the satellite Laforte where they set up a colony.

GEOPHYSICAL/GEOGRAPHICAL

A bitterly cold world (at best -17°C in the equatorial summers) where the surface can be divided into three areas: the frozen seas, the agriculturally productive lowlands and the rugged, ice-covered highlands. The Hellan surface is composed of 46% land and 54% 'ocean'.

The oceans and seas are frozen over 99% of their surface 99% of the time. The land can be broken down into three major continents, three minor Continent and five major archipelagos. This division is a bit pointless as all the land masses arc connected by huge 'ice-bridges'. These ice-bridges are strong and permanent enough in places to allow heavy agricultural transport vehicles (a mix of hover- and grav-craft) to pass between islands and continents.

Almost 751 of the 'dry' land is above 200m above mean sea (ice) level are permanently covered in snow and ice. Despite the cold and the heavy snow that falls on every part of the world, the lowlands are primary source of income for Hellas and labelled it as a agricultural exporter.

At the time of the initial survey in 660, Hellas had a slight atmospheric taint of sulphur. Before colonisation could proceed in earnest, an atmospheric terraforming tower was built (mostly pre-fabricated parts) which over the next 75 years reduced the level of sulphur by 97%. The terraforming unit (named the Govinti tower after the designer) was decommissioned and stripped of the terraforming machinery. The tower was refitted as a complete residential area, serving the embryonic starport and the farmers from the pilot set-ups. The tower formed the hub around which Kendricks-Alaal grew. The tower also serves as an atmospheric and environmental monitoring station, taking readings from the immediate locale and receiving data from a series of remote sensing satellites.

Recent geological indicated that under the southern polar there may be large deposits of petrochemicals as well as a number of possible valuable mineral ores. The Hellan Trade Council have set up a mining company in conjunction with Girse LIC (of Phaln/Gushemege 3029) and Tannesh MinTech (based on Undim 0914).

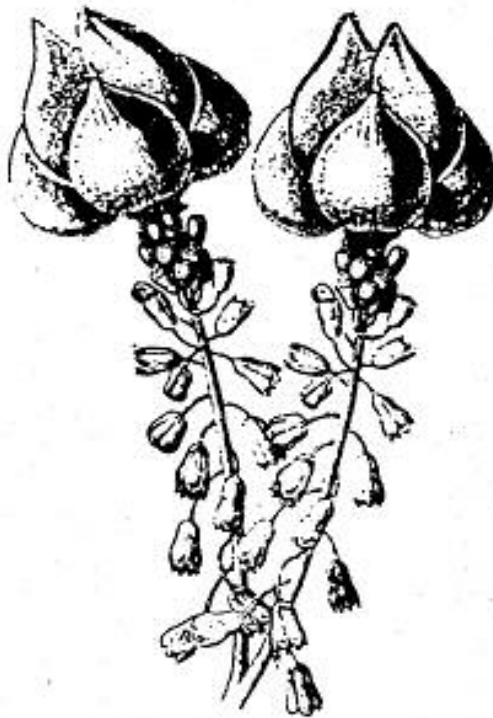
ECONOMICS

The prosperity of Hellas has been founded on agriculture but lately it has been enhanced by the booming tourism industry, which has brought in new wealth to the once lifeless and barren mountains of the central Hellan continent of Amulus.

Agriculture: The principle economic success upon which the growing wealth of Hellas is founded is a remarkable plant, the Fillaslopu. The exploitation of this remarkable piece of natural bioengineering has raised

the standards of living of the average Hellan to twice that of his or her average Imperial counterpart. The Fillaslopu produces a seed that is incredibly rich in protein and carbohydrate and has provided the staple food for the entire subsector. The seed can be eaten raw, can be cooked (on its own or as part of a more complex meal), can be ground and baked to produce a rich, bread-like cake as well as fermented to produce a much sought after beer-type drink. It is also rich in many vitamins and minerals. Yet the most remarkable thin, about this wonder-plant is that it grows faster the colder it gas (up to -110°C). This has baffled botanists for centuries.

The Fillaslopu is common to both hemispheres of Hellas, there are two main crops grown each gear, one in each hemisphere. The plant is thin, spindly and tough. There are very small, thin, leaf-like appendages that are very efficient at trapping the weak sunlight emanating from Granahel. The plant is topped by a crown of bell-shaped protrusions which house the developing seed. It is the seed dispersion that is another peculiarity of this plant.



Fillaslopu

The developing seeds are held in the bell-shaped structures at the top of the plant. The seeds are surrounded in a water based fluid that expands rapidly on cooling. The structures are made of the tough material that keeps the plants upright in the strong winds that sweep the plains of Hellas. The opening to the outside world is covered by a thin but resilient membrane, which holds the seed in place even as the liquid freezes. Tremendous pressures build up but the membrane does not yield until the outside temperature hits -77°C when the molecules of the membrane suddenly is transformed resulting in a very brittle state. The slightest expansion causes the smallest pressure increase that ruptures the membrane. Under these huge pressures the seed is propelled out at high velocities which can carry the seed up to 300m. A number of farmers have been killed by seeds that have the effect of a snub pistol round. The Fillaslopu fields are now covered with tough, rubber netting to contain the flying seeds.

The plant has a deep and extensive root system to tap into the liquid water only found 30m below the frozen surface. The root system of the Fillaslopu is the key to its survival. Within its roots are nodules which contain a complex symbiosis of a bacterium and a fungus, which in turn form a symbiotic union with the plant. The bacterium and fungus provide some of the nutrients locked into the substrate and protection against certain micro-organisms pathogenic for the Fillaslopu. The Fillaslopu provides a 'safe' environment and complex molecules for the resident microbes.

Riding on the success of the Fillaslopu, the co-operative farms set up the Beglaa Agricultural institute a well renowned educational and research establishment. This academic body has pioneered research into agricultural development and technology with special emphasis on the cryoflora of Hellas. The Institute (named after one of the first farmers to make it rich on Hellas) offers courses on general agriculture as well as refresher courses on new techniques peculiar to Hellas.

SYSTEM DATA

M0 V Granahel	
0 Hellas	A55567C-C Ag Ni 603 Im
5 Anssahl	G200200-B
1 Argahn (sgg)	
12 Task	Y100000-0
30 Foll	YS00000-0
55 Suonn	C201100-B
2 Pollus (sgg)	
5 Rish	YS00000-0
10 Hebien	Y310000-0
40 Laforte	G422466-B Aslani
100 Ginno	Y100000-0
3 Amorilli (lgg)	
2 ring	YR00000-0
5 Nestor	YS00000-0
12 Arvolane	YS00000-0
15 Pavis	YS00000-0
35 Telemachus	Y200000-0
60 Eurimeneus	Y201000-0
100 Thytis	G200200-C Rs

Tourism: The excessive winter environment has been a recent boon to the sporting culture of the subsector. Hellas is now the centre of the Ushran subsector's winter sports scene as hundreds of thousands flock to the Briigas mountains to partake in cross-country and downhill skiing, skating, sledging, ski jumping, ice vehicle races and ice-hockey type games.

Every three years there is the Hellan Ice Championships, where competitors from all over the sector (and sometimes beyond) to take part in the large number of events for the prestige (and not insignificant amount of cash prizes) of being crowned Champion of Hellas.

Mining: Recent remote sensing satellites orbiting above Hellas have raised the possibility that under the ice there may lay a huge store of organic materials and precious metal ores. A consortium led by the Hellan Trade Council, a local company set up by entrepreneurs who have made their fortune in agriculture are now funding explorations on the outer moon, Sounn, of the inner gas giant, Argahn.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

The IISS government classification of Hellas as type 7 is somewhat misleading. Although there is no central government as such there is the Hellan Trade Council that has many powers and the authority of a representative democracy. The Hellan Trade Council (HTC) is made up of three representatives of the eight major farming co-operatives and three officials



A Brethren Monk at Jajuno-Diaz

representing the handful of independent farmers. There are various other committees at which other members of Hellan society are represented, including many of the Aslan financiers of farmers. The Aslan farmers form a distinctive power block within the HTC, holding a slim majority, yet yield this political muscle only for the benefit of Hellas. The HTC oversees the running of the starports, the farming and trading regulations, tourism operations and the fiscal policy related to farming and tourism. The HTC has created the Hellan Customs Inspectorate (HCI), a local police-type organisation to oversee and enforce the compliance to HTC regulations and policy. The 'Customs Inspectorate' are widely respected, being both thorough and fair.

BlackDancer

BlackDancer, or BD as it is sometimes known, is the street name for a family of designer drugs that have recently become fashionable in the resorts of Ushra Sub-sector.

BlackDancer can be manufactured on any planet with access to Medical technology 10+, and is an artificial Neuropeptide: a drug that enables the brain to function faster and clearer while increasing manual dexterity.

It is available in pill form and costs about Cr. 100 per tablet. BlackDancer is illegal on worlds with a law level of 4+. Taking BD increases a characters INT by 4, Dex by 1 and gives the illusion of +1 to Edu. The effects last for 6 hours.

To find a supplier of BlackDancer

(Varies), Streetwise, Int, (Time varies), (hazardous, confrontation, uncertain)

Referee: Difficulty level varies according to law level; Low - Simple, Moderate -Routine, High - Difficult, Extreme - Formidable. Time varies according to tech level; Early - 24 hours, Average - 8 hours, High - 4 hours.

If the task is successful then the player has located a supply of 1d6 x 10 pills, on an exceptional success 1d6 x 100_ A fumble means they have just approached an undercover police-person.

REFEREE'S ONLY

BlackDancer is addictive after 1d6 uses. The player must make the following task roll for each use after this

To avoid addiction:

Routine, Determination (-1 per pill taken after the safety period)

Referee: Failure means the PC must take another pill immediately just to feel normal again or suffer -2 to Int and -1 Edu per day without until the player goes cold turkey or collapses.

When Int reaches 0 the PC will suffer a permanent -1d6 to Edu and Int unless they have already entered cold turkey (see below) by this point.



LANGUAGES WITHIN DAGUDASHAAG SECTOR

WHAT FOLLOWS IS AN “UNOFFICIAL” LOOK AT LANGUAGES. REFEREES MAY FEEL FREE TO ADD, ALTER OR EVEN IGNORE AS THEY SEE FIT.

Introduction

There are a vast number of languages spoken throughout the Imperium, and even in a relatively small area such as Dagudashaag sector there are literally hundreds of separate languages, sub-languages and dialects. What follows is a brief discussion of some of the more widely spoken languages within Dagudashaag, some notes on the use of Linguistics skill within the game.

Anglic

Anglic (for more commonly Galanglic) is the official and most widely spoken language in the Imperium it is a distant descendent of Terran English but includes a large number of words from other Terran cultures such as Russian, and even from alien languages such as Vilani or Vegan. Galanglic was widely spoken during the Rule of Man and remained as a common Human language during the Long Night. Core is a dialect of Galanglic is spoken within Dagudashaag.

Vilani

Vilani, the second Language of the Imperium is also commonly heard wherever Galanglic is spoken. Unlike Galanglic it has not absorbed many foreign words. Instead new Vilani words are periodically created to describe new ideas and concepts. The root language is Old High Vilani: all the other Vilani languages, including modern spoken Vilani, are descended from it.

Ziaddi

The Ziadd, the only minor human race within Dagudashaag, had a comprehensive culture and language by the time they were contacted by the Vilani. They expanded out to the stars during the Rule of Man, taking their language with them. Most Ziaddi speakers are found within Shallows, Ushra, Zeda, and The Remnants subsectors, although there are Ziaddi speakers throughout the Domain of Vland.

Meduu-Galaach

Meduu-Galaach, or Galaach which is spoken throughout Ushra subsector, is a sub-language of Anglic, the official language of the Rule of Man. It is descended from a number of Terran tongues but has evolved a complicated grammar, a range of tonal expressions, and an unusually large amount of new words. Its use was spread by Ushran traders during the Long Night, and it eventually became the main trade language used before the coming of the Third Imperium.

Aarani

Aarani is mainly spoken throughout Argi and Sapphyre subsectors. It is related to Old High Vilani, and includes many Vilani words and phrases. Those fluent in Vilani often find that they can communicate, albeit with some difficulty among native Aarani speakers. Aarani was the language of the Aakhri (or Slaver) Empire, and although it is still widely spoken people prefer to use Galanglic or Vilani when in polite company.

Sfuizia

Sfuizia is the language of the S'mrii a minor race native to the Mimu system in Mimu subsector. They had colonies on worlds throughout the core ward-spinward edge of the sector thousands of years before the Vilani achieved space travel and Sfuizia served as a common language. Since then it has evolved slowly, absorbing some alien words and adjusting them for S'mrii vocal abilities. Almost all Sfuizia speakers are S'mrii, and are found within Mimu subsector.

Kehuu

The language of the Lancians, spoken extensively within the Lancian cultural region and throughout the Domain of Vland. It is descended from pre-contact Kukhenian, but since then has evolved, absorbing many Vilani and Galanglic words and phrases. It is a particularly flowery tongue often described as the 'language of romance'. In keeping with the artistic and creative traditions of the Lancians it is often used by actors, poets, and writers.

Other Languages

Many worlds within Dagudashaag sector have their own languages as do all the native sophont species. Some of the most important are:

Goheim : A descendent of Hebrew spoken by almost all Scanians.

Amisal : Spoken by the Amisal of Khiradu, Iiradu.

Kiriani : Spoken by the Hamaran of Tethys, Ushra.

Misiani : The most important language spoken on Misaruu, Arnakhish.

Amisal and Kuriani are rapidly becoming major language even beyond their subsectors.

Aslan living in Dagudashaag speak Hierate Trokh though NeoTrokh, a hybrid form of Trokh that includes many Anglic words is extensively used by the Alikasch and as well as many native Medurman. The Vargr remaining in the sector speak languages descended from Ovaghoun-Logaksu, Gvegh and Gvegh Aeg, though a trade language, Ghaehoun has developed.

Native Language

All characters are considered to be fluent in their native language, and can usually be understood by other

speakers of the same language. If a situation arises where the characters have difficulty making themselves understood (perhaps talking to a tourist) it can be useful to know their skill level in their own language.

A good guide is to divide the experience level of the character by five, and round up any fractions.

Linguistics Skill

If linguistics is received the player specifies what language their character has learnt. Linguistics skill indicates that the character has had training in and experience of communicating through the use of foreign or alien languages. With a linguistic ability, a fair amount of time and a great deal of patience a character has the chance of learning and understand an unknown language based on language structure laws.

A skill level of one in a language indicates that a character can communicate fairly adeptly. They can count, read and write, and perform a wide range of everyday activities such as buying food or holding a conversation. Higher skill levels in the same language indicates an increasing ability to explain complex concepts, such as scientific theories or engineering problems. The higher the skill level, the better the chance that the character can pass himself off as a local.

EASISPEAK-13 LANGUAGE TRANSLATOR

Introduction

A huge variety of language translators exist throughout the Imperium. At lower tech levels they might be something as simple as a dual-language dictionary, while at high tech levels they might be complex electronic devices capable of interpreting all manner of intonation and subtleties of speech. The best known electronic translator within Dagudashaag is the Easispeak-15, produced by Sariani Microtec Industries of Medurma, and made under licence throughout the sector.

The Easispeak is typical of electronic translators. It consists of a battery-powered processing unit worn on a belt or carried in a pocket. Speech is picked up by a microphone and translated into the required language. The translation is sent to the listener via a small speaker. Incoming speech is picked up by the same microphone and sent to the user via an earpiece. There is a slight (less than a second) delay between the subject speaking and the user receiving the translation, and this can cause sonic confusion until the user grows accustomed to it.

But the Easispeak really comes into its own when it is connected up to other add-ons and devices. Commdots replace the earpiece and the microphone, although the latter is still used for receiving incoming speech. The translator can be linked to a hand computer via the commdot multiplexer, and will give written translations. If privacy is preferred the speaker is simply turned off and translations can be sent and received through a radio.

The Easispeak takes standard language memclips. These are small recording crystals with a complete vocabulary and a breakdown of the language. There are four ports for the memclips one is usually used for the user's native language, and the others for the language to be translated. Easispeak units are usually sold with a Galaach memclip and either a Galanglic or a Vilani memclip as standard.

EASISPEAK-15 Translator Unit

TL	Type	Vol	Wt
15	Language Translator Cr.500	1 liter	1 Kg
15	Memclip Cr.150	--	--

TL	Duration	Noise	Power	Comments
15	1 Week	Silent	0.01Kw	Pocket Sized Unit.

The main selling points of the Easispeak are its ease of operation, its small size and its cheapness - it has proven to be a consistent seller. The Easispeak does have one major drawback: it cannot translate anything except speech. As is so often the case a full understanding of what the speaker is saying is reliant on such things as mannerisms and gestures.

WHERE RED EAGLES DARE: THE HAMANOK CONSPIRACY, PART III.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure/scenario follows on from the first two parts “Wet!Wet! Wet!” and “One of Our Doctors is Missing” presented in Signal GK #2 and forms a five-part campaign. However, the scenario presented here can be run as a stand-alone, independent adventure in its own right.

SYNOPSIS

The player characters find themselves with a lot of time on their hands on arriving on Hellas (Dagudashaag 1416). While exploring the capital of Hellas (Kensricks-Alaal) the PCs discover a number of bombs designed to bring down the impressive Mekuu Tower. Evidence at the site suggests the resurgence of the Red Eagles, a pro-Solomani terrorist organisation. Further examination will reveal that terrorist devices are the work of another organisation (Ilelish elite commando units) who are trying to destabilise the region through terror and exploiting inter-racial tensions.

SET UP

Following the party’s mission for the University of Medurma in its search for Dr. Dai-Kavent, the PCs are

THE HAMANOK CONSPIRACY

A five-part adventure set in Dagudashaag sector:

1: Wet! Wet! Wet! The characters investigate the loss of a boat on the water world of Thalassa (Pact 2 127) where they run into a mercenary Cruiser (occupied by an elite Ilelish commando team) trying to salvage a crashed starship or the sea floor.

2: One of Our Doctors is Missing. the PC’s are contracted to locate the whereabouts of a missing scientist. the head of the department of Biomolecular Sciences at the University of Medurma (Pact 2124). The characters discover that the doctor deviate from his intended route and appears to have died in the starship crash on Thalassa that the PC’s found.

3: Where (Red) Eagles Dare. The PC’s are caught up in a terrorist raid on Hellas (Ushra 1416) apparently due to the resurgence of the Solomani group, the Red Eagles. The PC’s are led to believe that this may have beer the work of another agency trying to divert attention away from other activities.

4: Breathless. The PC’s are asked to undertake a very hazardous mission on Veluishim (Old Suns 1507). They are instructed to recover bodies and obtain information of a plague that has swept an agricultural world decimating its’ small population. Evidence is uncovered that the was deliberately introduced into the planet’s ecosystem and may have been a man-made disease. There is also evidence of those responsible which has a disturbing familiarity for the PC’s.

5: The Hamanok Conspiracy. With a armful of circumstantial and tenuous evidence the characters go to uncover the chilling details of a plot by Dulinor’s agents to devastate the high population worlds of Lucan’s Imperium: the characters take on the responsibility of eradicating the threat and destroying the Ilelish commando team.

approached by the personal secretary of the vice-chancellor (of the University).

The University has just played host to a sector-wide conference on higher education. Unfortunately two delegates from the Agricultural Institute of Hellas have become stranded on Medurma. The crew of their charter vessel were involved in a barroom brawl and are now facing a short prison sentence. The University require a party to pilot the vessel to Hellas (a one-way trip) immediately. You agreed to undertake the Job for one-and-a-half normal salaries.

On arrival at Hellas the PCs will be given two middle passages each to get them off planet.

OPTIONAL START

If the referee wishes you may like the PCs to role-play the trip out from Medurma to Hellas. Otherwise go straight to ‘Summary of Nuggets’.

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

1. Customs Details: the PCs passage through customs.
2. R and R: The party tour Hellas.
3. Little Black Boxes: The PCs come across some suspect devices.

4. Bang One: of the devices prematurely explodes.
5. Fingering the Culprits: The PCs investigate and highlight the role of the Red Eagles.
6. Fingering the Real Culprits: The PCs realise that all the available evidence does not fit and uncover crucial evidence that identifies the real culprits.

1: Customs.

The PCs undergo an examination of the ship and themselves.

Location: Hellas Orbital Starport - new arrival bays.

Scene: You have just landed at a vacant bay of the Orbital Starport above Kendricks-Alaal, the capital of Hellas. You have been instructed to stay in your vessel and await the arrival of a starport customs team who will inspect your ship and its documentation.

Action: If the characters have anything to hide then they had better do so now. The Customs inspection officer will arrive with two assistants in ten minutes.

To pass then customs inspection:

[difficulty], Legal, Admin, 5 min, (uncertain, unskilled OK).

Referee: The difficulty level depends on the law code on the world:

No law - no check, Low law - simple, Mod law - routine, High law -difficult, Ext law -formidable. The law level can give the difficulty level to pass general security checks as well as customs inspections.

Failure - minor paperwork problem; 2 hour delay with passage to Hellas surface; Extreme failure - carrying materials illegal on Hellas, seriousness depends upon level of mishap: Superficial - polite but stern warning, Minor - small fine 2D6 x Cr.100, Major - large fine 2U6 x Cr.1000, Destroyed - prison sentence (if destroyed results, the referee will need to make a number of extra task tolls to simulate a court case and to determine guilt. If the players are convicted arrange a prison break or a pardon. Alternatively the PCs patrons can intercede to prevent a jail term).

Once the inspection has been resolved the PCs will have clearance to land at Kendricks Down Starport.

2: R and R.

The PCs tour Hellas and take some rest.

Location: Within the capital of Hellas, Kendricks-Alaal.

Scene: You have just delivered your passenger, cleared all the starport administration details and surrendered the chartered vessel.

Before you lies the renowned dome-city of Kendricks-Alaal Under the plexiglass ties a plethora of cafes, bars, clubs, restaurants and casinos. For here is the stopping off point for the winter-sport enthusiasts, who flock to the slopes of the Briggas mountains. The world's yours.

Action: Hellas offers plenty for the visitor. The range of services found in the capital is commensurate with a moderately-large city with a class H starport at tech level 12. All prices are as the Imperial Encyclopaedia. Meals range from Cr.15 to Cr.200, from a small snack to a five-course illicit in a quality restaurant.

If the characters want some winter-sport action then a weeks full board at one of the decent ski resorts (they arc all decent and well equipped) will cost Cr.1,250. This is a bargain as it includes food, equipment hire, tuition, slope passes, and at the end of the week (for most participants) a basic competence in skiing:

To pass a basic proficiency exam in skiing:

Routine. End, Dex, 5 hours, (uncertain, fateful) Referee: Success of any sort will give the character a skill level of 0 in skiing. Mishaps relate to a level of injury from a bruise to a broken limb or two.

Whatever the PCs do get them on a 'open-top bus' type tour of the capital, but have them abandoned at the Govinti tower, either due to missing reboarding vehicle or the vehicle breaks down. Or any other plausible (or improbable) reason. Alternatively the PCs could be set on a tour of the tower. For a description of the tower see "Port of Call: Hellas" in this issue.

3: Little Black Box

The PCs, when stranded at the tower, discover some suspect devices which turn out to bombs).

Location: At the base of the Govinti Tower.

Scene: You now find yourself at the base of the Govinti Tower. You have decided to take a trip up the tower. It is a long journey to the top of the tower, it is some 340m at its highest point above the surface, protruding 60m above the domes peak. The views arc spectacular and the guided-tour you managed to tack onto the back of gives you an interesting and informative description of the tower and its construction. As the PCs climb they pass many shops, cafes, bars, business and luxury apartments now filling many of the spaces vacated by the old atmosphere terraforming equipment. The residual machinery can still be seen in a few places indicating this tower still has an important function on Hellas.

The journey to the top has taken you some 45 minutes and has ended at the 'Roof Restaurant', which offers quality meals. The prices match the high location. Yet there is a breathtaking view of the land surrounding Kendricks-Alaal - rolling plains covered in bright, white, crisp-looking snow. In the distance are the Briggas mountains, just breaking through low cloud. All around fresh snow is falling lightly.

Action: The narrative above should accompany the players passage up through the cower. This should only be an outline as the players will probably want to stop, pry and ask questions. It is up to the referee to

Improvise and, role-play the trip, it is suggested that the referee acts as the tour guide, making up any necessary details.

As the PCs descend one of the characters collides, with a local. As both sides offer apologies the PC involved in the incident notices that his wallet/money/papers/watch or some other valuable missing. The stranger glances nervously back and starts to run off down a corridor. Get the players into a chase into the quieter areas of the Tower going downwards towards the maintenance and service regions.

The players if they continue to follow (encourage them to do so) they will find themselves running after the thief into what appears to a blind alley. Yet as the PCs approach the character he turns his back to them - there is a click and a large panel opens up through which he disappears. It closes leaving no trace of the exit.

To discover the opening mechanism:

Difficult, Engineering, Int, 1 min (unskilled OK).

Referee: A hidden key panel is found on success. Any number of attempts may be made by any number of individuals, as long as determination tasks are made. Looking through the panel will reveal a dimly lit metal staircase leading downwards away from the opening.

The PCs can now see into one of the support pillars of the tower - there are numerous huge beams, walkways, ladders, rails, power conduits, etc., criss-crossing the wide pillar. Down below can be heard the sound of footsteps ringing on the metal staircase. Again if the PCs continue pursue the thief he will pull out a small pistol and take a number of shots at the party, if cornered. Let the thief wound one or possibly two members of the party, but not kill. especially if they have no weapons at their disposal. The thief's gun should jam after 1 or 2 shots. When the PCs close in, the thief should fall about 150m to his death.

The PCs should be encouraged to examine the body if only to recover the stolen items. The body will be sprawled over a power sub-system distribution unit on its top. Turning the body of the man will cause it to fall, revealing the badly damaged power unit - the impact of the body ruptured the casing. Crackles and fizzes can be heard from the unit.

To notice a bomb in the unit:

Routine, Demo, Electronic, 2 min (instant, uncertain, unskilled OK).

Referee: The bomb will be spotted on 'Total Truth'. On 'Some Truth' something amiss will be noticed. A second roll can be made to determine the exact nature of the anomaly although subject to a successful determination check.

To determine the state of the device:

Routine, Demo, Int, 1 min (uncertain).

Referee: On 'Total Truth' reveal the fact that the bomb will explode in 10 minutes from the moment you give the result of the task (the counter can be seen). On

'Some Truth' tell the players that the timer has entered the final countdown (in reality the counter is faulty and there is a full 10 minutes to go) - this could be fun!

The bomb is one of five, each situated in one of the five support pillars. Each is connected up to the power sub-system and is due to go off simultaneously. The explosion will cause a overload which would rupture the tower's power plant - not only would this bring the tower down, the secondary explosion of the power plant would destroy a large portion of central Kendricks-Alaal.

To disable the bomb use the task above. The counter will stop if the task is Successful thus removing the uncertainty, unless of course, you decide to be cruel and make them sweat!

4: Bang!

The power supply unit explodes as the PCs Leave the pillar.

Location: Within one of the support pillars of the Govinti Tower.

Scene: You have just had the scare of the your lives. A chance chase of a thief into one of the support pillars led to the discovery of a powerful bomb hooked up to the tower's power circuits. Having success fully disabled it, whether by accident or design, you are now faced notifying the authorities. As you exit the pillar you hear a muffled explosion behind you.

Action: The detonator has exploded despite the PCs intervention: lucky they lift the site! The detonator exploded when a circuit-breaker within the power unit ignited under the power build up. This didn't trigger the main charge luckily.

The PCs may or may not to search for any other devices on their own (there are four others, one in each of the support pillars. hooked up in an identical way), but the authorities must be informed of the situation. The Hellan Customs Inspectorate (the de facto police force) have little experience in dealing , with incidents like this, and terrorism in general. They will try to enlist the characters' help if they have the requisite skills (e.g. Demolitions) to deal with further explosive devices. The characters can expect substantial, remuneration for their cooperation (although the exact amount/value should be decided at a Later date depending on their overall success).

The other bombs have also been hooked up to the local supply and have been synchronised to detonate four hours from when the PCs alert the HCI.

To gauge the impact of a single bomb:

Routine, Engineer, Demo or Electronics, 1 min (uncertain).

Referee: On 'some truth' indicate that the device would do mainly cosmetic damage to the inside of the pillar, although there would be the risk of fires and power

blackouts. A result 'total truth' will lend itself to the following facts: a number of these devices set in identical places set to explode at the same time could have catastrophic consequences - although there is only a very small risk of direct structural damage the pillars that could destabilise the tower the real threat is through the power surge created as the Power sub-units are disabled. The surge would in all probability lead to an instability in the fusion plant supplying the tower. If the fusion plant instability reaches a critical threshold (and it would do so very quickly) the plant could detonate. Scratch one city.

To locate the other devices:

Routine, Recon, Int, 2 min.

Referee: Once the first of the remaining devices are found reduce the difficulty level to simple. Hasty and cautious task modifiers apply.

To disable the devices:

Use the task in nugget 3. Hasty and cautious task modifiers apply.

This section is basically a race against time to locate and disable the bombs. Coupled to this is the impact of an evacuation of the tower, arrival of fire and medical team, to increase the state of panic in the tower have a couple of small fires break out to slow the progress through one support pillar, short power cuts and/or similar things. The PCs should succeed unless you want to level Kendricks-Alaal!

5: Fingering the Culprits.

The party try and track down those responsible for planting the bombs.

Location: Throughout the city of Kendricks-Alaal, Hellas.

Scene: You are sitting in the bar frequented by the local Police force (the HCI - the Hellan Customs Inspectorate) as a quest of some of the officers you had been cooperating with in locating and disarming the bombs. The rather large barman stretches up to the holo vid and switches channels. He turns up the volume as a news program comes on air "Main news this evening - the discovery of a series of explosive devices designed to bring down the Govinti tower. All the devices were successfully disarmed by a team involving HCI Officers and off-world experts." To this a big cheer goes up and there are hearty slaps on the back for all ... "there is no news as yet as to discovery of those responsible for this near-outrage Hold on. I have just been informed that representative of the Red Eagles has contacted our switchboard to claim responsibility for the bombs. More news on that in a moment..."

Following this news the PCs will be invited to a briefing by the local forensic officer who has been having a close examination of one of the devices. This brief will conclude that the bombs were made out of a mix of local and "foreign" parts - the majority appear to originate in Ilelish space. The "local" parts appear to

have been made on Hellas. The tracking down of the local parts should be relatively simple as the parts carry an identification and serial numbers - there are only a small number of suppliers of electronic equipment on Hellas. The manufacturers of the parts will send them out in batches with parts having consecutive serial numbers. Casual inquiries should be able to track down the suppliers of the parts found with the bombs.

The particular supplier in question is of Solomani extraction and has close ties with the Solomani Peoples Party. The proprietor can be handed over to the HCI who would obviously be interested in his political connections. The PCs may wish to conduct their own questioning of the proprietor.

To interrogate any person:

Difficult, off= Inter, Int; def=, Int, (uncertain, confrontation).

Referee: Of course, success depends upon whether the subject has something interesting to say. On 'Total truth' reveal the following (slowly); the items picked out from the bombs can be traced back to a single sale three weeks earlier. An examination of the sales records will jog the proprietor's memory - he will remember selling the items to some foreign gentlemen. He noted their accents and believes they were from the Bolivar region. The men did give an address, which he has in his sales ledger, but he reckons there will be little joy from this address as it is probably false.

The HCI will be content to arrest the hapless proprietor as a co-conspirator in the bombing plot. The proprietor will be unable to give any details on the men who bought the electronics. The HCI officer will assume that the man is covering up for his co-conspirators and will be charged.

The PCs will now be required to sit before a pre-trial hearing on the proprietor in a few days time.

6. Fingering the Real Culprits.

The characters track down the group who have planted the bombs in the tower.

Location: Within the Hellan capital of Kendricks-Alaal.

Scene: You have participated in the tracing of those responsible for the planting of explosive devices and you are now waiting to act as witnesses in a pre-trial hearing of the supplier of some of the bomb parts. You have an address to which the mysterious figures involved in the bomb threat are supposed to have resided.

Action: Inquiries into the address will lead the PCs to a small cheap hotel in the run-down section of the city. The hotel is sloppy and does not keep up-to-date records of all its guests. The owner will usually turn a blind eye to minor regulations if the price is right.

If the characters wish to enquire as to the mysterious foreigners then there are a number of approaches that

they can take to gather further information on them. Asking at the desk will show not get them far however as the clerk at reception will be uncooperative without either a bribe or a threat of violence.

Money or intimidation will reveal the following information: the desk clerk remembers two foreigners booking a room for the night last week but he doesn't believe they actually stayed in the room. The clerk on duty in the morning found a bill for the double room and payment left on the desk. No-one had seen the pair leave and the maid noticed that the bed had not been slept in. A cursory glance by the maid into the adjoining bathroom seemed to indicate that the room had itself been undisturbed. No-one has used the room since.

Again a bribe or threat - might get the characters into the room to give it a search, or alternatively the PCs could book the room for the night if they wish to search the room and get any other information out of a couple of the guests (who are out at the moment). Another possible way of getting into the room if bribery or threats of violence fail is to break in.

To bribe the clerk into letting the PCs to search the room:

Routine, Bribery, Soc (confrontation, uncertain, hazardous)

Referee: the character must make a cash offer of Cr.180. If the cash offer by the player is lower than this limit, increase the task difficulty. On failure the clerk will indicate that the player should offer more. On exceptional failure the clerk will ignore the approach. Subsequent attempts will be reported to the HCI if they fail.

To gain access to the room by coercion:

Difficult, Persuasion, Str (confrontation, hazardous)

Referee: the clerk will give access to the room on success or better. On failure the clerk will indicate that he can handle himself and that the PCs won't get in unless they pay. On exceptional failure the clerk will pull a shotgun from under the desk and will order the characters to leave. Roll on the mishap table in the latter case: on 'Destroyed' the clerk will fire at the centre of the PCs' group. Resolve any combat if the PCs elect to fight. The HCI will not be pleased but the PCs cooperation should clear them of any firearms charges.

To break into the room:

Routine, Intrusion, Int, 1 min (hazardous)

Referee: The only problem with failure is that the characters may attract a maid or some other hotel employee. Roll a mishap on exceptional failure and engineer an encounter with a porter on a result of major or destroyed.

Having got into the room the characters will obviously want to search for clues.

To search the room for clues about the occupiers:

Formidable, Forensic, Int, 5 min (uncertain, hazardous, unskilled OK).

Referee: Each member of the party may attempt this

task if they are all prepared to get on their hands and knees to look for clues. Hasty and cautious task modifiers apply. Only one PC can have complete success ('total truth'). The clue that the PCs are looking for is a small piece of paper upon which is a ten-digit number.

This is crumpled and worn: 76-035-98476. This number is a holophone number (a 3-D videophone) of a warehouse in the industrial district of Kendricks-Alaal. This may not be apparent to the PCs at first. A casual enquiry will give them this answer if they can't think of it themselves. If the characters decide to contact the people at the other end of the holophone (during the day) they will be recognised from their appearance on the local holovision news broadcasts about the bombs in the Govinti Tower and will become targets if they come into range of the Ilesish agents/sympathisers

Going through, the HCI would probably be the quickest route to obtain an address matching the holophone number. The HCI officers will be curious at this request although they will pass over the information freely. The PCs are free to reveal, as much or as little information or theories they have. The officers will be interested but unable to act without concrete evidence as the ease is closed to all intents and purposes. If the characters reveal any of their plans (like breaking into the warehouse) then the HCI men will tell them to be careful, and pretend that had not heard this.

Once the PCs have the address of the warehouse then they can try a direct approach and bluff their way in or try breaking in (once again). Adapt the appropriate task presented above. The warehouse office will be the key to real culprits.

To uncover something useful in a search of the warehouse:

Difficult, Forensic, Int, 15 min (uncertain, hazardous, unskilled OK).

Referee: Each member of the party can roll on this task although only one can have success. On 'Total truth' the party will discover a partly burnt message. If the PCs decide to search the office first then reduce the task level to routine and the time increment to 7 minutes.

Upon the piece of paper will be a message written in the Ilesish dialect:

"...all the devices and should detonate two days after we ... distraction to cover aspects principle operation. Despite the loss of our esteemed comrade [doctor K] are safe; the release ... [several words]... two weeks on Veluishim. Clear up the loose ends."

This evidence will probably convince the authorities that the proprietor of the electronics firm is innocent of involvement with the bomb plot. But they will be virtually powerless to apprehend those really responsible. A raid on the warehouse will turn up nothing extra of importance. The warehouse has just been sold, the original owner will have disappeared - an investigation into his business and personal, financial

accounts will show a withdrawal of his entire wealth, the recent sale of the warehouse (and associated business) and a open high passage for six jumps the yesterday.

END-PIECE

The characters are now free to pursue whichever course they so desire - you the referee should extend the ending of this scenario once the main points have been passed through/by. The players may want to pursue the bomb makers and the mysterious (if not dead) Dr.K's involvement on Veluishim (Old Suns).

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR: THE HAMANOK CONSPIRACY, PART IV.

HEARTS & FLOWERS

This is a Megatraveller adventure set on the planet Elysium, located in Ushra subsector in the Dagudashaag sector.

of satellite towns. Around these are the huge farms that the world is famous for. The rest of the world is still largely unexplored wilderness, with who knows what sort of beauties or dangers lurking.

SYSTEM

The system contains eight major bodies, including four gas giants. There are sixteen major satellites orbiting the many gas giants and worlds of the system. Elysium orbits in the habitable zone of Shangrilla, the system primary.

THE SITUATION

The players take the rolls of the Senior officers of the Security Forces for one of the secondary cities on Elysium. The positions open to the players are: Head of either the Police, Army or local militia OR their Second In Commands.

POLITICAL SITUATION

Elysium supports a population of 70,000 people, almost all humans of Imperial descent. They are ruled by a self perpetuating oligarchy made up of a Monarch, the Royal Family, and the members of various advisory councils. Ranged below these is a judiciary made up of peers, landowners, and trained lawyers, who both make and interpret the laws. Below them is an extensive bureaucracy that includes the police force, the local militia and the army.

Local laws tend to cover two main areas: trade and loyalty to the Monarch. The trade Laws cover all manner of items, but are largely designed to prevent foodstuffs and the like being imported. Recently they have been modified to prevent the import of weapons. Loyalty to the Monarch is rather more difficult to define, but basically means that no member of the population may speak out against the ruling classes or may own or produce material likely to cause dissatisfaction with the present status quo. Penalties for breaking the laws tend to be harsh, and execution for treason is a commonplace event.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

A large amount of the planet is uncolonised, and almost all of the population live in two cities. The single largest city is where the starport and offworld settlement is located. Dotted around it are a number

THE POLICE

Group Command consists of:- Chief Lieutenants (x3), Corporals (x2).

Under these there are three squads each consisting of one Sergeant and three teams of four Enforcers. These teams are called Able, Baker and Charlie.

Each squad normally works an eight hour shift with sixteen hours off. This means one day in three they work two shifts and one shift for the next two days

Arms and equipment

The Law Enforcers are all equipped with cloth armour and are armed with the following: Auto shotguns with tranq ammo, handcuffs, clubs and 9mm Magnum pistols. Charlie team of the Third squad is the SWAT team with 7mm rifles instead of the shotguns.

The Law Enforcers also have ten Police cars and two ATVs available to them. For details of the vehicles see '101 Vehicles':

No 54 (Letra Ground Car) x 10.

No 55 (Bundan Wheeled ATV) x 2.

Each vehicle is equipped with a 5km radio range.

The Enforcers also have any reasonable equipment up to tech level 6 that is allowed by law level 3 at the referee's discretion.

THE LOCAL MILITIA

The militia are local troops, raised from in and around the city. Normally they would be part-time soldiers, used as auxiliaries in support of the local army or in such incidences as disaster relief. While they might be less than reliable in foreign wars they have a vested interest in preserving the local status quo and because of this, are reliable and highly loyal.

Company Command Group consists of: Captain, Company Sergeant Major, Lance Corporals (x2), Privates (x6).

Under these are two platoons each with their own Command Group consisting of:

Lieutenant, Sergeant, Lance Corporal, Privates (x3)

Each platoon is further divided into three squads each made up of three teams. Each squad is led by either a Lance Sergeant or a Corporal with each team comprising of a Corporal and three Privates.

Equipment

All Militia soldiers wear standard military uniforms and have Flack Jackets for personal protection. Officers, who pay for their own uniforms, have cloth armour. The soldiers all have Auto rifles, the NCOs have SMGs, and officers have Auto pistols. Each platoon has a Light Machine Gun TL6, and the company has four 7cm AT GL-6.

For transport the company is equipped with eight military versions of the 'Bundan' class wheeled ATV, and two military versions of the 'Letra' class ground vehicle. All the vehicles have hardpoints, and are equipped with 50km radios. Although the vehicles have hardpoints, weapons are only fitted as needed, rather than on a permanent basis.

THE SECURITY FORCES

These are the forces assigned by Lucan to maintain the peace. They are effectively one platoon in strength, but the platoon is made up of oddments from several different units of the local militia and the police.

Command Group consists of: Major, Sergeant Major, Flight Sergeant (2 x Hartford Tech level 6 helicopters), Aircraft hands (x3).

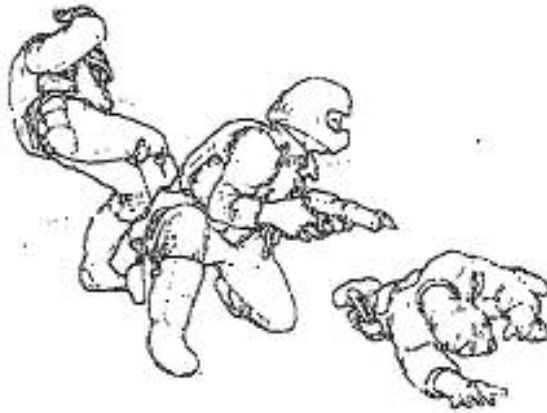
Under these the platoon is split into three squads of four teams, each squad led by a Second Lieutenant. In First squad, teams Able and Baker each have a Tech level 8 Fusillade Armoured Car while teams Charlie and Delta are equipped with a Tech level 8 Very Light Recon ATV, each. In Second squad, Able team is armed with 4 Tech level 8 Sepoy APC. Each team comprises of a Corporal and three Privates. The First Squad is from a cavalry unit and, apart

from their vehicles are equipped with cloth armour, Snub Pistol 10mm Auto's or Assault Rifle 7mm as personal weapons, and 5km personal radios.

Able team of the Second Squad is the platoons transport team and may transport up to 44 passengers in their APCs. They are also equipped as the First Squad.

Baker and Charlie teams of the Second and Third Squads are equipped with cloth armour and Assault rifles, each man also has a 5km radio. Each team also has a 4cm RAM Auto GL-8, as a support weapon.

Able team of the Third Squad is an Elite Imperial Marine group equipped to tech level 15 - Assault battle dress, Gauss rifles, Grav belts, PGMP 14, Map boxes, and battle computers.



THE PROBLEM (REFEREE ONLY)

The main campaign centres around the activities of the security forces, their actions being the catalyst for guerrilla activity. This does not mean that the players are in command of the situation, frequently it's the reverse! Firstly, the security forces will have to do a lot of moving around.

This is unfortunate as it leaves them very vulnerable, but it is inevitable. It is a sad fact of life that an illiterate peasant with a gauss rifle can kill the best troops anywhere if they are caught on the move.

To prevent acts of terrorism the security forces must patrol the city. Each patrol has the following values:

Each Foot Patrol (regardless of size) value 1
Each land vehicle has a value of 4
Each flying vehicle has a value of 9

For each day that you have a value of 20 in patrols on the street all day, you may attempt the following tasks:

To intercept Terrorists before they act:

Routine, Number, Recon, 1 day absolute.

The number is found on the Civilian Reaction Table.

If this task is made then one of the patrols has intercepted the terrorists on the way to their outrage. Also for every 2d6 days of patrolling the city allows one attempt at the Intelligence task below.

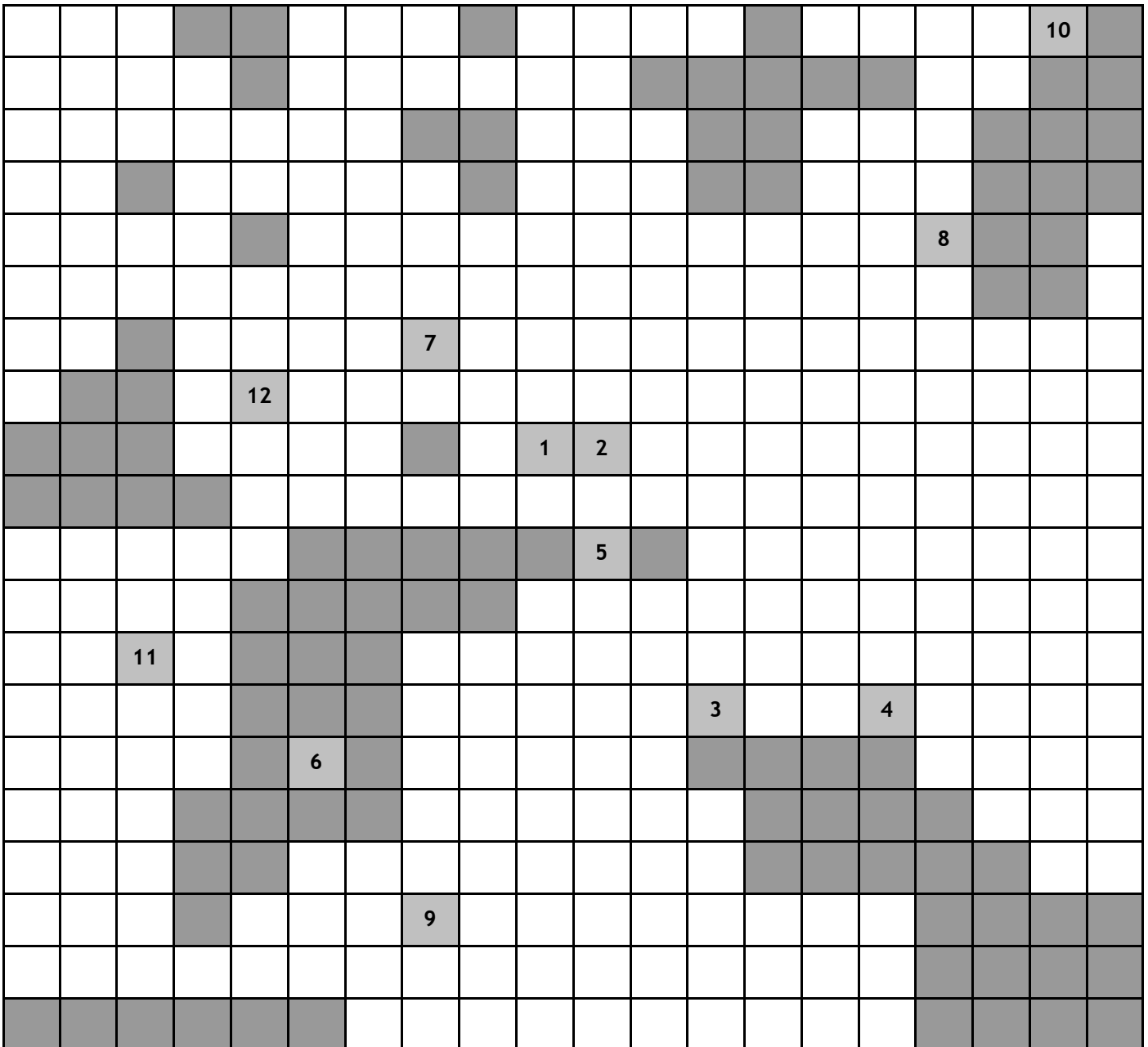
To gather Intelligence while on patrol:

Difficult, Number, Streetwise, 2d6 days absolute.

The number is found on the Civilian Reaction Table.

If this task is made then roll on the following table:

1. Evidence of guerrilla contacting town.*
2. Food/Money cache found.
3. Weapons cache and 1d6 terrorists found.
4. Taxman or Political activist caught.



Map Key

Block Building Number (Light Grey squares)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Police Station. The Police station is a large imposing structure. built from reinforced plasticrete. It consists of a central building with three stories, surrounded by landscaped grounds. There are all manner of outer buildings, mainly used as garages and workshops. 2. Town Hall. This is a collection of interlinked 3 story office blocks, which house all the civic functions of this city. Court chambers, tax offices, and all the other petty officials needed to run the town work from here. 3. Library/Data processing building. A large low building in landscaped surrounds, this houses the civic library and art gallery as well as a link to the planetary data net that has been set up and run by off world corporations. 4. University. This old building is only the main campus of the local place of adult education, other units exist in several of the residential zones of the city. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Mass transit station. A combined bus and train station. 6. Power generation station. 7. Jail. 8. Military Barracks/Compound. 9. TV /Radio station. 10. Diplomatic/Off World/ Corporation Buildings. 11. Financial Center. 12. Local Militia Base. |
|--|---|

White squares Residential/commercial buildings.
 Grey squares Industrial/warehousing.

City Map Pop: about 20,000
Each Square = 1 Block (Pop: about 50)

5. Small freedom fighter group found by patrol (1 to 6 in number)
6. Forward base (Terrorist) found (2-20 guerrillas present)

* If evidence is found then you may try to lay an ambush for the guerrillas. Ambushes must be laid discreetly, or else they will not work. A few soldiers dropped off by a passing patrol, or special forces teams in civilian clothes are the idea. Reinforcements should be available in case things get too hot for them.

To ambush terrorists:

Difficult, Number, Stealth, 48 minutes (Fateful)
 The number is found on the Civilian Reaction Table.
 If the task fails then your ambushing group group is itself ambushed. What walks into your ambush or ambushes you.

- 1-3 Small party (1-6)
- 4-5 Combat team (3-18)
- 6 Team of Tech level 15 Mercenaries (Hostile)

Just to make things difficult for the security forces for each patrol they send out roll on the Patrol Table. Also roll on this table when anything moves outside the security forces' bases, whether they are a supply convoy, reinforcements, a search and destroy team or just the CO on a Sunday drive.

To locate saboteur:

Difficult, Number, Forensic, 1 day (absolute)
 The number is found on the civilian reaction table.
 On fumble wrong person is charged -1 to civilian reaction table.

This table is modified in a similar way to the guerrilla alert table, by the following values:

- +1 each civilian/police/militia killed (by both terrorists and security forces)
- +1 every dead or captured soldier in guerrilla hands

Patrol Table

01-69	Nothing happens
70-74	Route blocked/Sabotage discovered
75-85	Booby Trap- Only found 60% of the time before it goes off bang.
86-89	Sniper takes pot shot at patrol
90	Weapons cache found with 1-6 guerrillas present
91-95	Small party found 1-6 guerrillas
96-98	Guerrilla combat group 3-18 members + 1 heavy weapon
99	Guerrilla base found 2-20 members present
100	Team of Tech level 15 hostile mercenaries encountered

The guerrillas will be active according to the following table, the referee is responsible for keeping track of the alert status.

Guerrilla alert table

(Starts at 0 when players begin)

< 1	1 act of terrorism per day (see terror table)
1-9	1 in 6 chance of terrorism per day
10-29	1 in 10 chance of terrorism per day, no combat group out in daytime
30-59	1 in 10 chance of terrorism per day, no small parties away from bases
60-89	1 in 20 chance of terrorism per day, no night-time combat groups
90-119	1 in 20 chance of terrorism per day, no major units/night assaults
120-149	1 in 20 chance of terrorism per day, 1/2 numbers in bases, no snipers
150-199	No terrorism, no booby traps, no guerrillas outside bases, chance of terrorist defection. Alert level -150%
200+	Area pacified. Players win?

This table is modified as below:

- +1 each guerrilla killed/captured/defected
- +5 each guerrilla leader killed
- +10 each guerrilla base/cache/taxman or political activist found
- +1 each personal weapon lost by terrorists
- 2 each personal weapon captured by terrorists
- +1 each heavy weapon lost by terrorists
- 1 each heavy weapon captured by terrorists
- 1 each new recruit to terrorists

As can be seen, the above table shows a slow change of tactics on the terrorists' part from offensive operations to consolidation to a final collapse of morale. You will find the value drops at the start of play but as the security forces get their act together it should slowly climb.

- +5 each dead mayor/successful attack/act of sabotage
 - +10 each security force base captured by terrorists
 - -5 election held and winner still alive at end of election campaign
 - -1 each point on guerrilla alert table over 100
- To interrogate captured terrorist:**
Simple, interrogation, interview, 2 hours.
On a success roll, below for what they know.
- | | |
|-------|--|
| 01-89 | knows nothing |
| 90-95 | gives you details to enable set up of ambush |
| 96-97 | gives you date and location of next act of terrorism |
| 98-99 | gives you location of political activist |
| 100 | gives you location of a guerrilla base |

This table requires a bit of common sense to work. Civilians killed deliberately or “accidentally” by the players count, as do those executed for crimes against the freedom fighters.

At some point, the security forces will capture a terrorist alive, at which point they can question him/her.

Terror Table

(Roll on as required by Guerrilla Alert Table above.)

01-49	Some minor crime committed requiring the police, etc. to respond
50-59	2d6 angry locals stone a patrol
60-69	An attack is carried out by a combat group'
70-77	Infiltrator commits an act of sabotage ²
78-82	2d6 guerrillas lay ambush on a road
83-88	2d6 civilians executed for treason against guerrillas
89-92	Grenade attack. A terrorist throws a grenade at a passing patrol
93-96	Sniper shoots someone
97-99	25kg bomb planted
100	2d20 per thousand civilians riot

As you can see, the aim of these attacks is twofold, killing security forces personnel and spreading dissatisfaction amongst the population.

Civilian Reaction Table

This is a measure of how popular the security forces are/are not, and how effective guerrilla recruiting is. The start point for this table is 50 at the beginning of the campaign.

Below 0	All deny guerrilla support None join the guerrillas +2
0-19	Favour security forces 1 in 1,000 join guerrillas per week +1
20--59	Neutral; 1 in 2,000 join guerrillas per week
60--79	Favour guerrillas; 1 in 5,000 join guerrillas per week --1
80-99	Hostile to security forces 1 in 10,000 join guerrillas per week -7_
100+	Civilian population revolts All join guerrillas. Players lose.

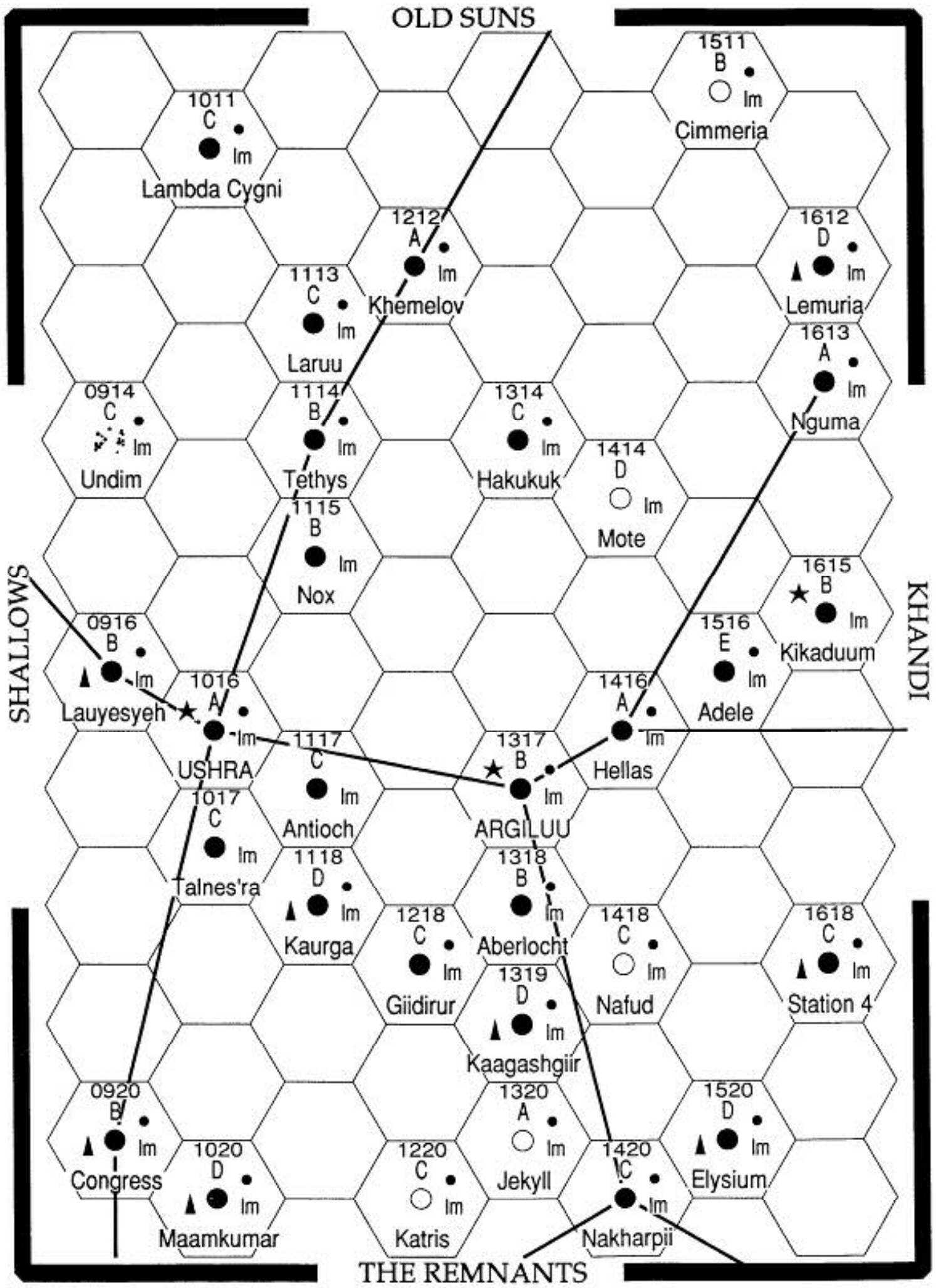
- [1] Targets for attack are in order; the Mayor (or similar), the Police, the Army, or 2d6 civilian government employees.
- [2] Targets for sabotage are communications, power lines, or schools (burnt down). To capture saboteur,

LIBRARY DATA: USHRA

Duchy Capital: Ushra

Individually, the system of Ushra is important, having had a major effect on the political structure of Dagudashaag since the middle of the Long Night - at its height (at about -300 to -120) the Ushran Empire covered two-thirds of the present Duchy, plus part of neighbouring Zeda subsector. The subsector as a whole is now important, as a communications link between Medurma and the subsectors of Mimur and Zeda.

Undim	0914	C000343-A	Lo Ni AS	514	Im K7 V	M4 D
Lauyesyeh	0916	B7678AC-C	S	504	Im K0 V	
Congress	0920	8545048-8	S Lo Ni	214	Im M0 II	
Lambda						
Cygni	1011	C679443-A	Ni	404	Im A2 V	M1 D
USHRA	1016	A625943-G	N Hi In	933	Im M4 V	
Talnes'ra	1017	C365845	8 Ri	520	Im M0 V	M9 D
Maamkumar	1020	D535010	7 S Lo Ni	904	Im K3 V	
Lnrui	1113	C521111-7	Lo Ni Po	404	Im M5 V	
Tethys	1114	B89A241-C	Lo Ni Wa	111	Im M7 V	M0 D
Nox	1115	B9A5446-A	C0 Ni Fl	220	Im M4 V	
Antioch	1117	C445741-8	Ag	700	Im K3 V	M8 D
Kaurga	1118	D686411-4	S Ni	601	Im M4 V	M6 D
Khemelov	1212	A772697-C	Ni	612	Im G1 V	
Lasiimshim	1218	C221557-A	Ni Po	601	Im A5 III	M1 D
Katris	1220	C410478-9	Ni	602	Im M2 V	M5 D
Hakukuk	1314	C594447-6	Ni	911	Im M0 V	
ARGILUU	1317	866A997-C	N Hi wa	114	Im M8 II	
Aberlocht	1318	B344357-E	Lo Ni	704	Im M8 V	
Kaagashgiir	1319	D553113-7	S Lo Ni Po	904	Im M9 V	M3 D
Jekyll	1320	A130458-F	Ni Po De	624	Im M7 II	M6 D
Mote	1414	D100420-8	Ni Va	210	Im K2 V	
Hellas	1416	A55567C-C	Ag Ni	603	Im M3 V	
Nafud	1418	C430773-7	Na Po De	114	Im K4 V	M9 D
Nakharpii	1420	C755400-A	Ni	714	Im K2 V	
Cimmeria	1511	8110878-A	Na	603	Im M0 V	
Adele	1516	E676559-A	Ag Ni	104	Im M6 III	M2 V M6 V
Elysium	1520	0765443-5	S Ni	714	Im M2 V	
Lemuria	1612	D68948A-9	S Ni	103	Im M1 V	M7 VI M3 D
Nguma	1613	A9E3546-F	Ni Fl	422	Im M1 V	M7 V
Kikaduum	1615	B351459-C	N Ni Po	410	Im M4 V	
Station						
Four	1618	C445000-9	S Lo Ni Ba	202	Im M1 IV	



OLD SUNS

SHALLOWS

KHANDI

THE REMNANTS

1011 C
● Im
Lambda Cygni

1511 B
○ Im
Cimmeria

1212 A
● Im
Khemelov

1612 D
● Im
Lemuria

1113 C
● Im
Laruu

1613 A
● Im
Nguma

0914 C
● Im
Undim

1114 B
● Im
Tethys

1314 C
● Im
Hakukuk

1414 D
○ Im
Mote

1115 B
● Im
Nox

1615 B
★ Im
Kikaduum

0916 B
● Im
Lauyesyeh

1016 A
● Im
USHRA

1416 A
● Im
Hellas

1117 C
● Im
Antioch

1317 B
★ Im
ARGILUU

1017 C
● Im
Talnes'ra

1118 D
● Im
Kaurga

1318 B
● Im
Aberlocht

1218 C
● Im
Giidirur

1418 C
○ Im
Nafud

1618 C
● Im
Station 4

0920 B
● Im
Congress

1020 D
● Im
Maamkumar

1319 D
● Im
Kaagashgiir

1220 C
○ Im
Katris

1320 A
○ Im
Jekyll

1420 C
● Im
Nakharpii

1520 D
● Im
Elysium

Aberlocht 1318 B344357-E Lo Ni 704 Im M8 V

Aberlocht is a frozen iceball of a planet with apparently no resources. An orbital starport is maintained for refueling and repairs but the planet itself is considered off-limits. Originally a base was established to allow weapons testing on the surface but that was closed down in 756. The system is still classed at a high technology level and, it is rumoured. The local Ushran Navy has re-established a weapons research base on the surface. While the Ushran Navy has confirmed that a small base has been established on the surface they have denied that it is currently involved in weapons testing.

Adele 516 E676559-A Ag Ni 104 Im M6 III M2 V M6 V

Adele is one of the important agricultural exporters of Ushra. The most productive areas are the temperate latitudes: in between the large desert equatorial regions and the transient polar ice-caps.

Another potentially rich agricultural world lies deep within the Adele system. Miagrathe orbits at 0.4 AUs around the tight pair of M-class stars that are the far companions of the central star, Agran. Miagrathe (Y556000-0) has yet to be extensively surveyed despite the attentions of the IISS looking for suitable worlds with colonisation potential. Recent speculation that Sternmetal have made overtures to the subsector government for the purchase of Miagrathe has sent a number of hopefuls off to the planet in search of valuable ores.

Agadua

<Mush, Stipple>

A flour created by grinding down the tuberous roots of the Agadua plant which only grows in the tundra of Antioch. Agadua retains its succulent flavour indefinitely and is considered a favourite dessert throughout the Core regions of the Imperium.

Antioch 1117 C445741-8 Ag 700 Im K3 V M8 D

Much of this world is extremely cold. This has made gathering of the Agadua crop extremely difficult. Most are gathered using remotely piloted vehicles or (occasionally) by robots.

Antioch is also a rich source of raw materials for several Ushran industries and corporations who are the main employers on the planet. The mining is done within environmentally controlled domes.

During the First Imperium an artists' enclave was established here. Although wiped out during the Long Night, the tradition has continued and Antioch ice sculptures are exhibited as far away as Terra.

ARGILUU 1317 B68A997-C N Hi Wa 114 Im M8 II

The world of Argiluu is literally a "molten snowball": the crust, and much of the mantle of this formerly icy outer gas giant satellite, melted when its primary star evolved off the main sequence. Argiluu's world-ocean is at least 60 kilometres deep, according to current estimates, its depths beyond the range of the most advanced densitometers. Terraforming has converted the original ammonia-water vapour atmosphere into a breathable nitrogen-oxygen mix.

The world has no land-masses as such - major settlements are tunnelled into huge naturally-occurring rafts of foamed carbonaceous material known as "tarballs". Valuable organic chemicals are extracted from the tar, and the seawater is also rich in dissolved minerals.

Argiluu derives from the Old High Vilani for "no sound ocean" - the primitive sonar systems used in the earliest Vilani surveys produced no returns in many areas of the world-ocean.

Arkayne LIC.

Originally founded as a joint venture between the Vilani industrialist Kugmika Arkuukhumlar, and the gifted gravitics researcher Dr. William Kayne in 412, Arkayne has since grown to become one of the largest gravitic technology suppliers in the Imperial Core. Arkayne is a major supplier of reactionless thrusters and inertial compensator systems to the Imperial Navy. Gravitic vehicle manufacture forms only a small part of Arkayne's turnover. The company's designs are advanced, though generally uncompetitively priced as compared with rival vehicles from GTL (Argi) and IGI. Arkayne's president Daan Corey, has however expressed an interest in expanding this division of the company. A tradewar seems imminent.

Stock Ownership: Arkuukhumlar family 17%, Kayne-Weston Investments LIC 25%, Zirunkariish 18%, Skuissa'mr-S'mak SIA 9%, Simalr family 2%, Viisarikaa family 4%, other Imperial nobility 7%, private ownership 28%

Burgo Hellan Ice Championship Trophy, The

At the triennial Hellan Ice Championships, the Burgo Trophy is the premier prize offered for the best all round performer in: downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, ski-jumping and slalom. Along with the trophy and the title as Hellan Ice Champion goes a prize of Cr.125,000. The current holder of the Burgo Trophy (as of 1115) is Kywa Tu of Jekyl. Kywa Tu has recently come under close scrutiny by the Championship Administrative Committee following allegations of drug use.

Cimmeria 1511 B110878-A Na 803 Im M0 V

A world almost tidally locked. It rotates once every 35 (std) days while the world orbits its star, Crom, every 46.7 days. This results in the nights on Cimmeria being extremely cold. The population, mostly composed of Scandanavians, has remained within the original five settlements, each of which has become an independant state. Because of politically motivated aggression between the settlements conflict and war has become a permanent feature of Cimmerian life. To prevent disaster befalling the settlements such conflicts have become ritualised in style and are fought on Sonya, one of the outer worlds, to prevent civilian casualties. These wars are holovised and the winning "teams", volunteers all, are treated as local celebrities.

Congress 0920 B545048-8 S Lo Ni 214 Im M0 II

Congress is a hermitage world which is run both as a religious seminary and a retreat by the Church of the Bethren.

The Tech level is deliberately kept down and large areas of the planet are left as wilderness to allow Church leaders and students to commune with nature. A small team of caretaker monks are the only permanent inhabitants.

The remarkable thing is that Congress had been a major industrial planet until 653 when, its natural resources exhausted the major stockholder, IPP, pulled out. The Church bought the planet for a pittance and proceeded to terraform it into the paradise it is today.

Cocchinus Deep Probe Project

Ongoing scientific research project into the internal composition of the brown dwarf in the Ushra system, led by UIIAT. The project uses the latest TL16 gravitic and neutrino probes, and is providing fascinating insights into this strange object. In 1098, the UIIAT launched Sundiver II, the first manned vessel to enter the outer envelope of a brown dwarf.

Concordance of Purity and Reason

<CPR, Coppers, Morality Police>

Minor political party on Ushra. The CPR are militant atheists whose objective is to eliminate all organised religion on Ushra. Their belief is that a consistent system of morals and ethics can be derived from scientific principles - anything else is "foolish superstition". The CPR have also set themselves up as arbiters of public morals, and seem to want to take Ushra's ectogenetic reproduction system to its logical conclusion, by legislating against sexual relationships of any kind.

The CPR has a strong Solomani element, which advocates "screening out" all alien (i.e. non-Solomani) genes in Ushra's next generation.

Best known outside Ushra for the private prosecution brought by the Concordance's leader Dr. Jarret Meade against the hyperrock group LightSpeed, on the grounds that their album 'Touch The Gold' was "grossly obscene". The unsuccessful action made wonderful publicity for the group, and the album remains one of the sector's best-sellers. It is rumoured that MakilaMedia, LightSpeed's agents, have sent Dr. Meade a sizeable cheque for "services rendered".

ContraTerrene Development Association

Organisation of Ushran scientists promoting the development of antimatter power for peaceful uses only. They have made several vocal indictments of Imperial Naval funding of weaponry research at the University of Ushra Institute of Advanced Technology (UIIAT).

Drexen Corporation LIC

<Drexler Enterprises>

A major Ushran corporation specialising in pharmaceuticals and nanotechnology. Believed to date from Rule of Man times, but no records of the company exist prior to an Ushran Empire Grand Fleet contract in -322. Through initial research work done by Dr. Karl Gantz, Drexen has developed several truly radical methods of exploiting the mineral wealth of Ushra using "molecular machines". Currently working on constructional nanotech and gantzic devices.

Stock Ownership: Caspian Holdings LIC 35%, Skuissa'mr-S'mak SIA 13%, Zirunkariish 10%, BioLogica SA 9%, Gantz family 5%, Viisarikaa family 3%, private ownership 9%, other holding companies 16%.

Elysium 1520 D765443-5 S Ni 714 Im M2 V

Despite its ideal conditions, Elysium has only two minor settlements. The planet is ruled over by a constitutional monarch, King Raoul III, and is a major meat exporter throughout the subsector. In recent years there has been several major disturbances concerning class' riots within the cities and visitors to the planet are advised to avoid wandering the streets without an official guide.

[See 'Hearts & Flowers']

Fillaslopu

This a plant that has single-handedly sponsored the colonisation and growth of the world of Hellas. The plant is remarkable in that it thrives at the low temperatures on Hellas where it is harvested for its

nutritious seeds. Tens of millions of plants are grown on the world producing millions of tons of seeds exported to the food markets of Ushra each year. The seeds are processed to yield high quality protein meat-substitute as well as a nutrient supplement. The seeds are also eaten whole as part of salads, stews, soups and sauces.

Gantz, Dr. Karl Immanuel

Brilliant nanotechnology researcher and emeritus professor of Developmental Nanochemistry at the University of Ushra (1037-1109). His theories led to the development of a new generation of truly practicable molecular machines. Their applications include extracting valuable elements from their ores, "growing" complex devices from their raw materials, and performing multiple programmed corrections to DNA molecules.

Karl Gantz died of a previously undetected pulmonary embolism in 1109. His stockholding in Drexen LIC passed to his son, Dr. Julian Gantz. There have been suggestions that Karl Gantz was in dispute with the company at the time of his death, but no evidence of foul play has been found.

gantzic (adj.)

(Refers to technological device) Self-repairing, using nanotechnological means.

HAMARAN

An intelligent simian-like race native to Tethys. Hamaran grow to a length of about 60cm from snout to prehensile tail and are one of the smallest intelligent races within the Imperium. They are bipedal and have two powerful arms which end in extremely dextrous paws with 5 digits arranged in a star-like symmetry. They have two pairs of eyes, each of which is capable of independent focus and movement. They are as intelligent as humans though with a much higher curiosity factor. Originally descended from island-dwelling hunter gatherers, at the time of their contact by the Vilani the Hamaran had reached a stable Tech 5 society but were near to collapse due to population problems. Because of their apparently natural affinity with electronics, Hamaran were allowed to return with the survey team. Within a hundred years, small settlements of Hamaran were established throughout the Sector though they never colonised a world on their own, preferring to partner humans in their endeavours. Most Hamaran today are to be found working in medicine or in the electronic or mechanical industries and a great many have become engineers amidst the Free Traders.

During the Psionic renaissance the Hamaran displayed strong taboo's against psionics and to this day have an intense racial hatred of psionic users. While extremely passive and gentle it should be noted that the Hamaran

display extremely violent behaviour when confronted by arachnid-like creatures.

Hellas 1416 A55567C-C Ag Ni 603 Im M3 V

Hellas was unpopulated until a survey by the Xenobiology unit of the University of Ushra in 677 identified Fillaslopu as a potential valuable food source. The success of the pilot farms ensured the influx of prospective farmers who set about trying to tame the frozen plains of Hellas.

The main city on Hellas, Kendricks-Alaal, developed round an atmospheric terraforming tower which was built to remove a sulphur taint from the atmosphere. The Tower was later decommissioned and stripped of the terraforming machinery and refitted as a residential area. It also serves as an atmospheric and environmental monitoring station, taking readings from the immediate locale and receiving data from a series of remote sensing satellites.

The Aslani make up a small but significant percentage of the total population (about 2%) on Hellas for it is estimated that this 2% hold approximately 22% of the total wealth.

[See 'Port of Call: Hellas']

Hakukuk 1314 C594447-6 Ni 911 Im M0 V

Hakukuk was originally colonised by a breakaway sect of the Church of Forever Sabbath. Of its original doctrines only two have survived, the Sacrament of Blood Letting and the Touch of Sin. Faithful followers, known as the "Chosen", believe that a person's Sill flows in their blood. As an act of repentance, and in order to seek forgiveness from Cruetha they are required to give of their blood, usually about a bowlful, each sacrament.

This means that the "Chosen" will not allow blood transplants without knowledge of its origins. The donor must be a member of the church and in good standing, the donation must have been taken immediately after sacrament and a Pastor must confirm these facts in writing. In reality, since most faithful are already severely anaemic, few donate blood.

The Touch of Sin is the doctrine that all non-followers of the church are unclean and can taint the faithful with their sin merely by being in their presence. This has resulted in a caste system. Non-followers and visitors are forbidden to enter into the presence of a "Chosen" except by undergoing ritual cleansing which results in the loss of about a litre of blood. If the cleansed then communicates (even by radio) or meets an unclean they are required to undergo the full ritual once more.

This doctrine has resulted in an almost total trade embargo to and from the planet.

INCHOK

Semi-intelligent species native to Nafud - the Inchok live in complex, communal burrows under the sandy surface of Nafud. They extract oxygen and water directly from the sand. The sand is taken into a special gut and chemically broken down to release the O₂ and the water which are reabsorbed into the bloodstream. Water is then reabsorbed by kidney-like structures. These organs are so efficient that virtually no water is lost during normal metabolism.

The Inchok are deaf - they sense each other (and more importantly their prey) through vibrations set up by their movements in the sand. Basic communications between the Inchok is achieved through 'drumming' signals onto compact sand using a spade-like tail; vibrations are picked up by special sensitive pads found on the underside of the limbs.

INSS <later FMSS> Julianne Viisarikaa, BCL-9984

First vessel in the new Duke class of light battlecruisers under construction at EdenHome Naval Shipyards. Formerly the Cleon Zhunastu, now named after Sector Duchess Julianne Viisarikaa, a major military figure of the First Civil War, who was instrumental in installing Emperor Cleon V on the Iridium Throne. Technical Level:16. Displacement: 100,000 tonnes. Primary Weaponry: Class U Meson Accelerator. Jump-4. 6-G.

Believed to be equipped with the latest Arkayne 100-ton gravitic effector bays, which are able to function as both tractors and repulsors. Laid down: 237-1115. Projected Launch date: 295-1118

Jekyll 1320 A130458-F Ni Po De 624 Im M7 V M6 D

The name is taken from an ancient Terran novel 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', given by the solomani who settled on this world. It is a story of a doctor who uses drugs to change his personality to open up and release his darker side. The analogy was drawn when the settlers first experienced the wildly fluctuating climate. At the equator the summer temperature switches from 65°C to -11°C between day and night. At the same latitude the temperature changes between 65°C and -64°C from summer to winter. There are more extreme fluctuations at higher latitudes. This has kept colonisation to a minimum, but the world is well served with a class A starport as Jekyll is an important transport nexus within the subsector.

Kaagashgiir 1319 D553113-7 S Lo Ni Po 904 Im M9 V M3 D

Kaagashgiir belongs to the Imperial Navy and was originally used as a planetary bombardment range. When the navy pulled out the planet was colonised under squatter's rights by several small salvage companies who survive by selling wreckage.

Katris 1220 C41047B-9 Ni 602 Im M2 V M5 D

The Katris system would be largely uninteresting were it not for the fact that a huge space battle occurred here during the Interstellar Wars era. The battle was fought on the edge of the system, close to the star's Oort cloud.

Although no-one has been able to actually locate the site, lumps of wreckage and even whole sections of ships occasionally tumble into the system, taking up a cometary orbit round the star. These are worth a fortune on the collector's market and are highly prized by historians and archaeologists. Oddly, all the wreckage recovered so far has been Vilani.

Kaurga 1118 D686411-4 S Ni 601 Im M4 V M6 D

Kaurga is wholly-owned by the Kaurga Agroproduce Combine (usually known as "KaurCorp"). The company was established in the last years of the Ziru Sirka, with the purpose of producing furs and high-quality agroproducts for off-world markets. With the onset of the Long Night, the population became introverted, and lost much of its technology. With the pleasant conditions on Kaurga, the inhabitants found that they were content with a lower level of technology.

Although the planetary government retains its corporate nature, off-world trading has only just resumed, and is still at a low level. Because of their exclusive nature, Kaurgan products can command an extremely high price.

The Ushran government has expressed an interest in building class-B orbital starport facilities around Kaurga, as the system forms a "gap" in the Dagudashaag Main. The pressure for migration of population from Ushra to Earth-like Kaurga has been growing, but KaurCorp has successfully resisted, so far.

Khemelov 1212 A772697-C Ni 612 Im M4 V M6 D

Khemelov is a world in ruins. Until 1014 it was a highly populated industrial world. However, a massive solar flare from Kossilov, its primary, led to the death of over 80% of the population. Most of the survivors were evacuated soon after.

A small, determined, minority remained. They have taken quite extreme methods of increasing the population. In addition to attempting to attract new colonists through financial enticements, the planetary council has decreed that all must undergo forced cloning and have made it illegal not to clone.

They are also experimenting with increasing the fertility of young adults. As a result, twins and triplets are a common sight on the surface.

Kikaduum 1615 B351459-C N Ni Po 410 Im M4 V

Kikaduum is famed for its gas trade. Large underground caverns are filled with a multitude of exotic gases found naturally nowhere else. Unfortunately this has meant that the surface of the planet can be extremely volatile and sudden and violent explosions the norm. This has meant that the colonists must live on a gigantic sky-city held aloft by grav generators. Mining is also done by means of grav-powered platforms which float above the sites extracting and refining the gases.

Lambda Cygni 1011 C679443-A Ni 404 Im A2 V M1 D

As a result of being originally colonised by Aquans, all cities have been built beneath the sea and the planet specialises in pisciculture. Today a large percentage of the population is Vargr and the surface of the planet is an untouched wilderness with even the starport being established on a floating artificial island, rather than being built on the land. Safari's into the archipelago's often bring back new undiscovered species even to this day.

Laruu 1113 C521111-7 Lo Ni Po 404 Im M5 V

Laruu is a dustbowl of a planet, all water is locked deep underground. A small settlement of Hamaran and humans were established during the civil war to act as a supply depot but were apparently forgotten. When the settlement was rediscovered 40 years later the entire human population had been wiped out by unknown means and only a small clan of Hamaran survived. They refused to leave and a small settlement was established. In 976, due to extensive inbreeding the population was on the road to extermination and the Imperial Navy stepped in to ship the surviving families back to civilisation. Only one family refused to leave and they now maintain the nearly automated port. Fortunately the family now actively encourages cross-fertilisation with visiting Hamaran.

Lasiimshim 1218 C221557-A Ni Po 601 Im A5 III M1 D

Lasiimshim is notable for being the birthplace of Grand Admiral Karl Harosaka, better known as Karl I, one of the Barrack Emperors during the Civil War. Among the places of interest on the planet are the Sky-Dragon reserves and Imperial War Museum. The centrepiece of the museum is Karl's flagship, the "Avenging Destiny", one of the few warships left from the Civil war period. Other important displays include a holographic recreation of the Second battle of Ushra where Karl was killed, and the Pacification Campaigns Centre, dedicated to the period when Dagudashaag was integrated into the young Third Imperium. It should be noted that tourism is the planet's main source of income and Karl's story of meteoric rise from rags to riches its only claim to fame.

Lauesyeh 0916 B7678AC-C S 504 Im K0 V

Lauesyeh was colonised by ships of the Oakhtai'yal clan in -1008. They originally retreated from full contact with humans but gradually accepted trade missions which became human settlements. Today Lauesyeh is equally populated by humans and Aslan but governed by the Oakhtai'yalko. The culture is still very Aslan and visitors are warned that duels over offences, real or imagined, are common.

Lemuria 1612 D68948A-9 S Ni 103 Im M1 V M7 VI M3 D

This world has been settled since the first Vilani explorations of Dagudashaag. Although outwardly idyllic Lemuria has resisted attempts at extensive colonisation due to a large number of differing microscopic pathogens which have an alarming predilection for the Vilani. The world on a number of occasions has been quarantined with access strictly controlled. There have been six colonisation expeditions, the most recent in 642, and all have met the same fate - extinction. The most common causes of death are respiratory and circulatory distress although the further removed from the Vilani race the more resistant individuals are against these diseases. The current population comprises IISS scientists and technicians from the service's medical branch investigating the problem. It is believed that the IISS have now developed a range of vaccines to allow future, safe colonisation efforts.

Maamkumar 1020 D535010-7 S Lo Ni 904 Im K3 V

Maamkumar was originally settled during the First Imperium but the colony died out during the Long Night. The planet is poor in resources and was not deemed viable to re-colonise. Currently Raphael Technology LIC have established a small research station and are carrying out an investigation into the anti-rejection properties of certain native cave-growing fungus.

Mote 1414 D100420-B Ni Va 210 Im K2 V

Mote is a carbonaceous/ice asteroid trapped into a stable orbit round Mother, a brown dwarf. It was tunnelled out originally by miners in 10 and a small mining settlement stayed. Moteans have developed under near zero-G and are a tall, spindly race that now, are unable to withstand gravity above 0.5g without exoskeletons.

Nafud 1418 C430773-7 Na Po De 114 Im K4 V M9 D

Nafud was colonised by several families or clans early in the start of the Third Imperium. Nafudian society is migratory in that each "city" consists of thousands of surface vehicles fitted with life support. These "cities" move around in order to find and extract minerals from the sand. The waste product, fine black sand is used throughout Ushra in electronic components and in water

filtration systems. There is intense competition between clans and open warfare has been known to break out on a regular basis.

In 438 it was discovered that Nafud was home to a semi-intelligent species, the Inchok. Since then the Miidian Desert regions have been isolated while the IISS study the race.

Nakharpii 1420 C755400-A Ni 714 Im K2 V

Nakharpii is the nearest thing that Ushra Subsector has to a frontier world. Due to conflicting claims as to ownership, the planet was not colonised until the 900's. The original settlers were funded by AnoTech which went into liquidation in 1005 and there was too much conflict between the citizens to agree on a planetary government to replace it. The planet is currently in a state of total anarchy and the planet is undergoing IISS evaluation as to its future traveller status.

Nanotech, constructional

The use of molecular machines to construct devices from their raw materials. At lower tech levels, this requires a specially-prepared vat with a carefully-controlled environment. At higher tech levels, the "nanos" are simply poured in liquid form onto a source of suitable elements (metal and carbon scrap, or even a broken or obsolete device). Tech Level 12+.

Nguma 1613 A9E3546-F Ni FI 422 Im M1 V M7 V

Nguma is a large unusual world which exhibits a large orbital eccentricity due to the gravitational effect of the central star's companion. The dense atmosphere is ellipsoid with a variation of two atmospheres between the less dense polar regions and the equator. There is free-standing water only in the higher latitudes during the 'winter' or the high altitudes of the polar regions during the short but intense summers. Much of the equatorial regions remain unexplored.

This inhospitable world has become an important juncture with ships passing into the heart of Ushra from Arnakhish subsector only because of the medically hostile nature of Lemuria. The class 'A' starport is an orbital facility with a subsidiary class C port on the surface.

Nox 1115 B9A5446-A C0 Ni FI 220 Im M4 V

Large, cool world noted both for the mysterious Joker's Tower and its small chirper population. The chirpers, who were relocated to Nox from Elysium in -276, have equal rights alongside their human counterparts and make up a large proportion of the governing council despite numbering only 300 individuals within a single settlement.

NOXIAN SPIDER

A large pseudo-arachnid that can grow to a length of 1.5 metres from antennae to stinger. The creature, which reproduces asexually is extremely vicious and extreme caution is advised in its proximity. Although totally deaf they are capable of sensing movement and seeing heat traces. The species is currently under a conservation order due to the fact that early settlers almost hunted the species to extinction.

Sesh-Ifaen Freight Tractors Ag

<SIFTA>

Bulk cargo shippers serving the subsectors bordering Gushemege and Dagudashaaag. The company have their origins and main base at Masa (Gushumege 2513) with a regional base for Dagudashaag at Ushra.

The company came into existence in 936 as a small brokerage firm but expanded into carriage after being let down with the delivery of freight. The company operate a number of different ship designs (the most numerous is a version of the Tukera 3,000-ton freighter) and in total run a total of thirty-two jump-capable vessels.

The company operates ships out of all class A and B starports along the Gushumege-Dagudashaag border, as well as all major worlds with class C starports, agricultural, rich or industrial status.

One of SIFTA's smaller vessels, the "Carolise", went missing while approaching the starport at Lamda Cygni. No trace of the subsidised merchant (a jump-2 version) has yet been found. Most attribute the loss to the 'Ghost Ship', the "Lundqvist". SIFTA are offering a reward for information leading to the recovery of the vessel or information on its loss.

Simalr Family, The

The title of Duke of Ushra is held by members of the Simalr family. This family has had a long and distinguished history - The Simalr claim ancestry from the Amsadege family, who settled in the region at about -5,900, and gave the sector at least two Vilani provincial governors. The Simalr themselves formed the majority of the rulers of the Ushran Empire during the Long Night.

Although the Simalr claim noble Vilani descent, they are of mixed lineage, and are unashamedly sophontist. Ushra itself still bears many signs of the original colonisation by the Solomani. They are skilled administrators, who show genuine concern for their subjects. One of the Simalrs' most noted policies is that of persuading surrounding systems to adopt a liberal, democratic style of government. This gradual, voluntary process has so far resulted in ten democratic systems.

These enlightened policies, together with distinguished Naval service, have earned the current incumbent, Duke Edward Amekaa Simalr (41), a prestigious seat on the Imperial Moot. He is noted throughout much of the Imperium for his campaigns for sophont rights.

Another notable member of the Simalr clan is Jianik-Anne Simalr (32), Edward's sister, and chief Dagudashaag representative to the Grand Council of the Vland Domain.

Simalr, Duke Edward Amekaa

Duke of Ushra (1075-). Current constitutional monarch of the Republic of Ushra.

Duke Edward is an ex-naval commander, awarded a Starburst of Extreme Heroism after an incident in Corridor Sector in 1098, in which Vargr corsairs seized a liner on which he and a number of high-ranking naval officers were travelling. Simalr regained control of the ship's computer, and managed to bluff the Vargr into surrendering, despite the injuries he had suffered at the corsairs' hands.

Edward Simalr took over the duchy when his father stood down in 1101 because of ill health. He has become a prominent member of the Imperial Moot, campaigning on a wide range of sophontarian issues, and holds many proxy votes from other Dagudashaag nobles (including Karyn Viisarikaa). He married Baroness Myselle deForrester of Shibishlim in 1110; they have two children.

Station Four 1618 C445000-9 S Lo Ni Ba 202 Im M1 IV

One of a chain of monitoring stations established at the time of the Third Imperium's entry into Dagudashaag. The Station was closed down in 342 and is now maintained purely as an automated facility for refueling IISS ships.

Talnes'ra 1017 C365845-8 RI 520 Im MO V M9 D

Talnes'ra is a resort world for the very rich. The entire planet has been extensively transformed so that its surface resembles over 200 exotic locations. These parks are maintained as game resorts for hunting or relaxation and all cities are built underground so as to not intrude upon the view. The local tech level is deliberately maintained at an artificially low level though all luxuries, up to TL 16 are available, for a price. The law demand that all local's undergo genetic manipulation and/or cosmetic surgery so that every inhabitant is visually "beautiful".

Tethys 1114 B89A241-C Lo Ni WA 111 Im M7 V MO D

Homeworld of the Hamaran, Tethys is today considered sacred and only the Haja'qi (priests of racial knowledge)

are allowed to dwell upon its surface. Each year millions of Hamaran and humans come in pilgrimage to visit the beautifully preserved buildings and temples and to taste the sea. Most Hamaran consider it their sacred duty to visit Tethys at least once before they die.

Undim 0914 C000343-A Lo Ni AS 514 Im K7 V M4 D

The whole population of the Undim Belt reside in the settlement of Olosquis and most work for UMT which houses its major research base here. The settlement both tests new equipment and mines the belt for its many unusual elements.

Whilst UMT [see entry below] is the currently the major employer the Government is run separately though the views of UMT do carry a great deal of weight. In recent years other mining companies have started to move in to the belt and tried to break UMT's monopoly but so far without a great deal of success. UMT's major competitors are Tannesh MinTech, a mining company which recently relocated to Undim from the Old Suns subsector. The animosity between the two companies is tearing the previously peaceful settlement of Olosquis apart.

USHRA 1016 A625943-G N HI IN 933 Im M4 V

Ushra is the only tech level-16 Industrial world in Dagudashaag sector, and so occupies an important position in the sector's economy. Interestingly, the democratic nature of Ushra's government, has meant that TL16 technology has reached the general population far sooner than might otherwise be expected (the highest levels of technology are often monopolised by the military in many systems). The standard of living enjoyed by the population is second to none.

Eden Orbital Naval Complex is a large facility devoted to shipbuilding and repair of naval vessels. A great deal of development work is done at the complex, directed towards the production of prototype TL-16 naval vessels. Several successful designs have been produced so far, the largest of these being the 40,000-ton strike cruiser Alexander Brayden.

Other research work is carried out at Naval installations elsewhere in the system. Reports that the Navy has established an antimatter production and containment facility insystem have been consistently denied.

Ushra Materials Technology

<UMT>

An Ushran based company which specialises in "creative techno-logy". That is, the use of both commonplace and exotic materials to manufacture unusual robotic equipment. UMT has gained a reputation for creating extremely versatile and innovative mining equipment amongst other things.

Xenorasty (n.)

(Terran Greek, xeno- alien, foreign; erastes lover)

Intercourse between sentients of differing races or species. The Ushran Kanumaar-Bruning legislation of 1022 which legalised the act between consenting adults in private, is a major target of the CPR and other conservative organisations.

'Zeenie (n., vulg.)

(Solomani Anglic, fr. xenorasty)

One who engages in xenorasty; contemptible person.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY ... REFEREE'S INFORMATION

Argiluu - A number of tarballs were tunneled out by the Malaach to act as hives. Their buoyancy has since deteriorated, and they now float at about 30km depth, beyond the range of current densitometers. They are probably unoccupied, but there could be a few eggs in cold storage...

Gantz, Dr. Karl Immanuel - Dr. Gantz was killed by a nanotech weapon administered by a Drexen hitman, after he had discovered that the company was using his techniques to produce a horrifying range of "plague" nanoforms, in contravention of Imperial Law. His son, Julian Gantz, had already been "bought" by the company, but he had had the foresight to store some of the evidence for his granddaughter, Mana, ordering her computer to reveal it on her sixteenth birthday.

As soon as she received the information, Mana realised her life was in danger. She fled to the only community on Ushra where she would be safe - the Alikasch. She now leads the life of an Alikasch NetDancer, striving to gather sufficient evidence to bring down the company which killed her grandfather.

Simalr, Duke Edward Amekaa - Duke Edward rose to Imperium-wide fame in 1116, when, as spokesman for the Moot, he denounced Lucan's ascension to the Imperial Throne as illegal. He was placed under immediate house arrest on Capital. With the help of his staff, he managed to escape, and fled to spinward. He arrived at Medurma on 342-1116, and briefed Karyn on the situation, then continued on to Ushra to prepare for the coming storm.

He made numerous public appearances on Ushra in early 1117, but departed the system at about 190, handing consitutional responsibility to his cousin, Kiyrel Vashkin-Simalr. His current whereabouts are unknown. It is rumoured that he is covertly roaming the Imperium, organising support against the "Usurper" Dulinor, and the "Pretender" Lucan.

WAR ZONE: USHRA

The Rebellion in Ushra Subsector 1116 to 1120

1116

The first few months of the rebellion were quiet for the subsector. The subsector saw a few scouting forays by both of the main factions. and whenever these met small but fierce skirmishes would take place. Also, whenever these forces encountered local fleet units, they were repulsed with considerable aggressiveness and exploiting their technological superiority. This was in contrast to Admiral DeVitt-Langdon's policy of non-engagement, but the commanding officer of the crack 188th fleet. Fleet Admiral Shaun McCafferty, a native of Ushra, was unhappy about his orders. With his forces being heavily pressed towards the imperial core, and with McCafferty being so popular with the fleet, Langdon was either unwilling or unable to replace him. When asked why he was disobeying his orders, the Admiral, a pure Solomani, whose ancestors fought in the Interstellar Wars, and claimed to have served on wet-navy nuclear submarines before then, replied, "If there is going to be a fight, I want to be part of it." This aggressiveness would put him in good stead in the future.

Admiral McCafferty did exhibit a weakness in being unwilling or unable to prevent the invasion of Nimluin/Bolivar by corporate starmerc forces funded by Arkayne. The invasion, launched around 230-1116, had blatantly commercial ends - Nimluin had long been a thorn in Arkayne's side, bending Duchess Alyssa Jalandri's ear to oppose corporate expansion plans in the Bolivar subsector. The totalitarian religious autocracy of Nimluin was almost universally hated by Ushrans, however, and there was little mourning at its demise.

1117

For the majority of the year, the pattern of scouting and minor raiding continued. As the Vengeance Fleet made its way towards the Dashi cluster, it came into rimward Ushra. As Fact is the industrial heart of the sector, McCafferty correctly predicted that this would be the main target for both Dulinor and Lucan. Thus the 188th was in perfect position to give the leading forces of Lucan's fleet a bloody nose. and only have Elysium to show for it.

McCafferty also predicted successfully that Admiral Chii'ekak's 5th Fleet would be unlikely to want to attack him. He was also correct in this, as an order from Lucan to deal with him was "lost in transit". This meant that despite the subsector being a prized objective. Lucan's admirals were willing to

concentrate on other targets and leave Ushra until sufficient forces were available to deal with them.

On 233-1117 DeVitt-Langdon was replaced by Stiev Elliot, admiral of the 209th fleet. One of his first acts was to confirm his support for his academy friend, the commander of the 188th fleet.

What McCafferty could not predict were the events of 275-1117 on Usdiki/Gushemege. What appeared to be the old emperor, Strephon, claimed not to have been assassinated after all! This put Ushra squarely between the new faction and some of the largest groupings of naval power ever seen. The question was, would Ushra be turned into a battlefield like Pact and Argi?

Several facts contributed to this not happening. Firstly, those large naval forces were busy fighting each other, and any reductions in order to deal with the new threat would likely mean victory for the other side. The ramifications of this were too great. Thus both sides attacked the new faction with what reserves they had available. Dulinor's reserves were in Verge sector and Bolivar subsector and Lucan's consisted of the newly arrived Corridor fleet. The lead elements of these entered the sector late in the year through Old Suns and Arnakhish subsectors, and before Ushran forces could be manoeuvred to face them, Lambda Cygni had already fallen. However. there were sufficient covering forces to delay the scouts until the arrival on main fleet elements. During late 1117, a heavily escorted courier docked at the Ushra naval base. On board this vessel were the secrets of the stealth device. Helm of Athena developed on Medurma/Pact. Soon, both vessels under development on Ushra and vessels of the 188th fleet were being refitted with the new technology. The first ship to receive it was the newly built Alexander Brayden, a TL 16 40,000 tonne strike cruiser.

At the end of 1117 virtually none of the subsector had been attacked. This was despite it being on a direct line between two of the major factions of the Rebellion. Needless to say, the local doom merchants were predicting that this situation would change for the worse very soon. Interestingly, and fortunately for the population of Ushra, they were wrong.

1118

Early in 1118, following the holocausts on Dashi and Shankida, the Free Medurman Federation (FMF) was formed. All the free worlds of Ushra subsector joined this new fledgling state. One effect of the declaration of independence that did not effect Ushra was the change over to a more offensive attitude in naval operations.

McCafferty had been carrying that out since day 1 of the Rebellion.

The other major event of the year was the secession of the Vilani. Throughout the year, huge convoys of transports and escorts from rimward would appear along the trailing edge of the subsector. After their numerous vicious battles in The Remnants and Pact with Lucan's forces, the Vilani were glad to have a respite. In several systems, huge fleets of Vilani ships would temporarily come together in order to carry out needed repairs.

The spinward probing by the forces arrayed against the Real Strephon continued. They would often encounter fierce resistance from the 188th fleet, which due to their new ability to hide from the enemy, won most of these skirmishes. However, Urdim belt did fall to the invaders. The lack of modern facilities and an active resistance movement prevented this system from being used as a base.

To rimward, the Imperial admirals were anxious to create a set of bases from which to support the attack into The Remnants and the Dashi cluster. They decided upon the rimward worlds of Ushra subsector. When they attacked, the 188th withdrew ahead of the imperial forces, only to double back and in a series of fierce battles across the entire Nakharpii system, the imperial offensive was halted. However, one of the goals of the attack, Jekyll with its class A starport, was captured.

At the end of 1118, the majority of Ushra had still yet to see any fighting. In contrast to the rest of the sector, which was seeing the Rebellion as a life or death struggle, it would have been reasonable for the Ushrans to have mistaken the whole Rebellion as a holo drama. Trade was down from pre-rebellion levels, but life in the subsector, for the majority of the population continued much as normal.

1119

In 1119, the war would finally come home to the Ushrans. Early in the year, Nafud would fall to a coup d'état by Lucan loyalists. This gave Lucan's forces a base, with nearby facilities for major repairs to be carried out, that permitted them to strike at Ushra proper. Numerous raids were launched against that world. All but one were repulsed in the out system by planetary defence forces. However, on the time the raiders got through, they surprised the luxury liner Medurman Princess as it approached the jump point. All hands were lost, as were over 1000 passengers. The Princess was on its maiden voyage, which was being shown live on holovid. It is believed that about 65% of the population of Ushra saw the catastrophe.

To spinward, several more attempts to secure more worlds were carried out by rear elements of the forces fighting against the Real Strephon. In most cases, the stealth vessels of the 188th repulsed the attacks with

few casualties. The exceptions to the rule, were on Laruu and Khemelov. These worlds were attacked simultaneously, stretching the 188th's assets too far. Also, at Khemelov, there was a traitor in the planetary communications centre. After taking it over, he informed Lucan's fleet of the dispositions of the otherwise invisible fleet. The FMF forces were quickly neutralised or forced to jump out of the system. Those FMF ships that were captured managed to destroy their stealth devices, still leaving Lucan's forces puzzled as to how the FMF forces could be invisible. The capture of Khemelov gave Lucan a class A starport. This was primarily used as a rear echelon repair centre for the forces attacking Strephon.

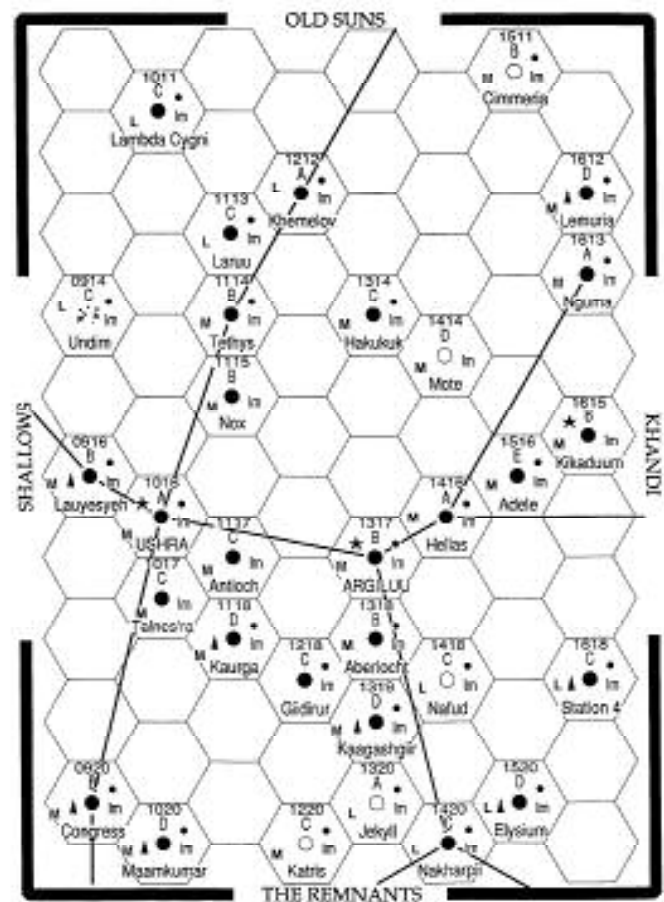
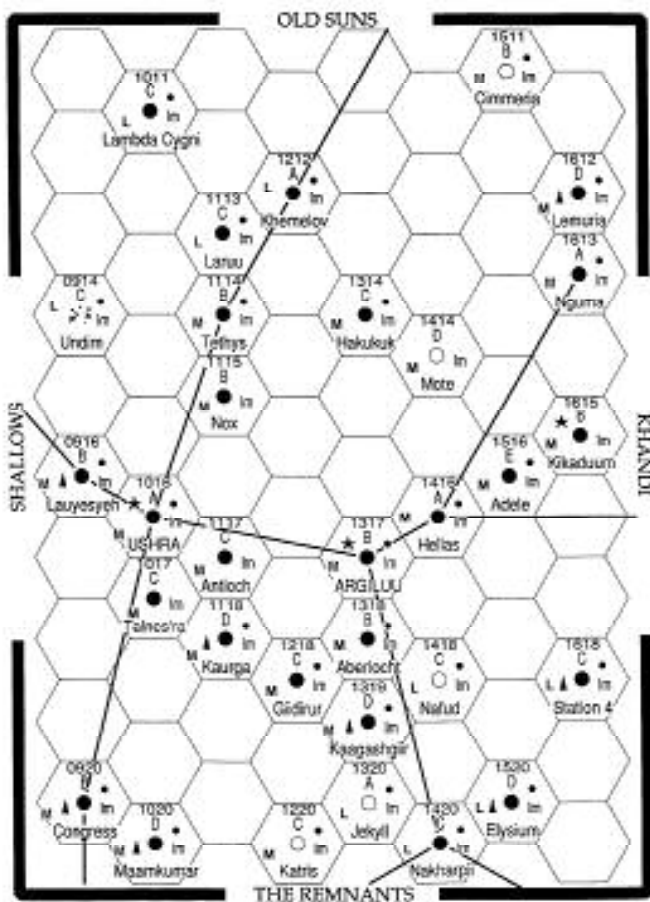
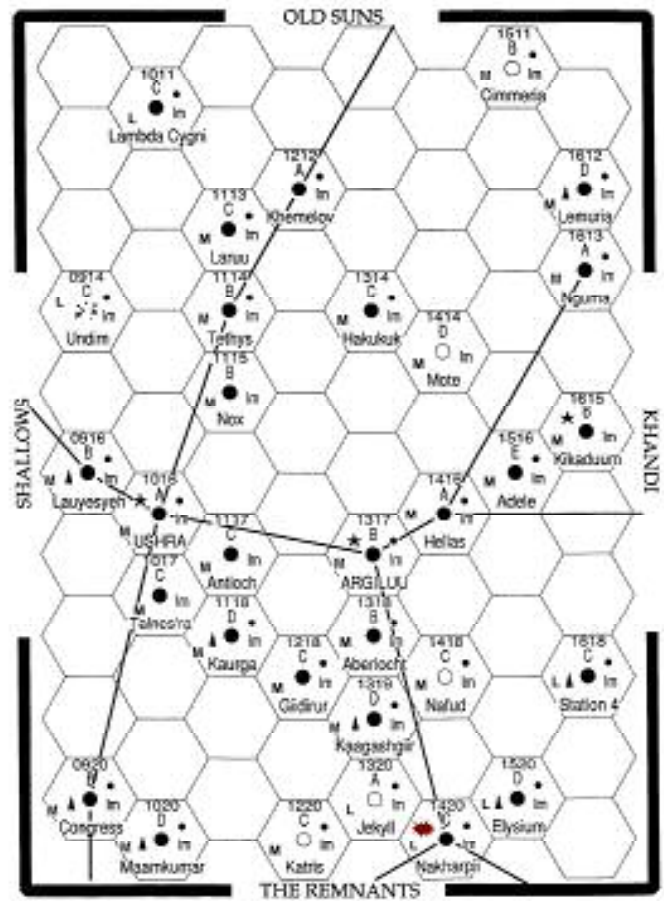
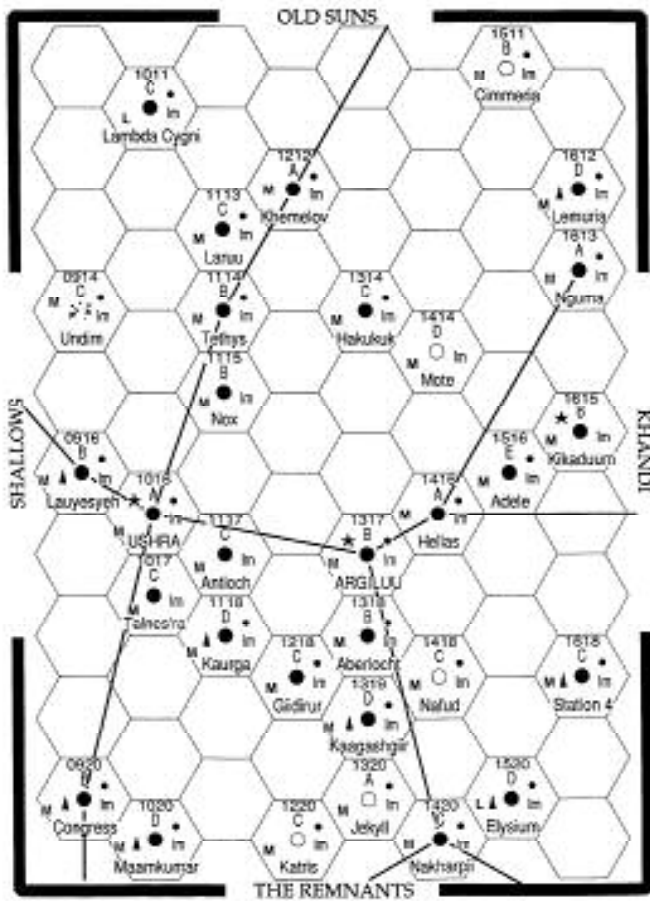
Although they would not know it, the Ushrans were very lucky. A branching thrust through Ushra was originally part of Dulinor's blitzkrieg attack against Lucan. However, it was removed from the plan at almost the last minute.

This was because of limited resources, and that it was felt bludgeoning through the 188th fleet would take too many ships. 1119 was a shock for the Ushrans. The disaster of the Medurman Princess had shaken the complacency about the rebellion from them. Although they were outside the main fighting in the sector, they were now painfully aware that it could come at any time. However, the people of Ushra were now determined to remain free and unbowed to any aggressor.

1120

During 1120, Ushra saw very little fighting at all. This was for several reasons. Firstly, all of Lucan's reserves were being used in offensives in Argi subsector and against the Real Strephon. He simply did not have enough ships to go round. Secondly there was the 188th fleet. It had seen very little heavy fighting, and with the copious industrial reserves of the subsector, and with the remainder of FMF forces from other subsectors, the 188th had actually grown over the Rebellion. It was now the largest subsector fleet in what was the Imperium, and was larger than the remains of many sector fleets.

Thus Ushra is like the eye of a hurricane, a region of tranquillity surrounded by incredible violence. Also, like the eye of a hurricane, this region of peace is likely to be obliterated by the tide of events. The populace of Ushra wait with trepidation the future, hoping the worst will not happen. Reinforcing that hope is the 188th fleet guarding the black waters above their heads.



Key to Allegiances: D—Federation of Ilish, L—Lucan's Imperium, M—Free Medurman Federation
 ★ Site of major battle

NATTER WITH A NUTTER

Yea I know. I promised myself that I wouldn't have to do an editorial and what happens? This!

Subscriptions - 1992

There are reasons for this little chat. First of all. I am having to increase subscriptions as from next issue. UK subs will go up to £2 per issue or £5 for a three issue sub. This is due to increased photocopying charges and postal charges.

Non-UK subber's I will still do a three issue sub for £7.50 but I will have to send it by land and sea. If you want it airmail then send £10. Please note. I will not accept foreign currency. It costs me to exchange it and I just can't afford to subsidise this mag anymore.

Change of Address

I had five people who changed address for last issue, two informed me as soon as possible and had a redirection order on. They got their 'mags. The others appeared to have it delivered to their old address and they never got their copy. If they want a copy of issue two contact me with £1.50 and I'll send on an RS copy. I can't afford to give out freebies except as part of the mag.

Back Issues

I have none. I'm sold out. This means that those issues are worth something to the new subscribers. If you want to sell them on you are welcome to put a free advert in to "Transponder Alert". New subbers will receive back issues of "WarZone" and "Library Data" at least for the moment.

Next Issue

What makes S-GK so different from all other fanzines? The answer is that S-GK is very much a team effort and not just the efforts of a single individual. These people, known collectively as the Dagudashaag Development Team work bloody hard to come up with new adventures, artwork and material. To give you a chance to better get to know them it is intended that the next few issues will be guest-edited by a different member of the team and they will have total editorial control over that issue. Issue 4 will be guest edited by Leighton Piper and will centre on Old Suns while issue 5 will take place in Mimu and be directed by Duncan Law-Green. It is hoped that Stuart Machin and Adie Stewart will also be able to take a 'Guest Editor' spot in the near future. Please still send all contributions to myself and I'll forward them on.

Competition

Someone recently, I can't remember who, stated that adventures were better if they were not background specific, an adventure that could be set anywhere. I disagree. To prove it we are running a competition inviting you to write an adventure set in Argi, Pact or Ushra and expanding on the library data included. We are looking for a masterpiece. The winner will be published as a separate special in the manner of the Medurma Special, and will be illustrated by the Dag. Artists. You will also win a t-shirt decorated with the cover from any issue of S-GK you like. Here is your chance to have published that adventure but remember it must use the library data (by all means expand on it) and must be set within Argi, Pact or Ushra and must be consistent with the material already published. Get busy - the deadline is May 1992.

Enough from me. Next issue Leighton takes the reins.

TRANSPONDER ALERT!

Errata

Stealth - hull shaping at TL 8, available for AF: extra 10% volume loss, +20% cost (goes above current values e.g. 4AF, vol x 0.75, price x 24).

Stealth finish obvious at TL 10 or less (improved materials at TL11+) and also works against passive EMS.

Synaptic processor vol 9 litres.

Also note starship errata in MTJ 2 - Black Globe stealth rule.

Perseus - Hi Psg = 6, note it is assumed that referees have read the computer requirements for stealth capability which are not restated.

Legends & Lore - Admiral Jenkins- MCr. 12 million should have read Cr. 12 million.

Dashi - should have read Instellarms and note that the Combine started out with many other companies which were bought out throughout the years.

>Stuart Machin

Liked Alikasch but could Duncan produce some rules for the cybergear - can the rippers be retracted? If so do they loss normal characteristics? (No. I don't have a wolverine character - yet!)

I liked the idea of "The Hamanok Conspiracy", A bit like DGP's "Traveller Adventure" taking the PCs across the Sector. Fortunately its a lot more interesting than the average Digest adventure.

When I said I would like to see faction borders and the Red Eagles I wasn't expecting to write them myself - oh well-

Re beginners - I think part of the problem with MT is information overload and not enough understanding of the rebellion. "WarZone" should help with the latter and the structured way the library data is produced in should also. I generally find a mix of thinking and violence helps, as does having the PCs deal with new situations. Careful use of humour is good too. If nothing else to remind players it's 'just a game'.

Thoughts on costs - you forgot the time, effort, bills, etc of the contributors!

>David Johnson

Duncan sent me a copy of S-GK and I loved it! Y'all are doing as good a job, in terms of quality as Challenge and Travellers' Digest/MegaTraveller Journal. I'd like to become a subscriber and possibly a contributor.

Welcome aboard

>Nick Walker

This issue I can only find one fault with this issue and then it is a minor quibble - in HighPoint when the players are refuelling if they fail the task they get

sprayed with liquid hydrogen. Am I wrong in thinking that liquid hydrogen is usually under very high pressure or very cold? If so, wouldn't a splash risk killing the PC? What about the fire risk with hydrogen defusing through HighPoint with all those broken and sparking connections...

The Conspiracy seems a good, well constructed adventure, or at least the first two parts are. I have high hopes for the rest.

Helm of Athena - yet more tables to add to the design tables but it seems logical and fits the Traveller universe, which is more important.

INDISS - This is anti-Lucan propaganda of the blackest sort. All INDISS reporters should be taken the nearest Ministry of Justice Special Branch for re-education.

The Geehrtahe - I love contact items and a race with only two limbs opens some interesting thoughts for adventures. Athar, now it the players had to transport some of these about in a starship - wouldn't that be fun!?!)

>Alan Huscroft

I've finally finished reading through GK, along with the extra bits and pieces that go with it. Whew, you don't skimp on the material do you?

Re the loose-leaf A5 stuff - an interesting idea, which I think should work quite well for building up a set of library data - where do I find a folder?

Most office stationers or large branches of W.H. Smiths, Menzies etc.

As far as the content of the 'zine is concerned. I vote to keep it the way it is. I think that the diversity of articles you included is probably the best way to make sure there is something to please everybody.

That was the decision of the majority. Let it be so!

Hints for great campaigns - I have only one to offer. Make your characters memorable. It is the characters (both PCs and NPCs) that make or break a campaign. They need personalities, histories, friends and enemies...

>Ewan Spence

The way S-GK is presented at the moment is great with a broad spectrum of articles rather than a single subject adventure which I may or may not use.

Sorry space is so short this issue but it was either this or three pages worth.

Favourites

Dashi: "Yep, I can see my PCs wanting to go there! (Gods preserve us!!)", "Well detailed and very informative in that it covered subjects other world details seem to miss", "Planet came alive, good place to send nasty PCs", "Good imaginative world--building, useful as a source of adventure ideas". RCS: "Very original, why didn't I think of it?"

Stealth: "useful and generic"

Contact- "Without alien races the game seems pointless"

HighPoint: "Scenario was adaptable to other locales" (Why would you want to?)

Least Favourites

One of our Doc's: "Really only a inking section"

HardWired: "I don't use TL 16", "I'm not very interested in ships"

Aliens: "Getting too many aliens", "Just wouldn't use the Geehrtahe"

Alikasch: "too powerful", "Good idea but not enough clarification"

Favourite pieces of Art

Cover, Geehrtahe, Maze, HighPoint, Karyn, alikasch

Special thanks to: David Burden for the Atlas program - see Dagudashaag Sector for Maps produced by it- Also thanks to Andrew Pickford for the Sector Map. The Disks arc on the way!

Next issue - March/April 1992 (hopefully)

READERS' SURVEY - ISSUE 2

o Overall Writing	8.1
o Overall Artwork	7.7
o Overall Layout	8.2
o Legends & Lore	8.8
o Wet. Wet. Wet	7.9
o Helm of Athena	7.6
o Rapid Cold Start	6.9
o Stealth Far Trader	6.4
o INDISS	7.6
o Contact: Geehrtahe	7.8
o HighPoint	8.8
o Port of Call: Dashi	9.0
o AKA: Shaddrak	8.3
o AKA Karyn	8.1
o One of our Doctors..	7.4
o Transponder Alert	8.5
o Library Data	9.3
o WarZone	8.7
o Contact: Athar	8.0
o Contact: Alikasch	8.3
o Port of Call: Medurma	8.9
o Overall	8.0
o Contact articles	A5 - 78%
o Library Data	A5 - 84