

TRAWELLER CHRONICLE

\$5.00 U.S.

- **A Regency Adventure
by Gregory P. Lee**
- **The Conclusion to a
Pilot's Guide to the
Caledon Subsector
by J. Andrew Keith**
- **An Introductory
Adventure for the
Grayln Union by
Guy Garnett**
- **And Much More!!**



The Traveller Chronicle

A Magazine Devoted to Traveller In All Of Its Forms

Issue #7 \$5.00US
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THE TRAVELLER CHRONICLE is published three times a year at the beginning of January, May, and September. 4-issue subscriptions are \$18.00 (North America), \$22.00 (Overseas Surface), and \$30.00 (Overseas Air). Please make all payments in US funds. Visa and Mastercard accepted.

Submissions: We are looking for good articles and illustrations for TTC. When submitting manuscripts and artwork enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope with appropriate postage for return (if you want it returned). We also require that articles be presented on IBM compatible diskettes or be sent to us over the Internet (the preferred method).

The Editor Speaks...

Greetings, Salutations, and Welcome Back!
Not a whole lot to say this issue other than to bear some good /bad news. The good news: Our circulation is growing and growing. The bad news: We are going to have to cut back to three issues during the calendar year of 1995 due to our agreement with GDW because of the fact that our circulation is growing. More mixed news: Issue 8 of the Traveller Chronicle will have 56 pages! However, the price will rise to \$6.00US cover price both due to the rising page count and the rising costs of paper (Tell Uncle Sam thanks everyone!). Anyway, the good news on the price increase is that the subscription rates will NOT increase! So subscribe today and save money tomorrow!
That's all for now folks...

From those of us Behind the Claw,

Kevin Knight

**Looking for some old, out-of-print gaming items?
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How Are We Doing???

Please take the time to let us know what you liked and didn't like about this issue of the Traveller Chronicle. Just photocopy this page or write your responses down on a sheet of paper or even email it to us, but just send it our way. Your responses help us determine what will go in future issues. As an incentive we will be giving away a copy of the next issue to three lucky respondents. You need to have your responses back to us by April 1, 1995 (no foolin') to qualify. Please rank the following articles and submissions on a scale of 0 (the worst) to 5 (the best).

A Rock Called Jade	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Intendant	0	1	2	3	4	5
Aikhiy	0	1	2	3	4	5
Caledon Subsector	0	1	2	3	4	5
Weapon's Locker	0	1	2	3	4	5
Far Frontiers	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Richard Biever)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Radley Masinelli)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Nathan Mezel)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Mike Sorensen)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Paul Sanders)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Alan Gillispie)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Overall Satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4	5

Again, thanks for taking the time to fill this out!

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____ Country: _____

Responses from Issue Six:

Aoreriyya	4.00
GUESS	4.00
The GrayIn Union	4.14
House Rules	3.29
Field Test	2.71
Caledon Subsector	4.29
Credit Where Due...	2.00
Far Frontiers	3.86
Far From Home	3.86
A Matter of Sovereignty	3.86
Ref's Bits	3.83
Artwork (Richard Biever)	4.71
Artwork (Nathan Mezel)	4.14
Artwork (Paul Sanders)	3.86
Artwork (Joe Heck)	3.86
Artwork (Alan Gillispie)	3.29
Overall Satisfaction	4.14

The winners of free copies of Issue 7 are Paul Johnson, Michael McKown, and Andy Lilly.

The winners of free copies of Issue 6 are Phillip Scott, Doug Fairbrother, and Grant Sinclair (Sorry we forgot to put you in last issue!)

A Rock Called Jade

By Andy Lilly

The Place

Starport, Goggic (A694610-B S Ni G301 Inverness subsector, Far Frontiers - see TTC 3)

The Advertisement

If the players have a starship:

"Wanted urgently: experienced crew with small private ship. Exceptional rates of pay for legal, low risk, short term (4 week) job. Large bonus terms. Apply to cbx263@downport.goggic"

Otherwise:

"Wanted urgently: experienced crew to man a small private ship. Exceptional..."

The Introduction

Eighty years ago the Zhodani watched the Imperium breaking apart. Anticipating its collapse, they created a number of hidden bases and arms caches throughout the Far Frontiers in preparation for a lightning strike across the entire sector and onward into the Domain of Deneb. But Deneb did not fall and the Zhodani bided their time. When the Virus struck parts of their own empire they abandoned their plans of military conquest. Many of the hidden caches were recovered or destroyed by Zhodani special forces, still without the knowledge of the systems within which they had lain undisturbed. Base 109, codename Zhiprajde ("Jade") was one of a few bases which 'went missing'...

The Asteroid

"Jade" was located within the "Inrian Ring" asteroid belt close to the planet of Goggic. Goggic is on the edge of the Protectorate, comparatively close to both Zhodani and Imperial space. Its starport would have been a valuable asset to an invading Zhodani force. The Protectorate's independent nature meant that (like

most of the bases) Jade's existence had to remain secret in order to prevent a huge diplomatic incident. Freak gravitational fluxes from Goggic's sun caused Jade to move out of its expected position within the Inrian Ring. When the Zhodani came back thirty years ago to remove the base, it could not be found. A prolonged search attracted the undesired attention of the local Scout base and the Zhodani ship had to abandon the search and flee the system. Several undercover agents and special operations teams were already in place on Goggic; these were alerted to keep an eye on the local beltters for news of any 'strange' finds. Fortunately Jade was deliberately placed in a known low value area of the belt. However, in thirty years many of the major belt strikes have been exhausted and now some beltters are moving into new areas...

The Patron

Zarpir Cognar is a native Goggic but has been a Zhodani agent for 35 years and is nearing retirement. While tidying up some old papers he rediscovered the Jade files. In an attempt to clear up this matter, he decided to hire a group of 'independents' to survey the belt and find Jade. His advertisement avoids mentioning asteroids because Zarpir does not want local beltters involved - should they find Jade they might determine there was something peculiar about the asteroid and start asking awkward questions.

The Mission

If the characters respond to the advertisement Zarpir will call and arrange a meeting the same day. He will explain that he wishes them to survey a particular section of the Inrian Ring for 3-4 weeks. He offers CR5,000 per character per week with a party bonus of CR100,000 for a successful strike. He claims to be looking for a rare gem crystal - *amondite* - hence the high bonus. The players will not



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be required to mine the gems, merely find them. Zarpir will accompany them with a Geologist - Jerry LeGrange. Jerry will provide the specialist sensor analysis programs required for locating the amondite amongst the asteroids. If the players do not have a ship then Zarpir will have already hired an old scout/courier or free trader (depending upon the number of characters). The characters must sign a nondisclosure agreement which prevents them from talking about what they find for 6 months (to allow Zarpir time to register his claim and mine it).

The NPCs

Zarpir Cognar (Undercover Agent)

Veteran NPC 11 terms Age 62

Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts 13, Slug Weapon 13
Str 8, Agl 5, Con 4, Int 9, Edu 8, Chr 8, Soc 6

Other Assets: Act/Bluff 15, Computer 9, Environment Suit 6, Interrogation 12, Intrusion 7, Language (Zhodani) 10, Liaison 10, Marketing 11, Observation 13, Pilot (i/f-grav) 6, Streetwise 15, Swimming 4, Wheeled Vehicle 5, Zero-G Environment 6

Zarpir's cover is as a wealthy trader who plyed the starlanes for 20 years then went native and settled at Goggic 15 years ago. He has a complete forged background (with appropriate skills) plus 35 years of experience in his cover, i.e. it is uncrackable. He also has excellent forged papers for a number of other identities. He fits in easily around the port and town, knows hundreds of people from the port commander down to cleaning staff, from most of whom (knowingly or unknowingly) he extracts the tidbits of information which he sends back to his masters. He is observant and maintains some intrusion skill, although his shipboard skills have deteriorated through lack of use. Zarpir is never separated from his Gauss pistol (after all, Goggic *IS* law level 0!) and Hand computer.

Spades Queen: Zarpir is ruthless and will quite happily sacrifice his colleagues (i.e. Jerry or the characters) to save himself.

Clubs 6: If cornered, Zarpir is a dangerous opponent and will not hesitate to use his weapon or melee skills (probably surprising his enemy with his sudden speed and accuracy).

Jerry LeGrange (Scientist)

Experienced NPC 5 terms Age 37

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon 7

Str 5, Agl 6, Con 5, Int 9, Edu 10, Chr 3, Soc 4

Other Assets: Carousing 5, Combat Engineer 10, Computer 14, Environment Suit 6, Geology 14, Intrusion 9, Medic (Trauma) 11, Research 11, Sensors 13, Wheeled Vehicle 6, Zero-G Environment 6

Jerry is a freelance geologist and claim inspector who has occasionally been hired by Zarpir for his demolitions skills but does not know of his Zhodani connections. Zarpir told him about Jade but claimed it was an abandoned Imperial spy station. Jerry's skills should allow him to find Jade while putting up a convincing front with regard to the amondite. However, he is a slob and frequently drinks himself into a stupor.

Diamonds 6 and 9: Jerry is in this for the money (CR250,000 for a successful find). Nothing and nobody stands between Jerry and his cash.

The Preparation

In order to find Jade, Jerry will have to attach extra sensor pods around the starship. He will be quite happy to have a member of the crew aid him. The widely spread sensors (adaptive phased array), combined with suitable software (synthetic aperture imaging), provides a very sensitive sensor suite. It is just possible (Starship Engineering or Sensors: Formidable) that someone accompanying Jerry throughout the entire process will detect that one sensor pod, placed close to the ship's bridge, is a fractionally different weight and seems to have a slightly different set up in the software. Jerry will say that one pod acts as a reference for the others - a perfectly reasonable explanation. Zarpir will be in a rush to leave port and the characters won't have time to examine the pods further.

The Journey

It will take 2 days to travel out to the Inrian Ring, during which time Zarpir will assure himself of the crews' abilities and Jerry will be calibrating his sensors.

Finding The Asteroid

Each day spent in the asteroid belt, roll to see if Jade is discovered and roll an additional encounter (2d6).

Day Roll to detect Jade (Sensors)

1-3 Jade cannot be found (but allow the characters to roll anyway)

4-6 Impossible

7-10 Formidable

11+ Difficult

Roll Encounter

2 Major systems failure on the characters' ship.

3 Scout ship - from the Goggic scout base, come to investigate what the characters' ship is doing so far from the normal belter areas. Zarpir will appear slightly edgy but if allowed to handle the situation the scouts know him and will leave. However, if the characters annoy the scouts they will board and search!

4-5 Minor systems failure on the characters' ship.

6 Sun spot activity causes a temporary communications black-out.

7 Asteroid falsely identified as Jade. A successful Average Computer task will determine that the asteroid is not Jade - the characters may be interested to note that Zarpir seems to be checking against an expected asteroid configuration on his hand computer (see *HAVING FOUND THE ASTEROID*). A failed computer roll will require Zarpir and a character to EVA to check the asteroid (see *HAVING FOUND THE ASTEROID*). Zarpir will return depressed...

8-9 An Average Astrogation task is required to avoid a minor collision with a field of small asteroid particles. Failure causes a minor systems failure aboard the ship.

10 A Belter ship passes by, apparently prospecting. Zarpir will be agitated until the ship is out of sensor range and will tell the characters to watch the belter to see if it stops anywhere (it doesn't).

11 Standard ship encounter at long range (e.g. passing merchant). Will show no interest in the characters' ship but Zarpir will still want it watched until it is out of range.

12 A Belter ship (Snowflake) is detected at long range, apparently motionless in the asteroid - possibly prospecting. Zarpir will get extremely worried and will want the characters to watch it very carefully. This is actually a SOU ship trying to keep tabs on Zarpir (see *GOGGIC SPECIAL OPS*).

Having Found The Asteroid

Once the characters have detected Jade (or falsely identified another asteroid), Zarpir will check the asteroid dimensions with data on his hand computer. Anyone looking over his shoulder will see that the computer is displaying data in Zhodani. Having verified its orientation he will order the ship to hove to on the far side from the base entrance. Zarpir will then EVA, assisted by one character. They will take several rock samples using a core-sampling drill (giving Zarpir time to get used to EVA) then he will get the character to return the samples to the ship while he collects further samples.

Once unobserved, Zarpir will continue round to the far side of the asteroid. Someone on the bridge may detect a strange radio emission as he sends the code to open the external link hatch (see *THE BASE: 2*). Once the hatch has opened Zarpir has final proof that he has found Jade. He will close the linkage hatch and return to the ship, practically bubbling with joy at his success. Throughout the EVA, Jerry has orders to keep watch on the crew and radio Zarpir if there is any trouble.

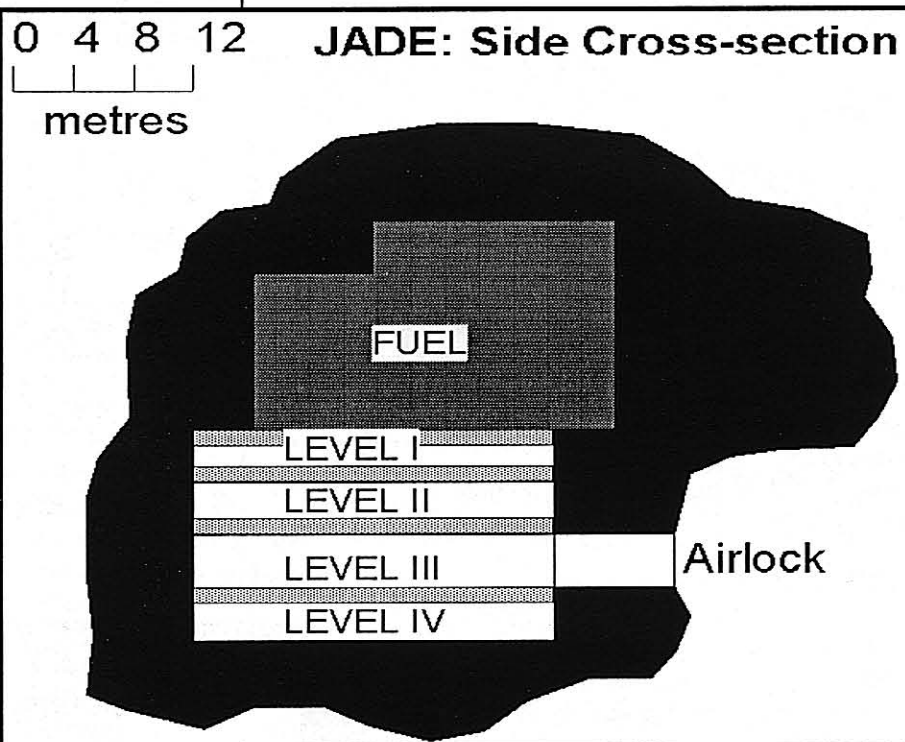
The Base

The installation was intended as a multi-purpose base:

1. Supplying fuel and spares to military ships - the fuel store holds 8200 m³ of fuel (sufficient to refuel 10 scout/couriers or 3 Systems Defence Boats or 2 Broadsword cruisers) and Storage Bay 1 contains ship spares.
2. Covert surveillance station - the base's passive EMS systems can watch in-system ships and interplanetary transmissions.
3. Stop-over point for a special operations unit - the barracks can contain 6 10-man squads with officers as well as a small team (including medics) to oversee base operations.

The base is fully stocked and ready for use. It relies upon

careful camouflage and shielding to maintain its anonymity within the asteroid belt. Its power plant is usually shut down hence none of the areas are pressurised or have artificial gravity. All empty spaces within the base are filled with a special foam which simulates a low density aerated core. This makes the asteroid appear normal for all except the most detailed of density scans. The foam will vapourise when it contacts a special chemical agent Pytrazon (a poisonous gas). An arriving Zhodani unit would moor their ship within the asteroid's overhang, transmit the secret code to open the concealed fuel/data port (2), link up the ship's computer and transmit the second code to open the main airlock (1). Using hand-sprays of Pytrazon, they will proceed (in vac suits in zero-G) to (25) where the power plant is fired up using power from the battery system. The computers in the control room (13) can be powered up immediately using the battery power which has been maintaining the base's screens for the interceding years. A third code is required to allow use of the computers at which point an internal store



of Pytrazon is cycled throughout the base for one minute and then vented into space. Gravity and atmosphere can now be restored; the entire base can be fully functional within an hour. The batteries would not maintain the screens indefinitely so a low power computer uses the passive scanners to determine when there are no ships within scanning range and then turns on the power plant to charge up the batteries, turning off again as soon as a ship comes into range.

DOORS

All doors and airlocks have manual controls but can be overridden from the control room (13). Doors can be operated by hand but only if power to the door has failed.

ELECTRONICS

3xTL-15 Mod Fb Computers, 300,000km radio, 1000 AU maser, passive EMS array 300,000km (built into asteroid structure), 150,000km EMS jammer, EM masking. Computer terminals outside the control room (13) have communication and display facilities but can only show data relayed from (13); they cannot be used to 'hack' into the main computer.

to slide away revealing ship fuel and data links. Connection to the link (by a ship's computer or hand computer) will allow the entry of a second code to open the main doors. At this point the main computer (13) cannot be accessed via this link.

3. Inner Airlock. Lockers contain emergency vac suits, sealant, medical kits and tool kits.

4. Changing room. Can be used as an airlock. Lockers as (3). Lift shaft up.

5. Personnel Lift.

6. Cargo Lift.

7. Pump Room. Moves fuel between the external link (2) and fuel store (28). Lift shaft up and down. Sealed shaft contains pipes up to fuel store (28).

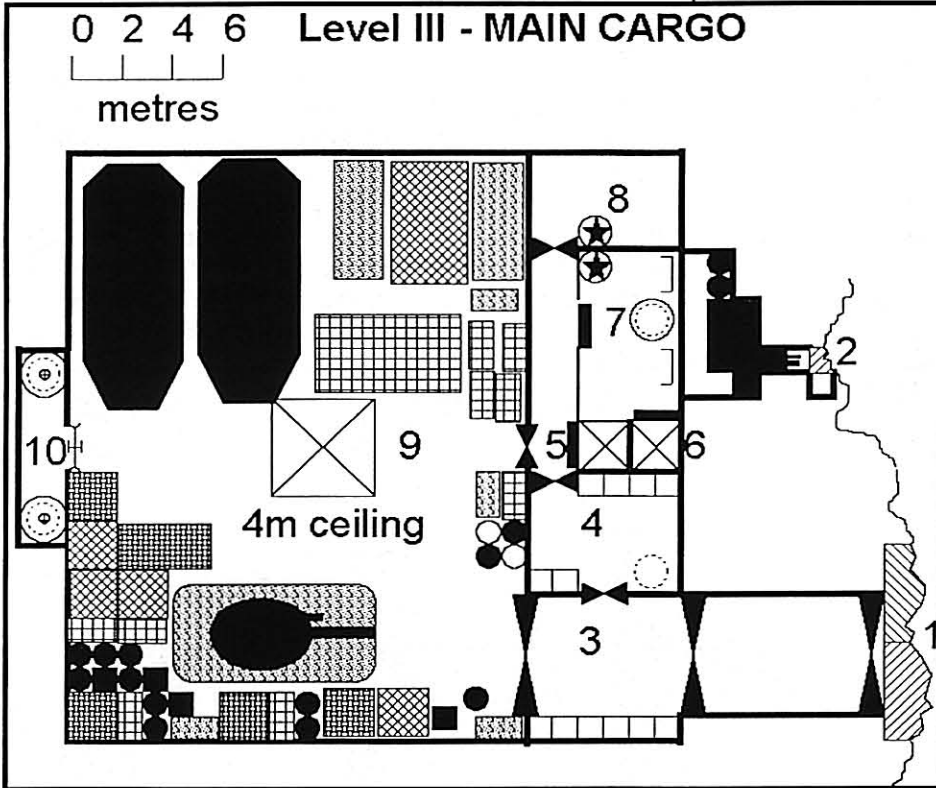
8. Life Support. Air recyclers and 24 hour emergency oxygen supply.

9. Storage Bay 1. Central lift platform (up). Spares and complete units for: ship's lasers, missiles, power plant, drives and computers. If you are feeling mad, add a grav tank and couple of G-carriers!

10. Emergency Access. Emergency locker as (3), manual hatches up and down. Provides an emergency escape route should the main lifts (in 4, 5 and 6) be inaccessible.

LEVEL II

11. Guard Room. Empty weapons racks, lockers, tables, chairs. Large computer display on wall (for



GRAVITY

Areas 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 15, 16, have no floor gravity plates.

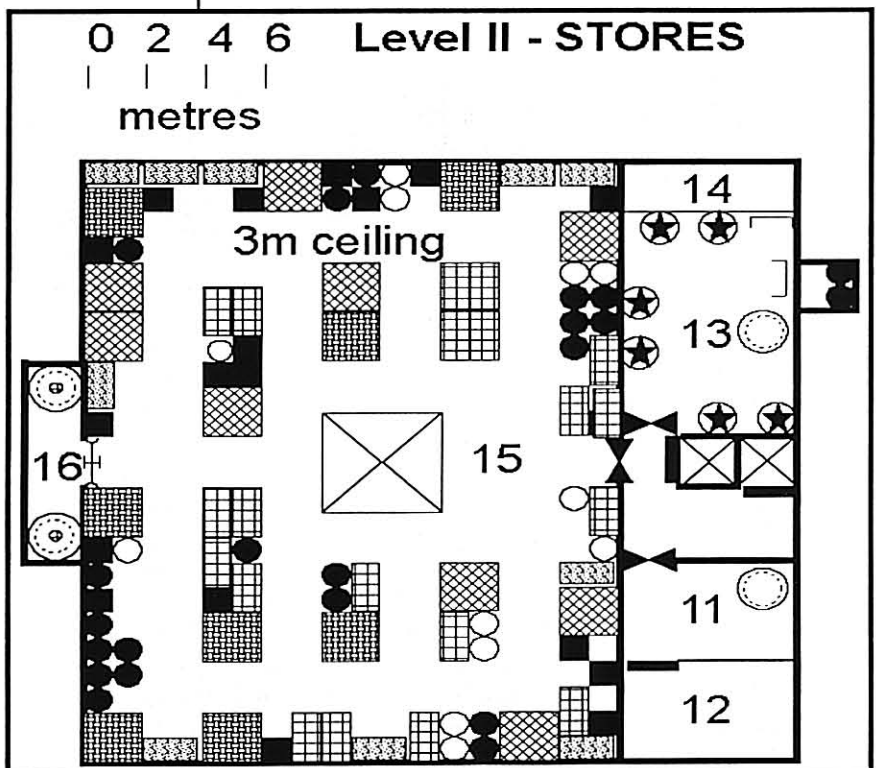
CONTENTS

Every item of equipment, armour, weaponry, etc. within Jade was manufactured somewhere within the Protectorate; not one item has any Zhodani markings on it nor any traceable serial number. Exact contents of any Storage Bay should be determined by the referee to maintain game balance in his campaign. It should be remembered that any computing equipment within the base is pre-Virus - the computing power may be 3-4 tech levels higher than local technology but it has no protection against Virus infection.

LEVEL III

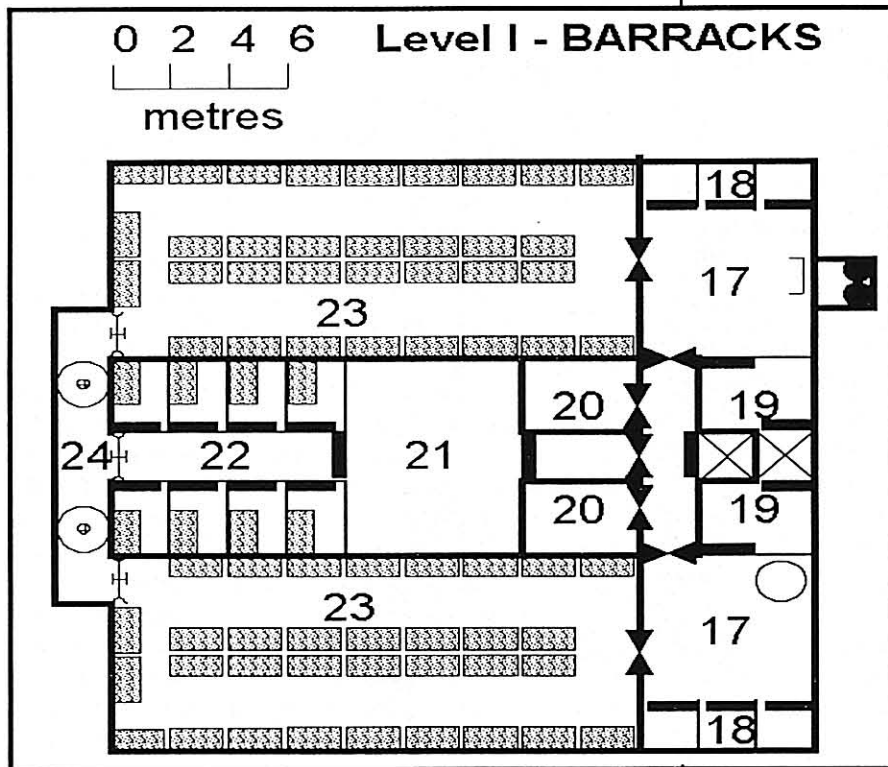
1. Main Airlock. No manual controls. Opened from control room (13) or remotely using external data link (2).

2. External Links. Reception of the correct coded radio signal causes a section of rock



entertainment or tactical displays). Lift shaft up and down.
 12. Medical Bay. TL15 robotic and computer-controlled systems with automatic diagnosis and treatment facilities.
 13. Control Room. Computer terminals. Consoles for screens and electronic counter-measures, power and life support, internal surveillance and security, external (passive) sensors and one spare (back-up) terminal. Lift shaft up and down.
 14. Computers. Access panel allows entry for servicing.

planning and briefing room (using the large wall display and a central holographic projection unit).
 22. Officers' cabins. Utilitarian. Single bunk in each with lockers, wash-basin, small table and chair.
 23. Barracks. Single beds, lockers beneath. A thin sound-absorbent privacy curtain can be pulled down from an overhead locker to surround each bed.
 24. Emergency Access. As (10).



POWERPLANT

25. 200 MW Power plant.
 26. 10 MW-hour batteries.
 27. Emergency Access. As (10).

FUEL STORE

28. 8200 cubic metres of starship fuel. Only a tiny fraction of this has been used up by the base powerplant.

Success

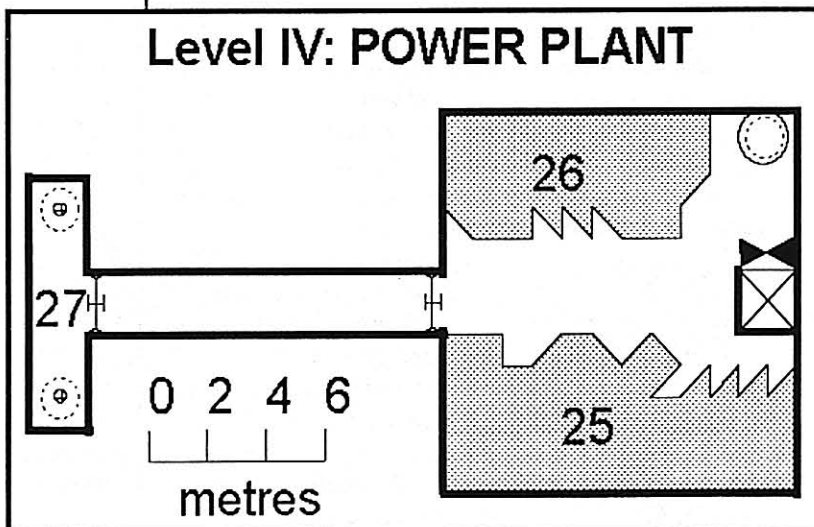
Once Jade is found, Zarpir will want to return immediately to Goggic. He will contact an acquaintance at Goggic starport to 'stake his claim'; in truth he is telling a special operations team where to find Jade. The characters may wonder why Zarpir didn't leave a marker beacon, or check any surrounding asteroids for additional 'amondite' strikes - he will claim that a beacon might encourage a rash of prospectors into the area, and that it is only a million-to-one chance of finding another amondite asteroid. But how did he know about this asteroid?

15. Storage Bay 2. Central lift platform (down). Hermetically sealed boxes on racks around the bay contain 2800 man-days of rations, medical kits and drugs (blood plasma, anaesthetics, etc.), vac suit accessories, beacons, survival kits, tents, short and long range communicators, hand computers, IR/LA goggles, PRIS binoculars, protective suits, electronic and mechanical tool kits, inertial navigators, combat fatigues, combat environment suits, combat armour.
 16. Emergency Access. As (10).

Zarpir will claim to have found details of the asteroid on a dead belter's navigation tape several years ago (he might even say the belter was a local-born half-Zhodani, hence the

LEVEL I

17. Common Rooms. As 11 but with fitness equipment stored against the wall.
 18. Freshers.
 19. Galleys. Mainly automated systems. Food is brought up from (15) via the cargo lift (6).
 20. Armouries. Racks contain gauss rifles, gauss pistols, snub pistols, laser rifles, plasma rifles, RAM grenades, plastic explosives, detonators. Wall sockets for recharging power packs.
 21. Officers' Mess. As 17. Also intended for use as a



Zhodani data on his hand computer).
 On approach to Goggic, the characters may detect the Queen's Harp (a Subsidized Merchant) heading out from

Goggic toward Jade. If asked, Zarpir will say it's his mining team. It might seem a slightly odd ship - why not a belter or dedicated ore refinery ship? Zarpir will say it has been fitted out with specialist extraction gear.

On arriving at Goggic, Zarpir will pay the characters (including their bonus) and say farewell. Local port acquaintances will keep a keen eye on the characters for up to a week, warning Zarpir if it appears that they have any intention of returning immediately to Jade. Zarpir will warn them off, hiring some local thugs to threaten them if necessary. If the characters still manage to return within a week, Zarpir will have called ahead to warn the team at Jade.

Meanwhile At Jade

The Queen's Harp carries a Zhodani special operations team (10 Veterans, heavily armed and armoured) from Goggic. Once linked to Jade the team will move all the valuable ship parts, weapons and other kit from Storage Bays 1 and 2 into the merchant. This will take at least 48 hours. They will then lock all doors open, set a 1 hour phosphorus charge in Storage Bay 2, open the fuel valves in room 7, close the airlocks and leave (to jump out of system). After an hour the vapourising hydrogen fuel should have filled most of the base and the phosphorus charge will ignite it. The resulting explosion will obliterate the entire asteroid. A ship in close proximity to the explosion will be hit by a cloud of asteroid 'shrapnel', probably taking some external damage.

The Bomb

If the characters become awkward, Zarpir (or Jerry) will offer more money to placate them (after all, Jade contains equipment worth hundreds of millions of credits). In a crisis, they will threaten to detonate the charge contained in the false sensor pod (each carries a small transmitter within their watch). This will instantly decompress the bridge and critically damage most of the control systems. Bad news... hope it doesn't get to this!

Defusing The Situation

It is possible that a character, EVAing to repair a damaged ship system, or examining an asteroid with Zarpir, may have the opportunity to check the sensor pods. A Difficult Electronics or Sensors task will identify the odd pod; a bad failure will falsely identify a different pod! An Average Intrusion or Difficult Electronics task is required to determine the pod is booby-trapped; a second roll will disable the trap. An Average Mechanical roll will open the pod. If the booby-trap has not been disarmed, an alarm will sound on the watches of Zarpir and Jerry and they will demand the characters cease their investigation, claiming it will damage the sensor within. If necessary Zarpir will then threaten to explode the bomb. If the trap was disarmed, a Simple Combat Engineer roll will identify the hull-penetrating charge within. An Average Combat Engineer task can be used to deactivate the explosives. If done carefully, this may be done without alerting Zarpir!

Goggic Special Ops

Goggic's intelligence services (GIS) have had their eye on LeGrange since a suspect explosion a year ago. A couple of days before the characters were recruited, LeGrange got drunk (as usual) and bleated out about his 'amondite' search while a GIS agent listened in on a bug. The GIS thought amondite an unlikely find and decided to watch LeGrange, sending a Special Operations Unit (SOU) of 4 Veteran Marines (heavily armed and armoured) in the Belter "Snowflake" to follow Zarpir's ship.

Play Options

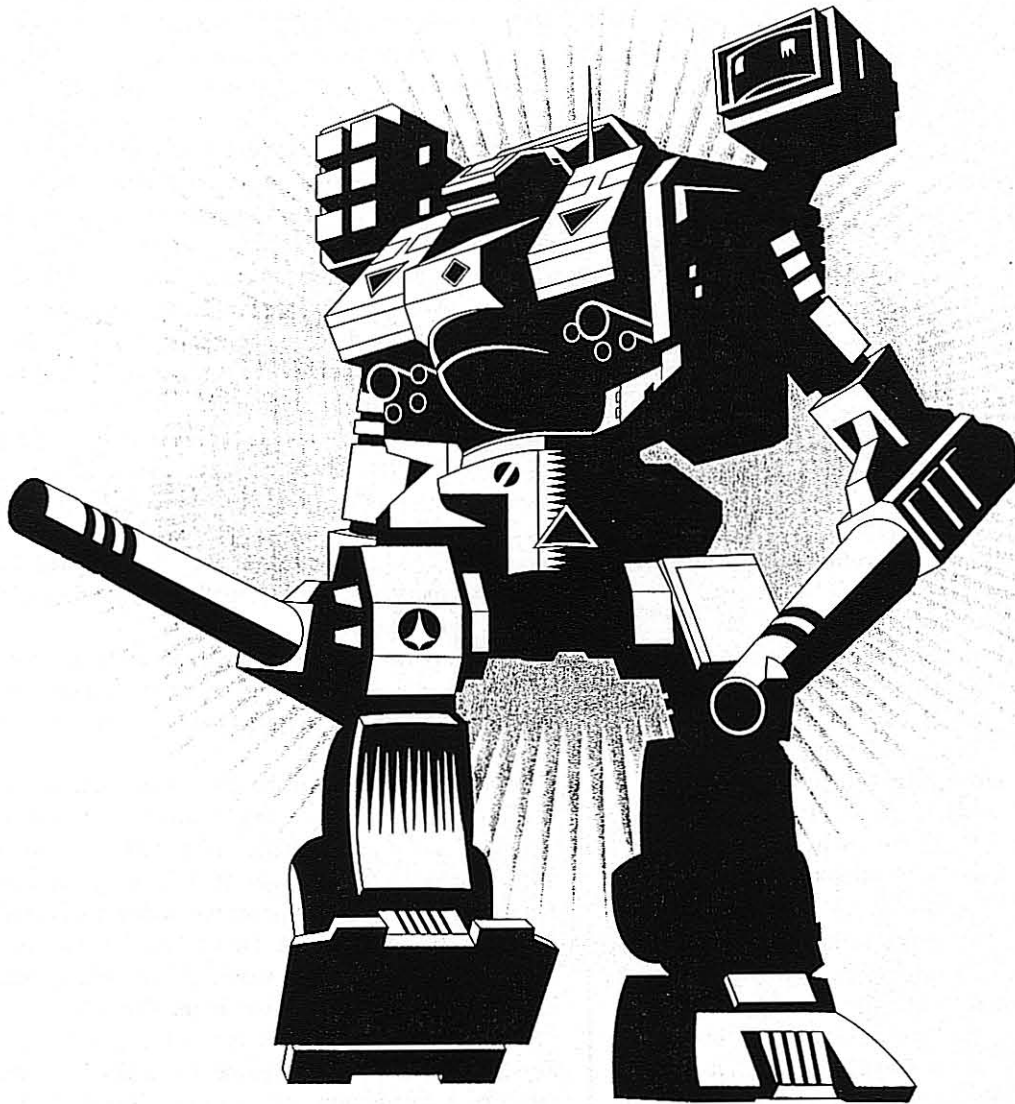
The players should become suspicious of Zarpir and LeGrange and may either overpower them or, having dropped them off on Goggic, return to investigate Jade themselves. In the former case the Zhodani Queen's Harp will come to investigate the lack of daily reports from Zarpir; in the latter case the characters may catch the Zhodani part way through unloading the base. The Goggic SOU lost contact with the characters' ship when it located Jade and although they have closed in, they may not yet have located the asteroid. The SOU may save the players from the Zhodani or the players may aid the SOU attacking the Zhodani. If the Zhodani have left or are about to leave, the base will soon explode - perhaps the players can defuse the bomb? Once the SOU are on the scene, other local forces (warships, marines, etc.) will be alerted and will start turning up after 5-6 hours. At the referee's option, additional threats could be placed within Jade - e.g. laser grids in critical corridors detect unauthorised access and activate automated defences - poison gas or a spray of laser fire from a concealed gun port. Alternatively, 2-4 defence droids may be located within the base, each heavily armed and armoured. These will be Protectorate models (rather than Zhodani warbots) and can be deactivated by a coded radio signal, the details of which are held on Zarpir's hand computer, together with the code for opening the base airlock, etc.

Rewards

It is extremely unlikely that the players will be able to take the base and keep it secret from everyone. They might be able to steal some weapons or starship parts before the Zhodani or SOU arrive. If they help the SOU they might be allowed to keep the base itself but all the contents would be confiscated. They just might be able to convince the Zhodani to give them an equivalent deal if they promise not to tell anyone who built the base. If they hijacked the ship from Zarpir, the SOU will require it to be returned to Goggic and, if Zarpir's agent status is revealed, the players may escape without being arrested. If Zarpir is still alive at this stage, he will use every possible persuasive ploy, e.g. claiming the entire set up was LeGrange's idea and that Zarpir was only brought along to fund the operation, etc. ✂

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The Intendant

By Gregory P. Lee

The Zho? I fought them. I'll never trust them. Norris should make them toe the line, no matter what. They're nothing but poison. Not because they're psionic. They're not sneaky because they can read minds and teleport. They're just sneaky, so they sneak into minds and homes.

--Aramais P. Lee

A Regency campaign is destined to meet with the Zhodani at one time or another. The Zhodani may also appear in other regions of space, though this is far less likely after the Collapse. Conflicts with them most often result from the still potent anti-psionic and anti-Zhodani prejudice. Even in the New Era, those of Imperial descent usually view the complex nature of Zhodani politics as inscrutable and ultimately malign. Aramais P. Lee's misunderstanding of Zhodani motives is typical among those who grew up in the Regency.

Adventures with Zhodani will often involve psionics and have an edge of mystery to them. However, the referee should not overlook other aspects of Zhodani society. For example, their basic honesty and ambition cannot be overemphasized, nor can their devotion to psychological health. These are the driving forces of this scenario.

The adventure opens somewhere off-port where the PCs encounter a tall, attractive, dark-skinned woman (457979, Psionic Rating 14, Cr 500, Chemistry-__, Persuasion-__, Telepathy-15, Biology-__). The woman may also have other psionic abilities, depending on campaign needs and preferences. Her bearing disguises that she is only about 20 standard years old. Nonetheless, she is visibly distraught.

She introduces herself as Shiezdhienvriep, making no effort to hide that she is Zhodani. The ending to her name places her in the Zhodani Intendant class. Although friendly, she remains dignified and will not suggest the characters address her more simply as Shiez until far later, and only when it is to her advantage to be less formal.

Other Zhodani are pursuing her, including her noble mentor, Priajdenjstebr and the Tavrchedl'. As she appeals for aid from the PCs, Priajdenjstebr and a contingent of armed Zhodani arrive to apprehend Shiezdhienvriep. She will flee (as should the PCs). The Zhodani will use force as necessary, but never mean to kill. If the PCs return fire, Priajdenjstebr must be allowed to withdraw before he is killed, captured, or seriously injured.

Shiezdhienvriep asks for passage or escort away from this place, and will do what she can to help the characters recoup the expense. She may even secretly use her potent telepathic powers to help them make profitable barter.

If pressed, Shiezdhienvriep claims that she is being pursued because she knows of a Zhodani plot against the Regency. This need not be a prelude to a Frontier War, but perhaps be a move to control a strategic world. She may hint that the plot involves use of psionic drugs that create or

massively amplify powers. She will have some convincing details or evidence of the alleged plot.

As the PCs may eventually discover, no such plot exists. She is lying. If the PCs know anything about Zhodani psychology, they should be disturbed when they learn this.

In truth, prior to leaving the Consulate, Shiezdhienvriep was a prole, a menial sub-technician at a Zhodani drug research facility. Like all Zhodani proles, she sought to become an Intendant to better her life. With her massive psionic potential, acceptance would normally be assured. Unfortunately, she had no actual trainable psionic talent. This is partially due to an undiscovered brain defect. Her only "talent" was a very erratic and untrainable telepathy.

The defect also caused a form of mental instability, which is most like a multiple personality disorder. A "stable" persona, combined with her erratic but powerful natural telepathy, has helped prevent discovery, diagnosis, and treatment of the less stable aspects of her personality.

As a laboratory technician, she learned how to reproduce sophisticated drugs and substances. She stumbled across the formulas for some of the experimental psionic drugs described in the accompanying article. She stole the raw materials to make injected the drugs herself, without proper medical supervision. Her telepathy is now dependable and under her full control.

Shiezdhienvriep saw the drugs as an opportunity to satisfy her natural ambition for higher status. Unfortunately, the drugs have also further injured her brain, rendering her even less stable than before.

The PCs might learn of the drugs when one inadvertently uses Shiezdhienvriep's hand computer, stumbles across written notes, or hears the truth from a Zhodani agent. When this happens, she will add to her story. According to Shiezdhienvriep, Priajdenjstebr was using her to produce the drugs for his own purpose. He wished to create an army of newly psionic proles who would do his bidding and render him the most powerful person in the Consulate.

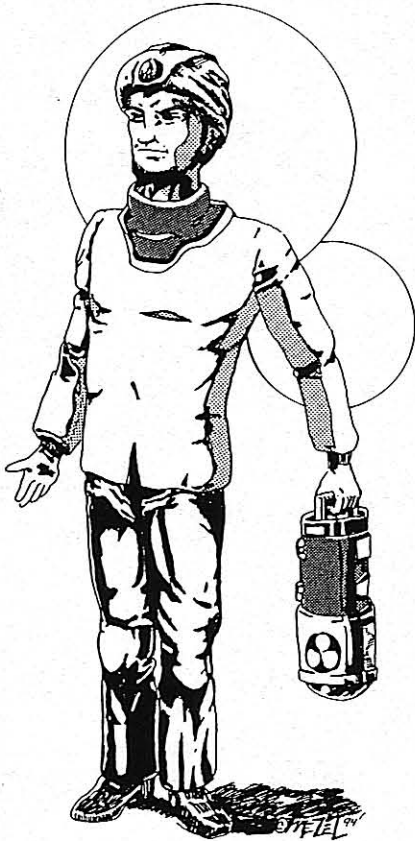
Priajdenjstebr's intentions are actually selfless and, in Zhodani terms, quite reasonable. He seeks the return of the formulas, destruction of existing drugs, and to put Shiezdhienvriep into therapy before she hurts herself or someone else. Moreover, her use of the drugs is dishonest, and violates the class system that protects Zhodani society. Thus, the drugs are both a danger and an affront to Zhodani virtues.

The adventure should ultimately lead the characters at least to the fringes of Zhodani space. Shiezdhienvriep will want to return to her culture and enjoy the status of an intendant or a noblewoman, even if she must take a false identity. Alternatively, she might choose to supply the drugs to other proles in an attempt at equalizing Zhodani society.

Until then, Shiezdhienvriep will say or do anything to keep her attendants (the PCs) with her as protection and company. She is likely to spark a romance with one (or more) of the



PCs, which will complicate matters. Shiezdhienvriep will probably turn on the PCs in time, given her unstable nature, or may take some other rash act leading them into danger.



To lure the group along with her to Zhodani space, Shiezdhienvriep might play up her story of a Zhodani threat. The PCs may be interested in investigating her story of secret naval preparations on their own. If they just report the claims, they might be commissioned by the Regency's intelligence community to investigate them. In this event, give them a likely system to explore for signs of an enemy build-up. They will find nothing, calling Shiezdhienvriep's information into doubt.

Shiezdhienvriep may also hold out promises that she can obtain more formulas with their help. For instance, she might assure the characters that a drug formula exists that returns an aged, untrained individual to his original (age 18) psionic potential. An Imperial psionic institute could be interested in her claims, and might serve as patron for the group to obtain the formulas.

On any incursion near or into Zhodani space, the PCs will come to the attention of Zhodani agents. Such agents may be from Tavrchedl', SORAG, other Zhodani security groups, or military organizations.

It is also possible to play this adventure with the PCs as Zhodani. They might be enlisted by Priajdenjstebr to pursue Shiezdhienvriep to retrieve the formulas and any drugs manufactured from them. Alternatively, they may observe characters from the Regency snooping in Zhodani territory. Investigating them, they will learn of the stolen formulas.

If the PCs are Zhodani, a second group with different objectives should also be in pursuit to confuse matters. For instance, members of a Zhodani client state or a Regency Psionic Institute might seek the drugs.

MORE PSI-DRUGS FOR TRAVELLER

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Introduction

Since the very first days of Traveller, there have been only

three classes of drugs with a direct effect on psionic potential: Booster, Double, and Special. Each temporarily enhances psionic strength with varying risks, though these drugs are not explained in detail.

Given the pre-collapse Imperial fear of psionics, the limited selection is natural and logical. However, Zhodani culture, embracing psionics, has allowed far more experimentation. While not all Zhodani experiments have as yet born fruit, versions of the drugs described below may be available.

Psionic abilities are a function of the whole brain, requiring concentration, volition, and expenditure of neural energy. However, like other sentient faculties such as language recognition and mathematical ability, certain very basic, discrete neurological structures must be present and fully developed for an individual to have both psionic "strength" (the neurological ability to produce and channel the poorly-understood psionic energies) and "talent" (the actual psionic abilities).

These structures are often called, albeit inaccurately, psionic "centers." Without the appropriate centers, psionic talents cannot develop, but they do not act alone in producing psionic strength potentials and actual psionic talents.

Both genetics and environment play a role in the development of psionic potential and talent. Moreover, the use of such talents is essential, or the structures (particularly those related to psionic strength potential) atrophy -- just as other brain structures atrophy if not used. Thus, while geneering could theoretically be used to develop psionic supermen, the development of the individual, and the individual's environment, could impede or prevent him from gaining any psionic skills.

The psionic drugs (Booster, Double, Special, and the drugs described below) act on the psionic centers. The drugs which act on psionic strength affect the strength centers; the drugs affecting talents affect the talent centers.

Manufacturing any of these drugs requires a complete TL 13+ biochemistry laboratory set-up (Cr 525,000, Disp 1 ton) ; using this bare-bones set-up allows one type of drug to be produced at a time.

Producing 10 doses of a psi drug using established formulas is an uncertain Difficult : Chemistry and Biology task. Referee: The individual must work with the lab and materials (at intervals) for 2 hours daily during the 7-day process. Once started, the process cannot be interrupted without risking subtle imperfections in the drugs and unpredictable side-effects. Raw materials cost 1/10th of the final base cost of the drug. An "expert" robot of appropriate programming can handle most of the monitoring, reducing human supervision to .5 hours per day. Undetected imperfections in the drugs can cause severe injuries to users.

Gaseous forms of drugs are suitable for use in confined spaces or when administered with a mask, and are often included in automated starship security systems.

The referee should note that some of the drugs described below could seriously affect the balance of play. The costs and potential consequences of these drugs are designed to make the use of many of them dangerous. If the PCs really

want to try these drugs, they should be given a proper example of the danger, perhaps via an overly eager NPC.

PSI DIMINISHING DRUGS

The psi diminishing drugs include the Dampers and Disruptors. Dampers are the direct opposite of the Booster class of drugs, and act on the Psionic Strength itself, reducing output of energy. Disruptors act on the psionic talents, reducing or eliminating a talent without affecting raw psionic power.

Of course, any drug which destroys volition will affect a psionic's ability to function.

Psi Dampers

There are three "broad-spectrum," short-term psionic dampers, all appearing at TL 12: Damper (base price Cr 500 /tablet, Cr1,500 gas canister), Double Damper (base price Cr 2000/tablet Cr6,000 gas canister), and Special Damper (base price Cr5000/liquid dose, Cr20,000 gas canister). These decrease the basic psionic strength potential, while not affecting the underlying talents. Thus, they are considered "broad spectrum" dampers.

Damper reduces potential by -3, Double Damper by -6; Special Damper reduces psionic potential to 0. Oral doses become fully effective in 1D20 + 5 minutes, while gas doses become effective in at a rate of 15 seconds per strength point diminished (since the gaseous forms go straight from the lungs to the bloodstream to the brain). Doses remain effective for 1D20 + 6 hours; thereafter, psionic strength returns at 1 point per hour. These drugs have been produced in the Imperium for temporary control of criminal psionicists prior to lobotomy.

Side effects range from severe headaches to coma.

The dampers cannot be counteracted by doses of Booster or its kin; such combinations cause brain inflammation and swelling leading to migraine-type headaches (minor wound), coma (medium wound), and sometimes death.

Permanent Damper first appears at TL 15 and costs CR 25,000 for a single dose. It is a highly toxic drug which targets the psionic strength center of the brain and destroys it. In essence, it is an advance on cancer chemotherapy; it treats the psionic strength center as a tumor. Side effects may include partial loss of intelligence or partial memory loss, since the drug is not a perfect "magic bullet." One dose is usually sufficient to destroy the psionic strength center.

Disruptors

Disruptors act directly on the talent centers, interfering directly with the neurological activities that control psionic forces. The effects last 1D20 + 6 hours per dose.

Broad Spectrum Disruptor interferes with all psionic centers, appears at TL 13 and costs Cr1,000 per pill (Cr3,000 for gas). Psionic strength is not affected, but cannot be controlled. This may lead, in rare cases, to unexpected uses of psionic abilities (e.g., a sudden teleportation).

Narrow spectrum disruptors, appearing at TL 14, temporarily disrupt the specific talent centers. Doses are generally liquid, with only a slight taste. Injectable and

gaseous forms are also available. The cost per dose for each target talent: Telepathy, Cr2,000 (Cr6,000 for gas); Teleperception, Cr2,500 (Cr5,000 for gas); Telephysics, Cr3,000 (Cr9,000 for gas); self, Cr 4,000 (Cr12,000 for gas); Teleportation, Cr4,500 (Cr13,500 for gas); Awareness, Cr10,000 (Cr30,000 for gas).

Permanent narrow spectrum disruptors which damage the specific talent centers first become available at TL 15 at ten times the cost of their temporary counterparts, but only in injectable forms. As with Permanent Damper, a risk of damage to other brain structures exists.

PSI AUGMENTING DRUGS

Psionic enhancers first become feasible at TL 14, when genetically engineered virus-like drugs can be manufactured to alter brain structures. However, these essentially experimental versions are unpredictable due to subtle structural differences from one brain to another.

All enhancers are injected. Permanent enhancers must be injected at a steady rate to be effective, and should be injected under the supervision of a doctor due to the risk of adverse reactions. Users wear a long-term injector, or have such an injector temporarily implanted. Injectors cost Cr5,000, (not reflected in the cost of the drugs described).

Some Zhodani are experimentally developing these drugs, although ethical questions on their use abound. In addition, some nobles desire to hoard their limited power base, and thus oppose developing drugs which could allow more Proles to become Intendants. There is at least one TL 15/16 lab which has obtained limited success in developing these drugs.

Activator

Activator is a single-dose, injectable drug; a variety exists for each known talent (and for some of the more widely known "arcana" talents. It first appears at TL 14; like other enhancers, it does not become safe and predictable for individuals until TL 17. The cost per dose for each target talent: Telepathy, Cr20,000; Teleperception, Cr24,000; Telephysics, Cr24,000; Self, Cr28,000; Teleportation, Cr 36,000; Arcana, Cr36,000 (or more, depending on the rarity of the talent).

Activator allows an untrained character to access a psionic talent without training, at the individual's current psionic strength rating, *so long as the character has that dormant talent*. The Activator becomes effective 1D10 minutes after injection, and it must be injected directly into the bloodstream. Each dose "activates" a psionic talent only while the dose remains effective (10 x 1D10 minutes). Thereafter, the character returns to the "untrained" state.

At the referee's discretion, the activator can be for a specific sub-talent (e.g., a Telephysics activator may activate only Pyrokinesis), or the entire spectrum of talents under the heading.

Although price alone makes repeated use prohibitive, the risk of brain injury should also present reason for caution when taking Activator manufactured below TL 17. In essence, the brain becomes allergic to such Activator unless

the drug is specifically tailored to the character's own biochemistry. On the other hand, repeated use of Activator can result in the character learning to use the psionic skill activated.

Avoiding allergy-mediated brain injury is a Routine : Constitution task. Once the character has an allergic reaction, s/he will always have an allergic reaction. Treating an allergy-mediated brain injury is a Difficult : Diagnosis task.

Learning a psionic skill by repeated use of activator is a Formidable : Willpower (Uncertain) task. Referee: if the character mistakenly believes he has (or hasn't) learned to control a talent, the character's decisions will of course be altered.

Permanent Boosters and Psion Genesis

Permanent booster increases the psionic strength rating of an individual by increasing the capacity of the psionic strength center to generate and conduct psionic energy. Each treatment permanently increases the psionic rating one point (to a maximum of F). Each dose costs Cr100,000.

Psion Genesis drugs cause new neurological growth in the talent centers of the brain, allowing an individual to develop talents so long as s/he has a genetic pre-disposition to such a talent. Thus, Telepathy Genesis is designed to cause growth of the telepathic center.

Psion Genesis drugs must be continuously injected for thirty days to be effective; only one talent can be generated at any one time. The price given is for the thirty-day program. The cost per talent: Telepathy, Cr100,000; Teleperception, Cr120,000; Telephysics, Cr120,000; Self, Cr140,000; Teleportation, Cr 180,000; Arcana Cr200,000 (or more, depending on the rarity of the talent). Once the talent center develops, it still must be tested and trained.

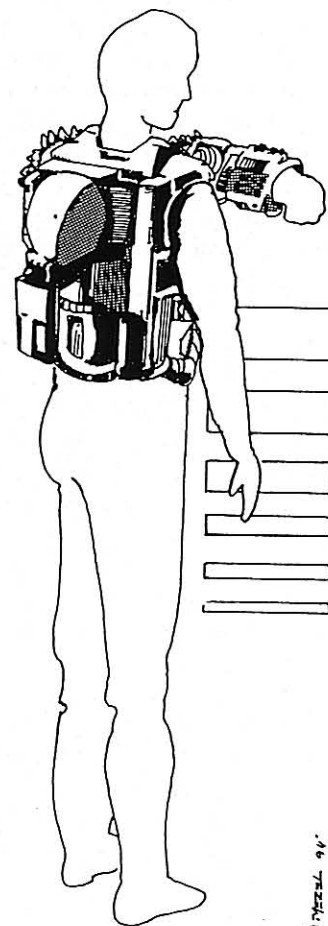
Permanently boosting psionic strength using Permanent Booster, or generating a psionic talent center using the appropriate Psion Genesis Drug is a Formidable : Medical task. The medical skill is that of the individual preparing and monitoring the dose. Failure generally results in adverse effects ranging from allergy to unintended neurological growth (with unpredictable and unintended effects on personality, intelligence, and other brain functions). On a destroyed mishap result, the character becomes permantly vegetative or dies. After two full treatments to the same individual, the task becomes Difficult for future treatments to that individual.

UNINTENDED EFFECTS OF PSIONIC DRUGS

The complexity of the psionic structures inside the human brain cannot be over-emphasized. A compound which will develop a telepathic center in one character may cause a tumor in another. The same drug may develop a telepathic center in a third, but also render him insane due to additional growth. Fully safe psionic drugs do not appear until TL 17, when complex medical diagnostic equipment can precisely map a brain, evaluate its chemistry, and calculate the exact chemical formulae needed to alter minute brain structures.

Unintended effects can result from any psionic drug, including the Booster family. Unintended effects of psi drug use include personality changes, intelligence changes, migraine headaches, seizure disorders, sleep disorders, coma, stroke, partial or complete paralysis, reduction in pre-existing psionic strength or talents, tumors, generalized brain damage, allergies, insanity, or death. Unintended effects are more likely if the drug is impure; excessive or prolonged use can render the character more sensitive to the drugs. Unintended effects are more severe as the character ages.

The referee should use discretion in imposing such effects on PCs, but not allow psi-drug use to be risk-free.



Tech Level 15 version illustrated

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Psi Sensors

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

TL	Type	Vol(L)	Wt(Kg)	Price(Cr)
O 14	PAD-14	40	20	80,000
O 15	PAD-15	25	12	50,000
O 16	PAD-16	19	11	45,000
O 19	PAD-19	17	7	45,000
O 21	PAD-21	15	5	40,000

SUPPLEMENTAL STATISTICS (OPTIONAL)

TL	ChgDur	OpNoise	PowUse	Comments
O 14	1	None	1.5 kw	Shrt Rnge = 300 meters
O 15	7	None	0.7 kw	Shrt Rnge = 300 meters
O 16	30	None	0.4 kw	Shrt Rnge = 450 meters
O 19	30	None	0.4 kw	Shrt Rnge = 750 meters
O 21	30	None	0.3 kw	Shrt Rnge = 5K meters

DESCRIPTION

Based on NAS technology, the psionic activity detector first appears at TL 14. The sensor is comparable to the NAS sensor in design, size, and range, but one tech level behind. The PAD does not detect psionic energy. Rather, the PAD detects patterns of central nervous system activity which accompany psionic manipulations. Thus, the individual performing the psionic activity must be within the PAD's range, regardless of the "range effect" of the psionic activity.

For example, the PAD will detect an individual teleporting only if the teleport commences within the range of the PAD. A person who teleports from a continent away into the PAD's range will not be detected.

The TL 14 PAD is rudimentary, detecting the activity of the psionic strength center without readily detecting the type of psionic manipulation involved. At TL 15, improvements to the system (and better understanding of psionic activity) allow the sensor to better determine the type of psionic activity being performed.

The cost of the PAD includes integral computers which contain a massive amount of "firmware" expert systems containing the information necessary to scan for the particular neurological activity which accompanies psionic manipulations. Thus, without gutting the PAD, it cannot be reprogrammed to seek other specific types of neurological activity. However, holocube slots are included to add additional databases for psionic manipulations not commonly encountered (i.e., the "arcana" talents). In addition, by its nature an NAS, the PAD can be set to function only at the more limited level of the NAS.

At higher TLs, the PAD's sensors and databases become powerful enough to readily detect psionic potential and natural shields -- that is, the "at rest" stage of the psionic centers of a trained individual.

TASK LIBRARY

Detecting psionic activity with a TL 14 PAD in its Short range is a Formidable : Sensor Ops (uncertain) task. The task difficulty increases by one level for long range, and two levels for extreme range. The Short Range task difficulty decreases by one level per TL advance discussed above (e.g., using a TL 19 PAD the task is Easy).

Pinpointing the location of psionic activity using a TL 14 PAD in its Short range requires successful detection, and then is a Formidable : Sensor Ops task. Task difficulty increases for range as discussed above, and decreases for TL advances as discussed above.

Determining the psionic activity being attempted using a TL 14 PAD in its short range is an Impossible : Sensor Ops task. Task difficulty increases for range as discussed above, and decreases for TL advances as discussed above.

Detecting a psionically trained individual using a TL 15

PAD in its short range is an Impossible : Sensor Ops task. Task difficulty increases for range as discussed above, and decreases for TL advances as discussed above. This task is not possible using a TL 14 PAD. ✧



Aikhiy

By Guy Garnett

"In a service as small as GUESS, the scuttlebutt gets around pretty fast. We all knew that Old Lady Honoko had something big planned for the Fidelity as soon as we were done with our shakedown. Most of the smart money was on a trip to Aikhiy. So I wasn't that suprised when the Skipper announced our destiation at the "all-hands" briefing. A couple of the younger crewmembers looked a little pale, but most everybody else looked glad that we were done waiting, and finally going to GO SOMEWHERE."

-- 1st Sgt. Obenhowzer.

Background

It was because of Aikhiy, or rather two starships that failed to return from Aikhiy, that the Exploration Ban was instituted 10 years ago. An early, and politically important task of GUESS will be to visit Aikhiy and prove that there are no "boogeymen" lurking in interstellar space.

Not only would the loss of another starship cause the imposition of another Exploration Ban, but a successful mission is also politically important to GUESS. Admiral Honoko has been adamant that the exploration service be independent from both the Gralyn Union Navy and the semi-civillian Space Transport Authority. Her argument, that GUESS's work is sufficiently different from the mission of either other service thata specially-trained independent service is required, is not without merit. It is also not without detractors.

A success at Aikhiy will help vindicate her position, and a failure, even a partial one, will provide her critics with more ammunition. Although this fact goes unspoken at Admiral Honoko's briefing, the Fidelity's officers can hardly help but be aware of the current political situation.

Options

Individual referees will want to decide how bold (or cautious) they want

Adm. Honoko to be; the decision here will probably set the tone for the campaign, and give the players an idea of how their characters are expected to behave. The cautious approach, while certainly more "realistic", may have the effect of stifling some of the creativity and initiative on the part of the players. Individual referees will have to assess their players, and decide accordingly.

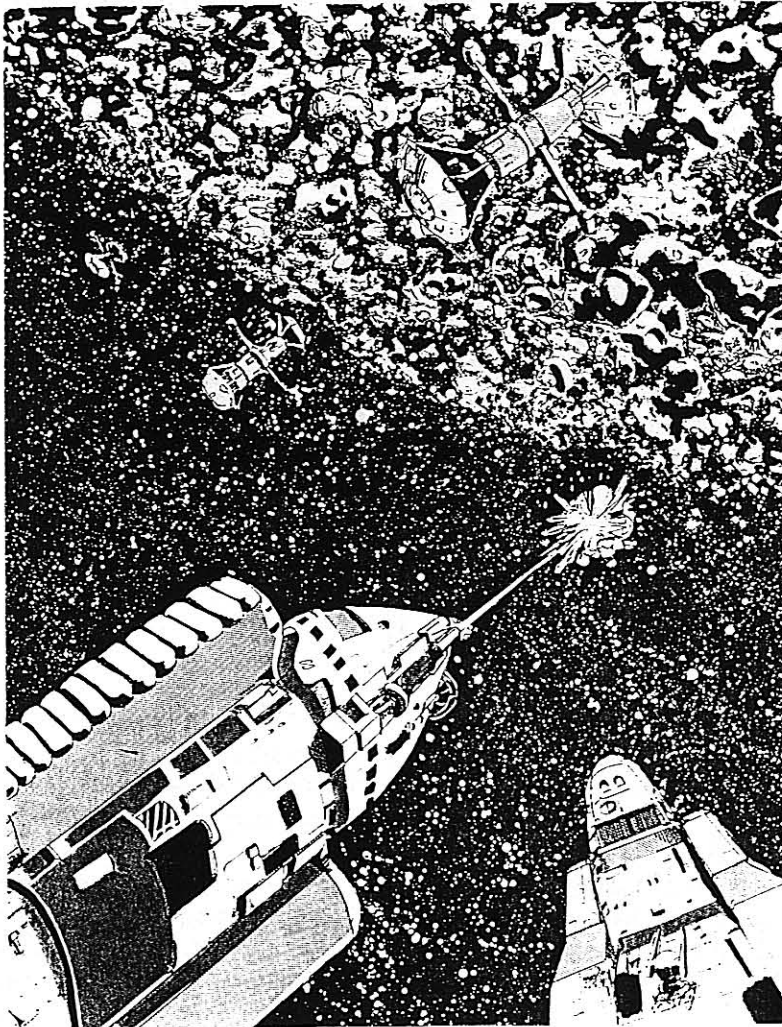
If the GUESS Admiral's style is bold, the Fidelity will be sent alone to reconnoiter the system, "take appropriate action to ensure the safe navigation of other ships", and return. This will allow the player characters a greater sense of freedom of action, without another ship "looking over their shoulder".

In a cautious campaign, Honoko will send at least one other ship, almost certainly New Hope, the service's 100-ton scoutship, with the Fidelity, to ensure that at least one ship is able to report back on the fate that befell the other. The ships will jump into Aikhiy in formation, and the New Hope will maintain strict radio silence. The two ships will emerge from jumpspace at widely-separated points in the Aikhiy

system, to prevent both ships from being attacked by the same menace.

The scoutship is manned by a "Line" quality crew; the referee should assume an asset of 13 whenever one of these NPCs needs to make a task roll. The Fidelity's NPCs are "Crack" quality, with average assets of 15 in their primary job skills. The Fidelity's Captain Stenbaum is senior, and in overall command.

If the formation jump is precise enough, the two ships can still communicate via laser communicator. This precision navigation is an Difficult task against Astrogation, for the navigators of both ships. If both are successful, it is an Average Communications task on the part of either to establish communications via a nearly-indetectable laser



commlink (a roll is required due to the distance, and lack of sensor contact with the other ship) Apply a +1 Diff Mod to this roll per navigation roll that was missed. Allow one attempt by the Fidelity's crew (and one by the New Hope's crew, if contact wasn't established by the Fidelity within a reasonable amount of time).

If both attempts fail, communications cannot be established. The referee should make both the astrogation and the sensor rolls in secret, to play up the suspense - it is, after all, quite possible that some horrible fate has overtaken the other ship, and awaits the players.

The New Hope's mission endurance is only a fraction of the Fidelity's; she will remain on-station for a week, making detailed passive scans of the system. At the end of the week, unless requested to remain by Captain Sternbaum, in which case the scoutship can remain for another week to ten days, before life-support reserves begin to run low.

History Up To The Crash

The Aikhiy system was originally explored by Aslan clan scouts, and a small colony was placed on Aikhiy by the Loakhtarl clan circa -80. Never fully successful, the residents were one of the first of their colonies to succumb to the Turmoils. All that remains of the Aslan colony are a few ruins, and the world names.

After the Peace of Ftahalr, Aikhiy was settled by humans recruited by the Aikhiy Development Trust, a joint venture between Venice and Gralyn. The intent was to establish an agricultural world to supply the growing demand for inexpensive, quality foodstuffs on both worlds. This project proved successful, and by the time of the Collapse, the Aikhiy was a typical agricultural world.

Aikhiy System Profile circa 1200

Primary: Eayehwo. K0 V. Luminosity 0.42, Mass 0.825, Radius 0.908.

Orbit	Name	UWP	Pop
0	Aowaiw	Y000000-0 As	0
1	Iyyua'a	Y000000-0 As	0
2	Htahrew	LGG	
4	Htaih	Y200000-0	0
11	Aikhiy	X5477A7-4 Ag	1
13	Oi'hweh	YS00000-0	0
45	Kahkiyrl	Y414000-0	0
3	Eilyel	SGG	
1	Ieiahorl	YR00000-0	0
55	Yoae'ai	Y411000-0	0
65	Eaoih	H100000-0	0
3.9	Witaiakteah	YA34000-0	0

The system's central star, Eayehwo, is 4.2 light-seconds in diameter; inbound starships can come no closer than slightly within orbit 3, 420 light-seconds from the star, and 71 light-seconds away from Aikhiy. Ieiahorl is Trokh for "bangle" or "bracelet", and is used by the Aslan in much the same way that Terran astrographers use the term "ring". At one point, a good quality spaceport on Eaoih catered to the needs

of ships using the system a refuelling point; although partially stripped during the Collapse, some salvageable equipment may remain.

Aikhiy World Description

Aikhiy is an ordinary, molten-core world, 8,346km in diameter. Like the other worlds in the system, it is poor in heavy elements and mineral resources. The world is not dense, and has a surface gravity of 0.525g. Htahrew orbits the central star once every 235.51 Imperial Standard (24-hour) days, and Aikhiy orbits the gas giant once every 78.9 Imperial Standard days. Htahrew's orbit is nearly perfectly circular, causing little seasonal variation. Aikhiy's axial tilt of 2 degrees also has a minor effect; mini-seasons caused by Aikhiy's orbit around Htahrew, of approximately 20 days duration are the only significant source of seasonal variation - hardy crops can enjoy a year round, though cool, growing season.

Aikhiy rotates slowly, with a 51.3 hour day. The day length is perhaps one of the most disagreeable (to humans) features of the world - the long cycle disrupts circadian rhythms, causing any number of minor health complaints. Aikhiy "natives" have adapted fairly well, spending about 12 hours asleep during the middle of the night, and a 4-hour nap during the hottest part of the mid-day. It takes about two weeks to adapt to the Aikhiy daylight cycle.

The atmosphere is tainted with biological spores from the world's diverse native plantlife. The spores cause a life-threatening severe allergic reaction in about half of all humans (and Vargr). For humans exposed to the atmosphere for more than an hour, roll 1d10. On 1-4, an allergic reaction develops after 2d6x10 minutes (roll the time for each person separately - it may be important, if characters with medical training are the first to succumb). On a throw of 5, the reaction will only develop after 1d6 weeks of exposure, and on 6+, the person is unaffected. Aslan are affected nearly as seriously: throw 1d6, and on a 1-2, the reaction develops after 2d6x10 minutes as above. On a 3 exactly, the reaction occurs after 1d6 weeks, and 4+ indicates immunity. Droÿne (and other alien races, if present) are less seriously affected: throw 1d6; one a 1, the character succumbs in 2d6x10 minutes; on a 2, the symptoms develop after 1d6 weeks, and on 3+ the character is immune.

Characters affected by the allergic reaction will initially break out in hives, and will have an ahsma-like difficulty breathing. Most will also suffer from itching, sneezing, watery eyes, and general congestion. The symptoms will increase in severity with prolonged exposure until death follows in 1d6x1d6 hours. It is an Easy task against Diagnosis for a medic to determine the cause of the reaction, and prescribe a course of treatment. Increase the task difficulty to Difficult if for some incredible reason the medic has no reason to suspect that the atmosphere might carry an allergen. If the patient isn't removed from the allergic atmosphere, death will eventually follow from the allergic reaction. Removing the patient from the contaminated atmosphere, and treatment with TL-6+ medicines, will

accomplish a complete recovery.

History Since The Collapse

Before the Collapse, Aikhiy was a profitable agricultural world, with a high enough technology level (TL-7) to be comfortable. Like many worlds in similar situations, it had no manufacturing base to speak of; local "production" consisting of assembling equipment from imported parts. With the coming of the Hard Times, trade fell off, and a slow slide in sustainable technology level began, as imported parts and equipment became harder (but not impossible) to obtain.

The coming of the Virus changed that. Infected ships destroyed the starport and themselves, causing considerable damage to the starport city of Groton (a corruption of Agro-Town, the original ADT settlement) and much of the infrastructure that supported the outlying farms. Being an agricultural world, feeding the survivors wasn't a problem. Shelter and sanitation were.

Approximately 12% of the population succumbed to the atmospheric taint when full-time filtered environments failed. The percentage would have been higher, except that ADT had a long-standing policy of refusing to post personell to Aikhiy that were subject to the rapid allergic reaction. The long-term reaction was missed by ADT's screening tests.

The ADT Director-General, the highest ranking company official on-planet, maintained order during the Collapse. As a company colony, the inhabitants were used to obeying instructions, and the Director-General's hands-on management style allowed him to remain effective even after the disaster.

At an average technology level of 6, most of Aikhiy's technological society was unaffected by the virus, except for the destruction of the starport and surrounding city. However, it still depended on imported parts and materials to remain functioning. With the complete loss of interstellar trade, equipment broke down gradually over the next several years, although some machinery was kept functional for over 20 years.

Even with the reduced agricultural efficiency, providing food to the population required less manpower than was available - leaving a considerable surplus to rebuild the city, and seek out the resources required to maintain a technical society. Construction of New Groton, located accross the river from the ruins of the old city, began as soon as practical after the crash.

Generally built to TL-4 standards, New Groton is nevertheless a well designed city. Streets are broad, and paved with cobblestone, and well drained into an efficient sewer system. Most construction is of a local sandstone, cut from quarries upstream and floated downriver on rafts. Brick construction is also used, and temporary structures are typically built from native softwood.

Local technology is an odd mixture of TL-4 through TL-7. There has been some success in locating small exploitable deposits of iron, copper, and tin in the mountain ranges to the west of New Groton. A railroad line has been extended in that direction, to haul those commodities, from the

boomtowns that have sprung up near the mine sites. The deposits are generally small, and of mediocchre quality; mines and whole towns are abandoned with the ore plays out, only to be founded anew a few dozen kilometers away at a new lode.

Aikhiy has no fossil fuels; power sources must be derived from agricultural sources, and include alcohol and charcoal. Most machines are still steam-powered, although electricity, electric lighting and motors are not unknown and are used in some areas of New Groton. The thin atmosphere prevents aircraft from being practical with these power sources; transportation is by foot, animal, railroad, or (for a priveledged few) steam-powered automobile.

Politically, the Director-General is the de-facto ruler of the planet. Originally, he was responsible to the offworld backers of the ADT, primarily the government agencies of Venice and Gralyn that between them own the majority of the trust. With the seperation of ties offworld, this responsibility has been effectively removed.

However, shortly after the collapse, the Director-General at that time "reformed" land ownership. To facilitate the organization and management of the colony, he granted his more effective managers "Stewardship" of large areas of land, retaining a larger share, which included Groton and New Groton, for himself. The Stewards meet regularly, and function as a landed gentry. The Assembly of Stewards has a second important function: The Director-General selects his successor by appointing his chosen heir to the position of Deputy Director-General, and the assembly of stewards must approve the selection.

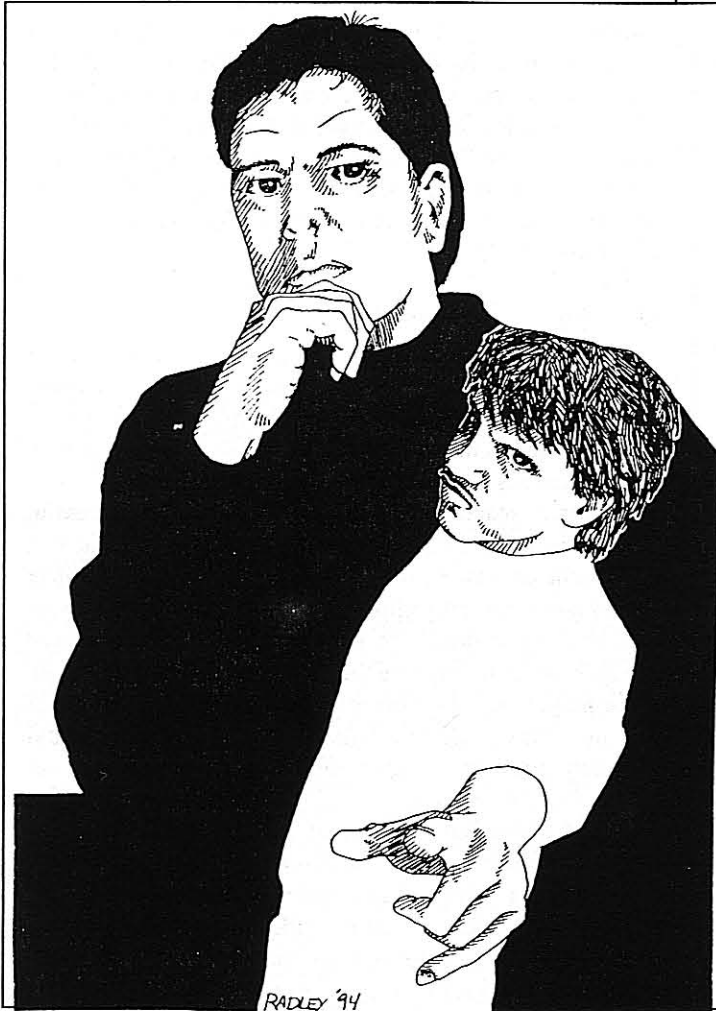
The director-general also personally controls the Company Forces. Originally the small ADT corporate security force maintained onworld for emergency services and to perform customs checks at the starport, the Company Forces now act as the police, rescue, and fire service for New Groton, and perform tax collection duties throughout the colony. Stewards are responsible for law enforcement and emergency services on their holdings, although Company Forces have precedence over the Steward's men.

Recent History

When the original explorers from Gralyn arrived, the director-general was Olav Shugilii. Although not a bad ruler, Olav's policies were unpopular with the majority of Stewards, and he was by no means politically adept. They were assessed high taxes in order to pay for projects such as the rail lines, an aqueduct, and other expensive projects which were seen by the stewards as benefiting the city at their expense. The stage thus set for a confrontation, the post of deputy director-general was vacant due to the death of Olav's older son; the Director-General intended to place his daughter, Gina, in that position, but the Assembly refused to approve the selection of a 14-year-old to the post.

Into this situation dropped the contact team from Gralyn. Although initial negotiations went well, from the Gralynite's viewpoint, the recontact with Gralyn drove another wedge between Olav and the Stewards. Fearing that recontact with Gralyn might mean the loss of their stewardship, and its

privileges, most of the Stewards opposed the recontact. Pulled by his sense of duty, curiosity, and the genuine persuasiveness of the possibilities renewed trade could bring, Olav took the opposite viewpoint.



Olav and Donal

The Gralyn contact team, which was sponsored in part by a branch of the ADT, was from the 400-ton trade explorer *Hope* (a subsidized merchant, fitted for trade exploration). The contact team used *Hope's* lander, *Chastity*, as their forward base. In the midst of the negotiations, the ground team lost contact with *Hope*, for reasons that remain unexplained.

The commander of the Company Forces, a charismatic, brash, and young Captain Donal Nelson with the support of several influential Stewards staged a coup. Within hours, the suddenly-stranded Gralynites were captured and held along with Olav, his daughter Gina, and one loyalist Steward. The balance of the Stewards believed that they could control "their" Director-General, or that a landless upstart commoner could be readily deposed if they so choose.

A relief mission from Gralyn, in a 200-ton free trader, was captured nearly bloodlessly by the Company Forces. Rationalizing this as necessary to prevent further unwanted offworld contact, the crew and passengers were also incarcerated. A small number of the captive Gralynites

were executed; the technically-knowledgeable captives have been retained, and pumped for useful information by local technicians. The free trader is being used as a power source, and technical repository by the Director-General. Although in (more or less) operable condition, a brick building has been built around it. The lander is inoperable, but is kept out in the open, the bait for trapping the next group of offworlders to arrive.

After a few early power struggles, it became rapidly clear to the Stewards that "their" Director-General had at least as much independence as the previous one. Donal had Olav executed within the year. Although he released the captured Steward after Olav's execution, he has had to execute one of the other Stewards for "treason" (sheltering Gina after her escape) in the intervening decade. This, one of Donal's worst policy mistakes, caused considerable backlash among the other Stewards that the Director-General has since then concentrated on playing the Stewards off against one another, rather than opposing them directly.

In order to cement his, and more importantly, his heir's standing in the social order, Donal made no secret of his plan to marry Gina. Although long-delayed, first due to her age, and later due to as many complications as Gina could dream up, the wedding was finally scheduled for Gina's eighteenth birthday. Shortly before the ceremony, a sympathetic servant assisted Gina's escape, foiling Donal's plan.

Director-General Donal is a charismatic speaker, and enjoys the support of the middle classes in New Groton. Outside of the city, the workers on the individual stewardships at least pay lip service to him, but their more immediate concern is with their own Steward. Most Stewards command the respect of their subjects. Three Stewards opposed to Donal's rule command sufficient loyalty that their subjects would follow them, even against the Director-General.

Donal has appointed three new stewards, effectively raising some of his associates to the nobility. Publicly announced as ushering in a "New Era" of expansion and prosperity, they have been shunned by the existing aristocracy. One replaced the steward executed for treason, and the other two have stewardship over the important resource areas, which are located outside of the boundaries of the old land divisions. Donal's appointees rule from New Groton (it is traditional for Stewards to live and work on their landholdings) and command neither respect nor loyalty. These Stewards generally maintain control through their managers and foremen, and occasionally through fear of reprisals.

Gina was originally the symbol, and now (in 1200), the actual leader of the small but dedicated rebellion against Donal. Although the majority of the population supports the current Director-General (at least with their apathy, if not actively), there is a small but vocal minority who are opposed to his increasingly arbitrary and oppressive rule.

Donal has been particularly clever at playing the Stewards off against one another. He disposed of one particularly difficult Steward by having the Steward and her family

killed, and her lands divided amongst her three neighbors, who provided most of the forces to perform the operation. Into this situation, the player characters drop.

Operations

The Downtime academy students and faculty, in a series of role-playing exercises and simulations, developed the GUESS "standard scenario". This calls for a starship like the Fidelity, when jumping into a previously-unexplored system, to remain outside the 100-diameter limit, and to maintain a sufficient fuel reserve that a jump back to the nearest safe system with fuel available. From this vantage point, extensive passive scans are conducted. Fidelity is equipped with sensor drones, to perform active scans and to allow closer looks at interesting features in the system.

Experience in both the Coonabaraban Belt and on Botany Bay have indicated that there is no substitute for putting trained personell "on the ground" to investigate personally. Fidelity carries a purpose-designed landing craft, as well as crewmembers and scientists, for just such ground expeditions.

If the safety of the starship is threatened, the lander crew is expendable.

Passive scanning of the Aikhiy system will locate all of the bodies in the system, and determine their physical characteristics (size, atmosphere, and hydrographics). Much of the material covered in the Survey chapter of the World Tamer's Handbook is applicable to this phase of the mission. Note, however, that GUESS has had no difficulty applying IISS navigational data, including stellar proper motion and orbital parameters, to compute the correct current location of the Aikhiy system, and there worlds therein.

Moving into an orbit around Aikhiy will allow the probe (or lander) to begin mapping the planet, and conduct detailed scans of Aikhiy's orbital space. From this vantage point, the emissions of small-scale electric generation can be detected, as well as the thermal emissions of industries such as power plants, smelters, ironworks, and the like.

Passive radio listening will not produce any intelligible signals on any of the standard bands, but an Average task against Sensor Operation, or a Difficult one versus Communicators, will reveal the presence of primitive wireless telegraphy on Aikhiy. The code in use is not standard, and proves resistant to analysis, although the transmitters can be located, and the symbols identifying each station can be figured out. The code uses one symbol (group of dots and dashes) to stand for a whole word. Without some idea of the vocabulary being used, the task to decode a message is Impossible, and requires the study of a month's worth of traffic, per attempt. If the players somehow obtain the plaintext of several messages, the difficulty is reduced to Formidable, and the duration is a week. Possession of the codebooks makes encoding or decoding an individual message a matter of minutes.

When the players attempt to search for the missing starships, consult the "Derelict" section below. Mapping the world's surface will take time; a complete map will also require a polar orbit and 6+1d6 days of scanning (reduce the time by

the Sensor Operator's SKILL, not asset, level). However, a simple map of the world's inhabited areas will take only about a local day, and reveal all of the world's physical features, as well as indicate roads and railroads, cities (and ruined cities). Industrial areas, such as they are, will be detected and mapped as well. The referee should prepare a players' map, using the Aikhiy world map as a guide, for the players to refer to. If the player request it, detailed scans of the city below can be made, and will yeild a suprising discovery - a standard Gralyn-built lander is parked on a concrete pad, in the center of a grassy quad that is surrounded on three sides by important-looking low (three-story) stone buildings.

Derelict

Although the players will almost certainly look, no trace of the missing ships can be found from Fidelity's passive scanning viewpoint. However, should the lander or a sensor drone be used to make a scan of the close orbit area around Aikhiy, there is a clue to be found.

On a passive scanning critical success, or on any successful active scan of the area, a small object, approximately the size of a missile or sensor drone, can be found in orbit. The object is cold and (aparrently) lifeless. In order to determine what it is, the sensor drone (or lander) will need to be moved closer, in order to improve the resolution of the visual scan. If the players ask the obvious question, the answer is yes: moving close enough to determine the object's nature would definitely put them in range of the object, if it turned out to be a detonation laser.

A visual inspection will reveal that the object is not a detonation laser or other implement of destruction, but instead it is a Gralyn-made communications relay drone, similar to the ones carried by Fidelity. It is recognizable automatically to anyone who has both RCV Operations and Communications skills (they've probably operated this type of drone before). Any characters with space-oriented backgrounds can use an Average roll against INT to recognize the object for what it is.

Attempts to establish control of the communications drone will fail - its fuel is exhausted, and the drone is powered down (but let the players figure this one out for themselves). The drone is too long to fit through the lander's cargo airlock, but if the interior of the lander is depressurized, so that both the inner and outer airlock doors can be opened at once, the lander's cargo compartment will hold the whole drone. Failing that, the drone is designed to easily detach the equipment section from the propulsion section. The equipment section, will fit through the airlock.

Work outside of the lander, in vacc suits, will be required to capture the drone, and bring it, or just the equipment section, on board the lander. The players should be encouraged to think of an imaginative plan to accomplish this. The referee will have to assign task rolls based on the actions of the players. In any case, the players should (eventually) be able to recover the drone.

The players will almost certainly want to examine the drone. The players, or failing that, NPCs aboard the Fidelity, have

the appropriate skills to conduct a thorough investigation of the object. The referee should generate appropriate tasks, depending on how the players go about their examination. If the players succeed at appropriate skill rolls (none should be more difficult than Difficult, and most should be Average), they can find out the following information by carefully inspecting the drone inside and out:

1) The drone is a standard Gralyn Union design, and players with the appropriate skills will have no trouble working on this equipment.

2) An examination of the propulsion section will quickly reveal the reason the drone didn't respond to its controls: the fuel is exhausted, and the drone's batteries are completely discharged.

3) An examination of the drone's hull will reveal micrometeorite pitting consistent with it having spent the last 10 years in orbit.

4) The drone's markings are consistent with the first expedition to Aikhiy.

5) An examination of the serial numbers and manufacture's spec. plates will show that the drone was manufactured on Gralyn slightly more than 11 years ago, again consistent with its inclusion on the first expedition to Aikhiy.

Electronics and Communications tasks will allow the drone's equipment to be disassembled and tested. It will be found to be in working order, and lacking only electrical power. If it is connected to a power source (such as the lander or aboard the Fidelity), the contents of the tape recorder can be played back.

The drone's tape recorder was used to store and forward messages from the ground party to their ship. Listening to the complete tape takes over an hour, and in general makes little sense - the stored messages do not make a complete record, because direct contact was used whenever the ground party had a line of sight to their ship. Listeners can use the following tasks to attempt to make sense out of the messages on the tape:

Average versus Astrogation: The drone was in a geostationary orbit over Groton, and the Hope (the first party's ship) was not; therefore the need for a satellite relay.

Difficult versus Astrogation, or Average versus Survey: The Hope was in a polar mapping orbit, conducting a detailed survey of the world.

Difficult versus Tactics(space): The Hope was not expecting trouble, and had no indication that any other ship was in-system at the time.

Average versus Sensor Operation, or Difficult versus Survey: The Hope was having technical problems with its

sensors, causing various 'ghosts' and false readings, and substantially increasing the time required to do the detailed survey.

Average versus INT: The landing party was enjoying successful negotiations with the "Director-General", apparently an important local official.

IF, and only if, the players listen to the whole tape, they also get the following two messages, both apparently stored on the tape and never before retrieved:

1) Negotiations with the Director-General took a turn for the worse, but the contact team doesn't know why. The Director-General abruptly cancelled their afternoon session, without explanation. Talks will resume tomorrow morning, and the negotiators are generally hopeful that the problem can be resolved once they know what it is.

2) The Hope is being attacked by an unknown ship that "appeared out of nowhere" deep inside the gravity well of the planet. This message is scratchy and full of noise at best, and fades into a wash of static before it is complete.

A Formidable roll against Communications (this roll can be enabled by a Difficult roll against Astrogation, OR knowledge that the Hope was in a polar mapping orbit) will reveal that the Hope was transmitting through the communicator noise at the world's poles, in a desperate attempt to get the message through to the relay. The static that washes out the transmission is of a different character: deliberate jamming.

It's A Trap

The players will undoubtedly be curious about the first mission's lander, parked near a complex of buildings in New Groton. Repeated sensor scans can be made of the area, and will yield additional information. Each attempt will require a local day, because several observations during the day and night are required for analysis. Repeated attempts are possible, provided that the players are willing to spend the time (recall the duration of a local day, above). For each scan, roll a Sensor Operations task. The information received depends on the difficulty achieved by the roll:

Critical Failure: Improper operation causes minor damage to the sensor systems. Treat as a minor breakdown, using the T:TNE equipment maintenance and repair rules. No new information is gained.

Easy: The launch does not appear to be powered up, or otherwise flight-ready. The concrete pad and surrounding quad are large enough for another vessel to land, without damaging the nearby buildings.

Average: All information above, plus the quad is a lawn or field (as opposed to an abandoned lot, or wild clearing) and has been recently mowed and watered. The buildings are electrically lit at night.

Difficult: All information above, plus regular human

activities occur in the quad. While it is nearly impossible to deduce the intent, a time schedule, showing the most and least active times can be prepared.

Formidable: All information above, plus one building on the north side of the quad, is warmer than it "should", compared to the other buildings.

Impossible: All information above, plus sentries or guards are posted around the quad. Their number and location can be inferred from infra-red data, and a map prepared.

Critical Success: All information above, plus the energy and radiation signature of the "warm" match, nearly exactly, with the power plant of a 200-ton free trader (such as the relief mission used).

If some sort of raid or capture mission is attempted, the players will be opposed by the Director-General's Company Forces. They are equipped to the best available standard, which can include anything from "new" TL-4 equipment, to old TL-7 gear, relics from before the Collapse.

The objective of the Company Forces will be to capture at least one (and preferably as many as possible) of the player characters, and drive the others away. The area around the lander is kept under surveillance, is protected by tripwires and boobytraps and a considerable number of troops barracked in one of the surrounding buildings.

If the players do gain the lander, they will discover that it isn't operable without repairs. The lander is maintained at that location as a decoy, for just this eventuality. And it worked once before.

If the players attempt to contact the lander on a hailing frequency, or if they attempt to contact the previous ground party on standard ship-to-planet channels, they will instead contact a watchman for the Director-General. The Director-General may consent to negotiate with the players over the communicator; if so, proceed to the "MEET THE BOSS" section below.

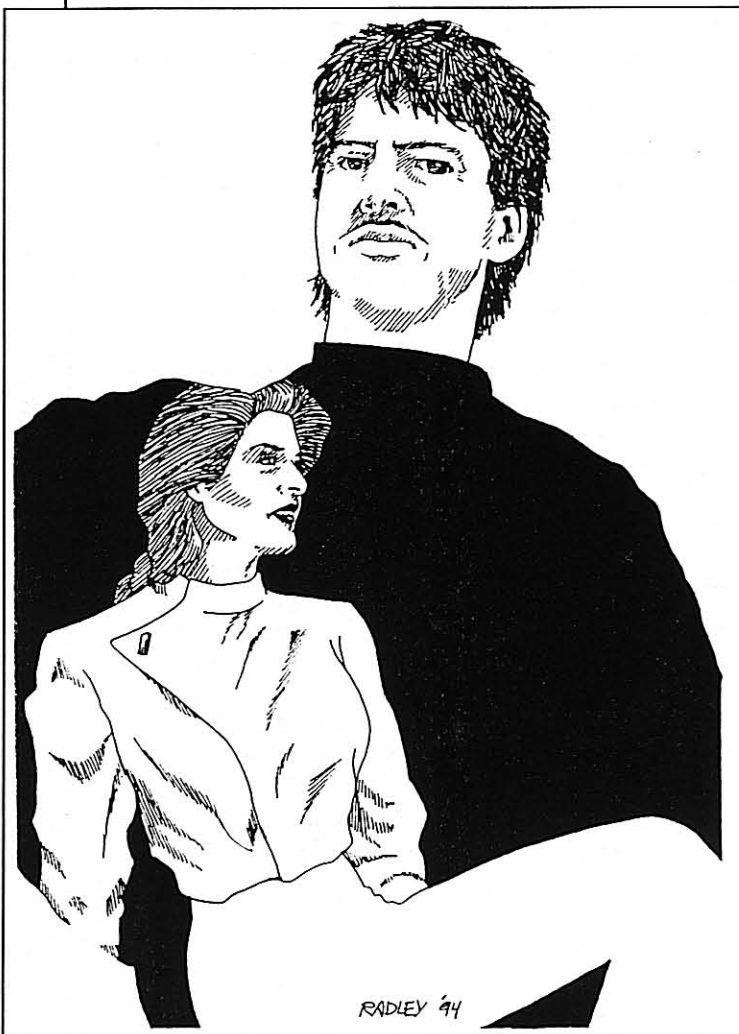
On The Ground

The players should be encouraged to make an expedition to the planet's surface. What they find will depend greatly on where they decide to land. In general, they can choose to land in an uninhabited area, on the outskirts of the settled area, on a large plantation, or near the city.

Uninhabited Areas: If they choose to land in an uninhabited area, there are plenty to choose from. The population of Aikhiy is concentrated on one continent, near New Groton. The rest of the world is uninhabited, and largely unexplored (or rather, it was explored by the survey teams from ADT, but that data has been lost). The referee will need to generate encounter tables for the area chosen by the players, and the survey rules from the *World Tamer's Handbook*[®] could prove useful in resolving an exploration of Aikhiy's uninhabited areas. Aikhiy will prove to be quite suitable for an agricultural colony, but is poor in mineral resources. It would be possible to locate a new colony on

Aikhiy that is well clear of the currently-inhabited areas of the planet.

Outlying Areas: The players may choose to land on the outskirts of the settled area. Making a covert landing, and hiding the lander, are fairly easy in the sparsely settled fringes of the colony. Several promising sites can be located in the foothills of the mountain range that forms the western border of the settled region. A successful covert landing is an Difficult task against the command pilot's Pilot(Interface /Grav) skill. This roll can be enabled by a Difficult roll against Survey, to locate a suitable area away from signs of habitation. Failure indicates that the landing attempt



Donal and Gina

accidentally alerted local residents to the ship's presence, and a critical failure indicates a crash or collision. The difficulty of the landing task can be reduced

However, as the players explore the area, the referee should secretly roll for encounters with the residents. Each period, the referee should roll 1d6; on a one, the players encounter some sign of habitation. These "signs" might include an area where logging is going on, a mine, a charcoal-making operation, fields, farms, or homesteads, or even a trail leading to the nearest town. Depending on the time of day and the care that the characters are exercising, this might

result in an encounter with the natives.

The residents of these frontiers are generally more independent than most other Aikhiy natives. Many in these areas profess to be uninterested in politics, and are remote from the intrigue in New Groton. However, they are also subjects of one of Donal's new Stewards, and a good number of these people oppose Donal when they can do so without attracting the attention of the Steward's men. Several groups of "Traitors", having fled the more civilized areas to avoid capture, are camped in the mountains, and survive on donations from, and trade with, the frontier residents.

Eventually, one of two events will happen. Either the players will attract the attention of the Steward's men, or they will contact the local underground. If the offworlders appear in town, or at a worksite such as a mine, wearing filter-masks and other obviously offworld gear, their existence will certainly be reported to the Steward's men. In this case, the local manager will attempt to ambush and capture the players. There is a considerably bounty on offworlders, if they are captured alive and brought to the Company Forces in New Groton. On the other hand, if the players can gain the confidence of the local underground leaders, they will be covertly shuttled from contact to contact. Presuming that they can convince these people (some friendly, and some quite skeptical) of their bona fides, they will eventually wind up being taken to an isolated valley, where Gina and many of her followers are currently residing.

Visiting a Plantation: Should the players choose to land on a plantation, a covert is possible, but less likely. A Formidable roll against Pilot(Interface/Grav) is required, although it can be enabled by a Difficult roll against Survey. If the roll is failed, the residents are alerted to this ship's landing. News of this event will be reported to the Steward within hours, and will eventually get back to the Director-General within a few days. In any case, the players will not be able to explore far from their ship without encountering fields, work parties, worker's cottages, or other human activity.

The referee should determine the general loyalty of the Steward on whose land the players have arrived. Most are ambivalent about Donal (at best), and a substantial minority are inclined to replace Donal with Gina, if at all possible to do so. In any case, the first concern of the Steward will be to talk to the offworlders personally, and assess them for himself (or herself). The tactics used by each Steward will also vary with their personality - some will attempt to ambush and capture the players, while others will confidently walk up to the players and greet them (the referee should remember that, from the point of view of the Steward, the players are strangers on the Steward's personal landholdings).

After the interview with the Steward, the referee should determine the subsequent events. The Steward's reaction to the players will influence this considerably. On a bad reaction, he will consider the PCs to be harmless (or dangerous, depending on previous events) crackpots, and will probably turn them over to the Company Forces in order to be rid of them. If, on the other hand, the player characters

convince the Steward that they are genuine and can offer advantages to his faction, the Steward will arrange a meeting with the appropriate factional leader. Thus, the player characters should eventually end up meeting either Director-General Donal, or the resistance leader Gina Sugilii.

Holding the characters and their landing craft undetected on the plantation will be impossible over the long term. No matter which leader the Steward decides to turn the players over to, the other will also find out, through their network of informants. At some convenient juncture, possibly as the player characters are being taken to the meeting place, a group from the opposing faction attempts to ambush the Steward's men and capture the player characters. The confusion should give the PCs an opportunity to choose sides and become active participants in the struggle. The actions of the PCs should (unless they find truly interesting ways to foul up) be enough to tip the balance of the fight, allowing the group they are supporting to win. After the fight, the victors will take the PCs to meet their leader, perhaps with a new respect for offworld weapon technology.

Landing at the City: A covert landing in the vicinity of New Groton is an Impossible task against Pilot(Interface/Grav). This roll can be enabled by a Difficult roll against Survey skill, to locate a suitable landing place. Even if a covert landing is successful, moving around the city without detection will be difficult, and wearing a filter-mask is a dead giveaway.

When the player characters are detected, the Company Forces will be called out to track them down and capture them. In this case, the referee should prepare a map of New Groton, and administer the Company Forces dragnet. If at all possible, an attempt will be made to capture some or all of the offworlders.

Meet The Boss

The Director-General, Donal Nelson, at 36 years of age retains his wiry black hair, thin moustache, and considerable charisma and speaking ability, although he has started a trend towards plump in his middle age. He seems used to giving orders and having them obeyed without question, and will be at a slight disadvantage at first when talking to the player characters - he will initially attempt to treat them as he does his subordinates. Donal is a good politician, and won't make that mistake twice. He is also ruthless in his pursuit of his own self-interest, and will use whatever means are at hand to further his goals. For combat purposes, Donal is a Trained NPC, and his personal guard are composed of Veteran NPCs.

Donal also has hostages, the survivors of the first two expeditions to Aikhiy. He is certainly not above taking members of party captive, and using all the hostages as leverage to get the remaining players to do his bidding. Although ignorant of the outside universe, and untrained in high technology, Donal isn't stupid. He perceives that offworld manufactured goods funneled through his organization, and high-tech equipment for his forces, could considerably increase his hold on Aikhiy.

Ultimately, Donal would like to arrange a deal where he

becomes the ultimate and sole ruler of Aikhiy, supported by offworld technology and trade wealth, and disposing of the increasingly rebellious Stewards. He will not, of course, tell the player characters this in so many words. He will offer reasonable trade terms, as long as two main points can be met. First of all, he will insist on conducting all negotiations personally, on Aikhiy (Donal has no subordinates who are both loyal to him, and sufficiently bright to be entrusted with negotiations). Secondly, Donal (or more properly, people and organizations he designates that are loyal to him personally) must be the sole point of contact with interstellar trade.

If the players indicate that they are willing to meet these conditions, they can return to Gralyn with a preliminary trade agreement, and the bulk of the first two expedition's survivors. A few survivors will "choose" to remain on Aikhiy to "further their research and technical projects" (one of these "researchers" actually "chose" to remain of his own free will - the others were retained on Donal's secret orders, because they are valuable to ongoing projects). This agreement will be considered a success, at least at the present time; as time progresses, the trade agreement could eventually come back to haunt the PCs as well as the Gralyn Union government.

Meet The Opposition

Gina Sugilii is an attractive and suprisingly young woman to be leading a resistance movement. After observing her for a while (and if the players think to ask) they can tell that she is genuinely well-liked within the rebel organization. Gina can almost always call any rebel she meets by name, and seems quite concerned for her people's welfare. In military matters, she leans on her advisors a good deal of the time, and gets generally sound although unimaginative advice. For combat purposes, Gina is a Trained NPC, and her personal guards are Elite NPCs.

The rebel group led by Gina Sugilii has been gaining support, and therefore members, faster than they can acquire

weapons for everyone. New Groton is the center of what little manufacturing there is on Aikhiy, and virtually all new weapons are produced there. Unfortunately, New Groton is loyal to the Director-General, and acquiring weapons is therefore correspondingly difficult. She is also aware that other offworlders are being held by the Director-General, and her informants know where (down to the individual building and floor) they are being kept.

When negotiating with the players, Gina's needs are relatively complex. Because her major supporters are the Stewards, she will absolutely require assurances that ADT or

other Gralyn concerns will not attempt to displace the Stewards or lessen their influence. Given those assurances, her other need is for military equipment and training for her forces, so that she can successfully challenge Donal. However, until after her troops receive the equipment and training, she has no way of paying for them. She is, however, willing to send one of her advisors to Gralyn to negotiate the details of the sale.

Should negotiations with Gina Sugilii go well, the player characters can return to Gralyn with a preliminary trade agreement, an ambassador and trade negotiator from Aikhiy, and possibly the members of the original expeditions to Aikhiy (see below). If they free



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the captives, the mission will be considered, at least by the popular media, as a great success. The overall reaction will be probably be favorable even if no attempt at a rescue is made. Over the next few months, credit arrangements will be made, and the shipment of arms and military advisors to Gina's forces will begin. The offworld technology and equipment will make a telling difference, and eventually enable Gina to reclaim her position (although there is certainly the possibility that the player characters will be sent to Aikhiy again, for a special mission, or at Gina's specific request).

Hostage Rescue: Immediately prior to the arrival of the player characters, Gina's military advisors had been planning a raid on the major Company Forces arsenal in New Groton. Although a risky proposition, it was their best

chance of acquiring the weapons that the rebels need. If the PCs require the return of the captured Gralynites as part of the deal, or if the PCs suggest such a raid to Gina's advisors, they can be convinced to agree, provided that the players provide their expertise (and high-tech weapons) to the attack.

In the modified plan, an attack on the arsenal will be used as a diversion (and to hopefully capture some weapons, although that is now a secondary objective) while the PCs

field?" than it is to throw a few dice and declare that "the nobleman doesn't seem to like you, make a Liasion roll".

It is, however, unfair to penalize players for things that their characters should know, or allow a player to get away with actions that are wildly out of character. If an inarticulate player makes a disaster out of the negotiations, it should be mitigated by his character's Liasion skill. On the other hand, the Droyne engineer who barely speaks Galanglic well enough to make himself understood shouldn't be able to

singlehandedly save the day, no matter how witty and charming his player may be. In cases like this, rather than quash a player's creativity, the referee may want to gently suggest ways for the player to work in-character. For example, the Droyne engineer may need to a language roll (with hilarious misunderstandings if he fails) to get his point across to one of the other characters in the group, who can then explain it to everyone. One thing the referee can do to encourage role-playing is to grant the players beneficial modifiers to the die



M. Sorensen

and the main group of rebels rescue the Gralynite hostages. The Fidelity's weapons locker has a considerable number of weapons which can be used for equipping the NPCs, to the considerable surprise of the opposing Company Forces. The referee will have to prepare maps of the work compound, keeping in mind that it is designed to keep unarmed civilians IN, rather than military forces OUT. A clever plan, presented by one of the player-characters, could lead to a nearly-bloodless (at least for the PCs) Entebbe-style raid, particularly if Fidelity's lander is used as an improvised assault lander.

Referee's Notes

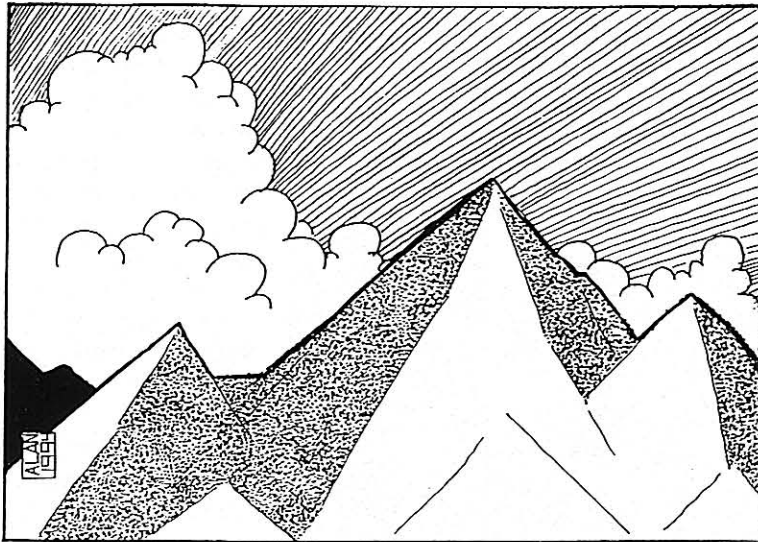
One of the keys to running a first-contact scenario is role-playing. Instead of just having the players roll their various skills, and making reaction rolls for the natives, it's far better to play out the conversation. Even if the players are reluctant to play their characters fully, the referee can draw them into the game by portraying the NPCs to the best of his or her ability.

It is much more satisfying for everyone to act out a conversation that begins with the Steward, one hand on his hip and the other resting on the butt of his flintlock pistol, confronting the player characters outside their ship with "And just WHAT do you think you're doing in MY beet

rolls, when the player has a good idea, and presents it while acting in character. A die roll modifier of -1 or -2 (and up to -3 in exceptional cases) will not unbalance the game, but will reward players for good roleplaying. ✂

A Pilot's Guide to the Caledon Subsector

By J. Andrew Keith



Glenshiel

(0302 DA86563-7 Ag Ni G302 F6 V)

Primary: Sassenach's Eye, spectral class F6 V. ICN S4G0302F6V. Mass 1.25 standard. Stellar diameter 1.3 standard. Luminosity 3.04 standard.

Planetary System: Twelve major bodies. One inhabited world (Glenshiel, VI). Two gas giants. No planetoid belts.

VI Glenshiel: Mean orbital radius, 261.8 million kilometers (1.75 AU). Period, 756.3 days. No satellites. Diameter, 17174 kilometers. Density, 1.0 standard. Mass, 1.95 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1.25 G. Rotation period: 29 hours, 48 minutes, 56 seconds. Axial inclination, 2°41'14.0". Albedo, .29. Surface atmospheric pressure, 2.4 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable by humans without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 82%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 32° C.

Remarks: Glenshiel is a backwater world, beyond the bounds of the Principality but still heavily under the influence of Caledon. It is a Protectorate, enjoying favorable trade relations and naval support from the Principality, but without representation in the House of Delegates or the Grand Senate.

Glenshiel has been settled for only 250 years, since Sir James Armstrong of Caledon founded the settlement now known as Armstrong's Landing. Sir James, who embraced the ideals of a "back-to-nature" movement which at that time enjoyed quite a bit of popularity on Caledon, founded the Glenshiel settlement as a wilderness retreat for those who wished to escape from the frantic pace of modern life. After his death, however, the colony slowly began to fall away from his original ideals. It is now an agricultural community,

and Ben Laren, the smaller of two cities on the world, has become a fishing town where bladfisch from the Northfar Sea are caught and exported; they are popular as a delicacy in the Principality and in the Imperial territories to trailing.

The world is famous in scientific circles as the location of an important archeological find, the site of a wrecked starship believed to have belonged to the Saie. Located on the high plateau of Jura, the site (known as Crash Jura) has attracted a large contingent of archeologists and historians interested in the Saie. The work is surrounded by considerable controversy, since Caledonian scientists and Imperial researchers have been clashing over rights of access to the site. The waters have been muddied further by the involvement of an Imperial megacorporation, Makhidkarun, which is attempting to gain access to a few recovered works of art discovered in the ship's hold (apparently

plundered from subject races such as the Yn-tsai and the Lhshani), in order to reproduce them and put the reproductions on the market. Charges of unethical conduct have been levelled at Makhidkarun as a result of these efforts.

Glenshiel is also noted as the site of Anekthor, an imposing, triple-peaked mountain on the Jura plateau. Shrouded in mystery, it has never been successfully climbed, and is reputed home of the strange animals known as "Windstalkers" -- which defy the world's known biology. More details on Anekthor are covered in the Gamelords adventure Ascent to Anekthor.

Claverse

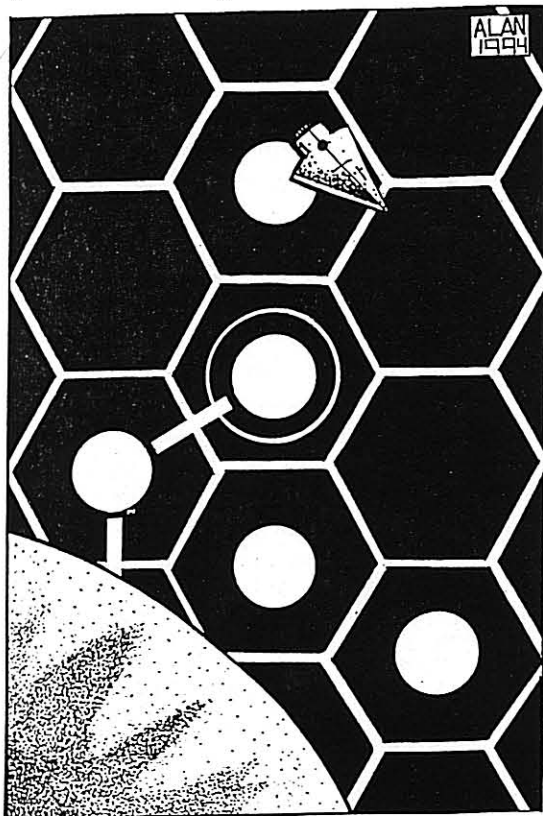
(0303 B7677BB-9 C Ag A514 C F0 V M4 VII)

Primary: Binary System. Major - Dundee, spectral class F0 V. ICN S4G0303F0V. Mass, 1.7 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.7 standard. Luminosity, 6.1 standard. Companion - Bonnet, spectral class M4 VII. ICN S4G0303M4VII. Mass, 1.11 standard. Stellar diameter, .006 standard. Luminosity, .00003 standard. Orbital radius, 0.7 AU.

Planetary System: Five major bodies. One inhabited world (Claverse, I). Four gas giants. One planetoid belt.

I Claverse: Mean orbital radius, 239.36 million kilometers (1.6 AU). Period, 532.4 days. No satellites. Diameter, 11261 kilometers. Density, 1.02 standard. Mass, .683 standard. Mean surface gravity, .89 G. Rotation period: 35 hours, 25 minutes, 30 seconds. Axial inclination, 3°30'26.6". Albedo, 0.46. Surface atmospheric pressure, 1.1 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable by humans without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 70%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface

temperature, 23° C (with minimal influence from binary companion's movement).



Remarks: Claverse is a world on the verge of rebellion, proof that even the relative order and stability of the Principality is not complete.

Claverse was the headquarters, almost a century ago, of Admiral Earl Maxwell, one of two claimants to the Princely Throne during the Dunastic Crisis of 1024. This crisis, sparked by the death without issue of Prince Colin, triggered a brief but bitter civil war. Maxwell was ultimately defeated by Edward, Lord Campbell, who was crowned Sovereign Prince of Caledon on 004-1025. The Admiral escaped, fleeing across the frontier; his descendents continue to style themselves the rightful rulers of the Principality.

Claverse, Maxwell's home world and military base, has remained dissatisfied with rule by the Campbell dynasty ever since the Admiral's defeat. The world simmered with discontent for many years, and the Campbells were forced to deny Claverse many important freedoms due to the ever-present possibility of armed insurrection. A Royal Governor has been in charge of the planet, suspending the usual principles of the local self-rule, and the planetary naval base is much stronger than the ordinary Caledonian installations (which are generally about the size of Imperial scout installations, and spread thin through the Principality, to keep small but mobile naval task forces available throughout the kingdom).

The most recently appointed governor, Lord John Gunn, proved to be a poor choice to control the unruly planet. A minor riot caused him to take drastic measures, having naval troops fire into the crowd. The result was even more unrest, which Lord John responded to with orders for martial law to be imposed. "Freedom Fighters" have emerged on Claverse, mounting guerilla raids, stockpiling arms and material, and further increasing tension.

The world has been declared an Amber Zone due to its potential for explosion into outright violence.

Gampia

(0304 E132520-5 Po NI G001 Cp M0 V)

Primary: Ember, spectral class MOV. ICN S4G0304M0V. Mass, 0.489 standard. Stellar diameter, 0.549 standard. Luminosity 0.04 standard.

Planetary System: Two major bodies. One inhabited world (Grampia, I). One gas giant in system. No planetoid belts in system.

I Grampia: Mean orbital radius, 29.92 million kilometers (.2AU). Period, 46.7 days. No satellites. Diameter, 1998 kilometers. Density, 1.03 standard. Mass, .002 standard. Mean surface gravity, .13 G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with primary). Axial inclination, 35°14'3.2". Albedo, 0.32. Surface atmospheric pressure, 0.15 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, respirator required to breathe atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage, 29%; composition, frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature (dayside), -19° C. Nightside temperatures reach -40° C or lower.

Remarks: Grampia is a small but rugged world settled only within the last two centuries. The world offers much in the way of resources; a number of worthwhile minerals are

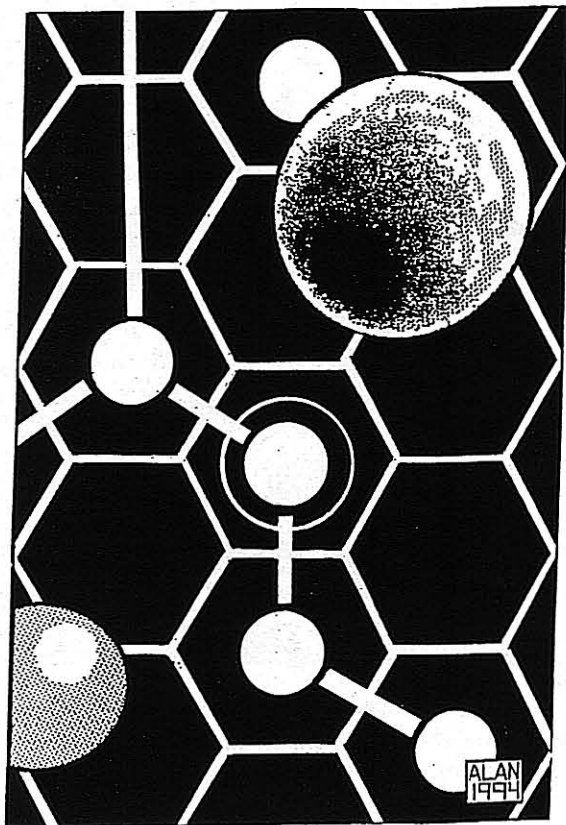


present in abundance, and the original settlement was founded by MacGregor Minerals, a prominent resource exploitation firm. However, the firm (based on Rob roy) made the mistake of backing the wrong side during the

Dynastic Crisis of 1024, a mistake which caused the Company charter to be revoked when Lord Campbell was elevated to the throne. The mining colony on Grampia rose against management, ostensibly because of politics, but in fact because of the agitation of a few opportunists who saw a rising as a ticket to power and wealth.

Their vision was an accurate one. The victorious Prince granted control of the Grampian colony and mines to the Provisional Workers' Council in early 1025, and the colony remained in the hands of the people from that time on. The council eventually passed power to a regularly elected executive body, with most major decisions being submitted to a Worker's Vote. Any citizen of the planet holding membership in one of several trade guilds is entitled to vote on such major issues, though the franchise is carefully controlled by vested interests among the various unions. Non-union members are second class citizens with few rights and no voice in affairs at all.

Government by the people has not always run smoothly on Grampia. Politics on the world is an especially dirty game, with a dangerous amount of power being wielded by a few key union administrators. The fact that the Miner's Guild has recently come under the influence of an ambitious pro-Maxwellian, Thorn Bournais, has caused considerable concern both on and off Grampia. A power struggle between Bournais and a syndicate of less powerful politicians has been shaping up for some time, and it is believed that the Miner's Guild leader is receiving help from Maxwellian sympathizers on Claverse, as well. Though not a major world, Grampia's resources, and its proximity to both Caledon and Scotia, make it a sensitive world in the interplay of contemporary politics.



Scotia

(0306 B789434-B Ni Lo G324 Cp G0 V)

Primary: Grain, spectral class, GOV. ICN S4G0306G0V. Mass, 1.04 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.03 standard. Luminosity, 1.21 standard.

Planetary System: Seven major bodies. One inhabited world (Scotia, IV). Four gas giants. One planetoid belt.

IV Scotia: Mean orbital radius, 163.06 million kilometers (1.09 AU). Period, 407.6 days. Two satellites. Diameter, 12206 kilometers. Density, .97 standard. Mass, .65 standard. Mean surface gravity, .85 G. Rotation period: 23 hours, 27 minutes, 48 seconds. Axial inclination, 15°55'a9.7". Albedo, .31. Surface atmospheric pressure, 1.7 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 95%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 25° C.

Remarks: A pleasant world, Scotia is reasonably Earthlike but has little land area. What land there is lies scattered across the wide seas in island chains; the largest land-mass on the world is less than 15,000 square kilometers in area. Scotia remained unsettled for a long time, considered too poor in land area to support a worthwhile colony. The presence of several far superior worlds nearby reinforced this decision. Transient groups visited the world many times during the Long Night; Scotia was a favorite hiding place for Reaver warships, who could set down on some small island, refuel from the planetary oceans, and make repairs in relative seclusion and security. As the Principality expanded off Caledon, Scotia was claimed early on, but seemed to offer little value in the way of exploitable resources.

However, the world was a beautiful, lush planet, the island chains reminiscent of the tropical isles of Caledon's Windshaeme Sea. William, Fourth Prince of Caledon, arranged to have the world declared the personal property of the throne, and proceeded to parcel out island estates and titles of nobility to individuals he wished to reward.

Scotia remains to this day a world of estates. Most major nobles and prominent businessmen own islands on Scotia, on which they maintain private retreats, estates, meeting-places, or vacation resorts. A few have even established resort hotels, offering Caledonian tourists the opportunity to spend a few days or weeks on Scotia's magnificent isles.

Aside from the nobility, many individuals own Scotian island estates, usually the result of inheritance from some ancestor who performed a service to the Crown. However, the expense of these island estates is frequently far higher than the owner can afford, and an owner without adequate resources will frequently sell his estate -- and the title of nobility that goes with it -- rather than face the costs. It is an expensive but simple way for individuals to gain access to the Caledonian nobility.

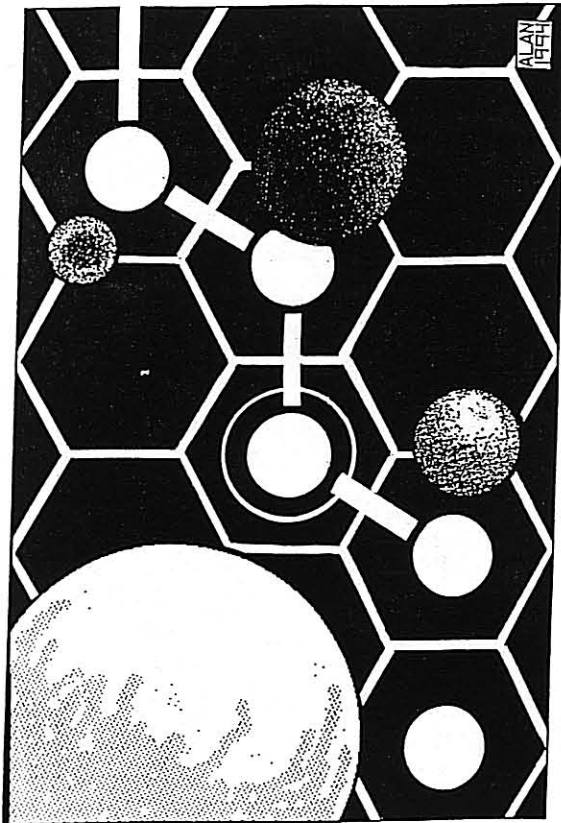
Rob Roy

(0307 B6469BA-B C Ni Hi A802 Cp K9 V)

Primary: MacGregor's Star, spectral class, K9V. ICN S4G0307K9V. Mass, .505 standard. Stellar diameter, .552

standard. Luminosity, .048 standard.

Planetary System: Six major bodies. One inhabited world (Rob Roy I). Four gas giants.



Rob Roy I: Mean orbital radius, 23.94 million kilometers (0.16 AU). Period, 32.10 days. No satellites. Diameter, 11021 kilometers. Density, 1.0 standard. Mass, .423 standard. Mean surface gravity, .75 G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with primary). Axial inclination, 32°36'36.8". Albedo, .4 Surface atmospheric pressure, .48m. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix tainted with industrial pollutants; filter mask may be needed to breathe atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage, 60%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 3o C. Mean nightside surface temperature, -155°C.

Remarks: Like Claverse, RobRoy supported the Maxwell faction during the Dynastic Crisis of 1024, and suffered in consequence. The world was and is a crucial industrial center of the Principality, and has the second highest population (the highest being at Cuillan/Scotian Deep 0803). During the crisis, both sides planned much of their strategy around the need to control Rob Roy, and there was bitter fighting as a result.

Early in the struggle, Maxwell's forces had the upperhand, but, shortly after Maxwell had himself

crowned as Sovereign Prince, the Maxwellians met Campbell's supporters at the Battle of Dunbarton, and Maxwell's fleet broke. Maxwell directed the defense of Rob Roy, one of his last bastions of support, until it became clear that his cause was truly lost. Then he fled, first to Skye, later to Germaine.

The victorious forces of Lord Campbell never actually engaged in ground fighting at Rob Roy, and never actually discovered Maxwell's command headquarters on the world. It is said to have been located underground somewhere in the arctic wilderness of Polaris, the northern continent of Rob Roy. But Maxwell shut down the complex prior to his departure, and the secret was purged from planetary computer records. For security purposes, the location was actually known to only a handful of key people, and, without coordinates, it remains undetectable. The HQ complex is lost until and unless one of Maxwell's people chooses to reveal its location, or until accidental discovery brings it to light.

There is a famous story, possibly apocryphal, which relates that this "Ice Fortress" (as it was popularly known) is the hiding place for the full Caledonian regalia, the orb, sceptre, circlet, and jeweled sword that together were the symbols of the rightful Prince. It is said that Maxwell, prior to his flight, left these symbols of authority here, on Caledonian soil, pending the day when a Maxwell would come to reclaim his own.

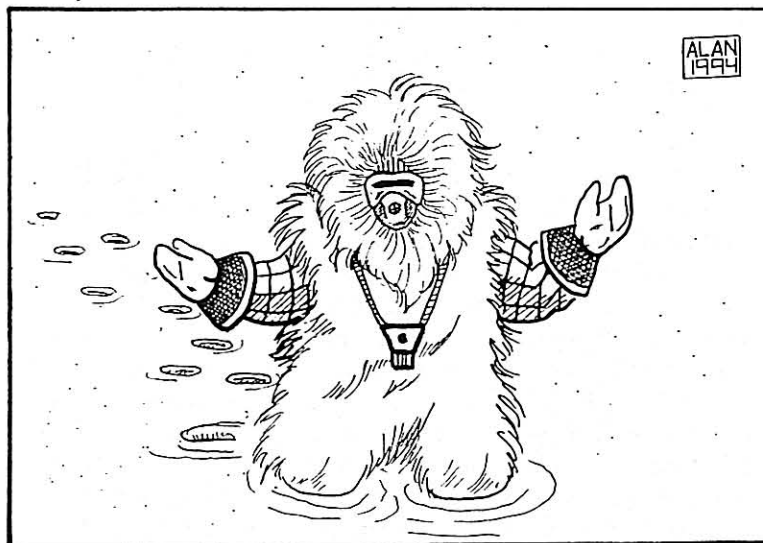
The regalia was certainly lost during the war, and never recovered. It is of great value, both monetarily and politically, and a fantastic reward is offered by the Principality for recovery of these symbolic items.

Fergus

(0404 C253304-7 Ni Po Lo G724 F7 V)

Primary: Ra, spectral class, F7V. ICN S4G0404FTV. Mass, 1.96 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.252 standard. Luminosity, 2.583 standard.

Planetary System: Nine major bodies. One inhabited world (Fergus, V). Four gas giants in system. Two planetoid belts in system..



V Fergus: Mean orbital radius, 317.15 million kilometers (2.12 AU). Period, 1030 days (2.82 years). No satellites. Diameter, 4302 kilometers. Density, .99 standard. Mass, .015 standard. Mean surface gravity, .24 G. Rotation period: 26 hours, 8 minutes, 22 seconds. Axial inclination, 21°7'1.6". Albedo, .23. Surface atmospheric pressure, .45 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 32%; composition, primarily frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, -10° C.

Remarks: Fergus is an anomalous world, a planet which should not be. Though very small, it has a fairly significant atmosphere. When discovered, it was found to support an abundance of life forms, but it was something of a potpourri of life from radically different evolutionary backgrounds, apparently all transplanted from other worlds to this one hundreds of thousands of years ago. Scientists believe that the Ancients were responsible for the world's anomalies; those mysterious, immensely powerful and intelligent beings who scattered humaniti to the stars, genetically engineered

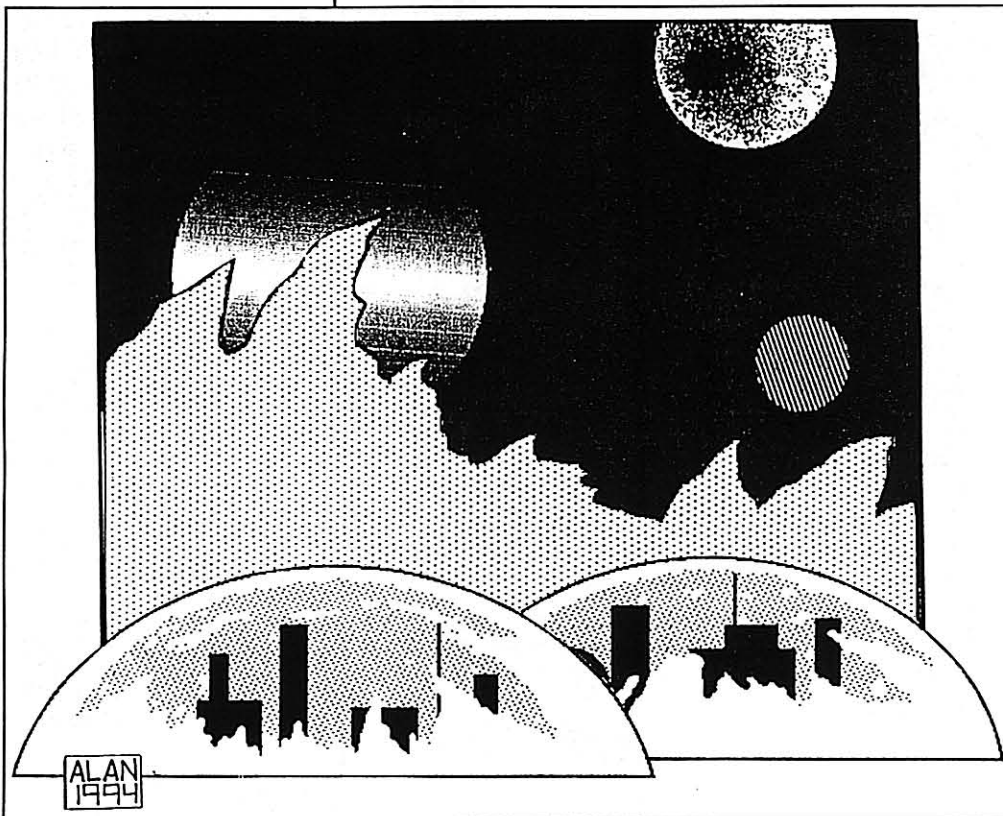
Terrestrial canine stock into the intelligent Vargr species, and otherwise altered worlds and life forms across space (often, it seems, on a whim) seem to have taken a lifeless world, Fergus, Terraformed it, and seeded it with life. As with most Ancients works, the purpose behind this action is unknown.

It is believed that Fergus was a hospitable, pleasant world in the Ancients period, probably subject to atmosphere and temperature control. Since the disappearance of the Ancients, however, the machinery which maintained all this has shut down. The atmosphere has thinned, and the climate has deteriorated to distinctly chilly conditions. Life forms left on the world are those which could adapt to the colder weather; a few excavations have confirmed that previously a variety of climates and weather patterns existed in which a large number of plant and animal species flourished.

Though the original purposes of the world are now unknown, scientists today are keenly interested in Fergus as a "Living laboratory" of evolution and adaptation in action. Whether by accident or on purpose, the world has provided harsh conditions in which life has been forced to adapt or die, giving rise to many interesting variations in behavior and physiology. A large scientific colony has been established

on Fergus to study the interaction of these life forms.

Fergus also attracts both reputable archeologists and a variety of fortune hunters, all of them searching for the Ancients complex which almost certainly exists somewhere on the planet. As yet, no sign of this control complex has been found, but it continues to draw seekers of knowledge, of wealth, or of power to Fergus time and time again.



Victory

(0407 A201766-C C Na Ic Va G214 Cp K0 IV)

Primary: Ildrathir, spectral class KOIV. ICN S4G0407K0IV. Mass 2.3 standard. Stellar diameter 3.3 standard. Luminosity 4.67 standard.

Planetary System: Four major bodies. No inhabited worlds. Four gas giants. One planetoid belts. Victory, IV C, is a satellite of planet IV, Druthere.

IV Druthere: Mean orbital radius, 418.88 million kilometers (2.8 AU). Period 1128.4 days. Ten satellites. Diameter, 78000 kilometers. Density, .2 standard. Mass, .43.2 standard. A large gas giant.

IV C Victory: Mean orbital radius, 3.12 million kilometers (40 radii). Period 92.8 days. No satellites. Diameter, 4531 kilometers. Density, 1.01 standard. Mass, .016 standard. Mean surface gravity, .26G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with Druthere). Axial inclination 39° 54' 42.6". Albedo, .27. Surface atmospheric pressure, less than .01 atm; vacuum suites required outside colony domes. Hydrographic percentage, 10%; composition, water-ice. Mean surface temperature, -33° C.

Remarks: The star designated Ildrathir was named by the first interstellar explorers to settle in the region.

representatives of the aggressive and militaristic culture of Drexilthar (Drexilthar/Drexilthar 0206 B46969-D-7). Prior to the expansion of Caledon, Drexilthar controlled a fairly substantial empire in the Deep. The Ildrathir system represented their furthest penetration coreward. The third moon of the outermost gas giant, Druthere, was established as an advanced military outpost after scouts discovered the fledgling Principality of Caledon, which at that time (-86) controlled only a handful of star systems. The Caledonian worlds were targeted for a full takeover by elements of the Imperial Starr navy.

The Principality, however, acted first. With a handful of ships, Admiral the Earl of Strathmore launched a pre-emptive strike against Ildrathir, running into unexpectedly large forces orbiting Druthere's satellite. In a hard-fought battle, the Drexiltharan forces were defeated. The moon was occupied, and Prince Jameison decreed that it would henceforth be known as "Victory" in commemoration of the battle. Caledonian aid to dissidents caused a rebellion to erupt in the Empire, and Drexilthar was never again in a position to renew direct warfare with the Principality.

Victory is currently the site of a major trading center linking the Principality to the Imperium by way of the Imperial world of Concord. A Caledonian naval base is also present, largely intended to guard against incursions (or a return by Maxwellian exiles) from Germaine.

Every so often, rumors spread through the colony of the presence on Victory (or, possibly, another of Druthere's satellites) of some secret cache of Drexiltharan equipment or weaponry. No two rumors have ever agreed on the contents, location, or fate of this cache, but the persistence of the basic story makes it probable that there is some basis in fact for the whole claim. The stories have sparked searches by treasure-hunters, archeologists, and even a few Maxwellian sympathizers who hope to turn up an arsenal or a hanger stocked with old but servicable warships. Such searches have not, to public knowledge, proven successful.

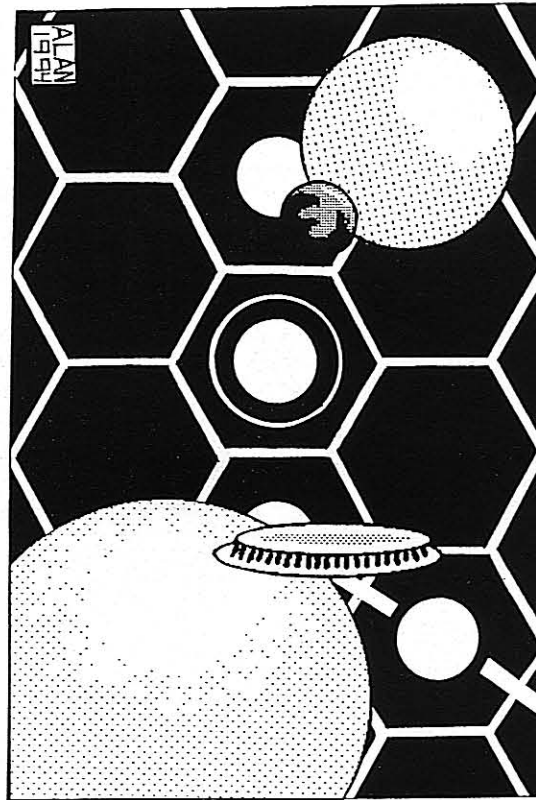
Skye

(0408 E799751-5 G512 F8 V M0 D)

Primary: Close binary system. Charlie, spectral class F8V. ICN S4G0404F8V. Mass 1.144 standard. Stellar diameter 1.178 standard. Luminosity 2.126 standard. Flora, spectral class M VI. ICN S4G0408MOVI. Mass .154 standard. Stellar diameter .256 standard. Luminosity .011 standard.

Planetary System: Five major bodies. One inhabited world (Skye, II). Two gas giants. One planetoid belts

II Skye: Mean orbital radius, 110.7 million kilometers (.74 AU). Period 204.1 days. One satellites. Diameter, 12594 kilometers. Density, 1.0 standard. Mass, 0.67 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.88G. Rotation period: 23 hours, 35 minutes, 11 seconds. Axial inclination 25° 26' 12.1". Albedo, 0.52. Surface atmospheric pressure, 2.0 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix tainted occasionally by airborne pollen. **CAUTION: POLLEN MAY CUASE SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS. FILTER MASKS ADVISED FOR ALL ATMOSPHERIC BREATHING!** Hydrographic percentage, 94%; composition, water and



frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 19° C.

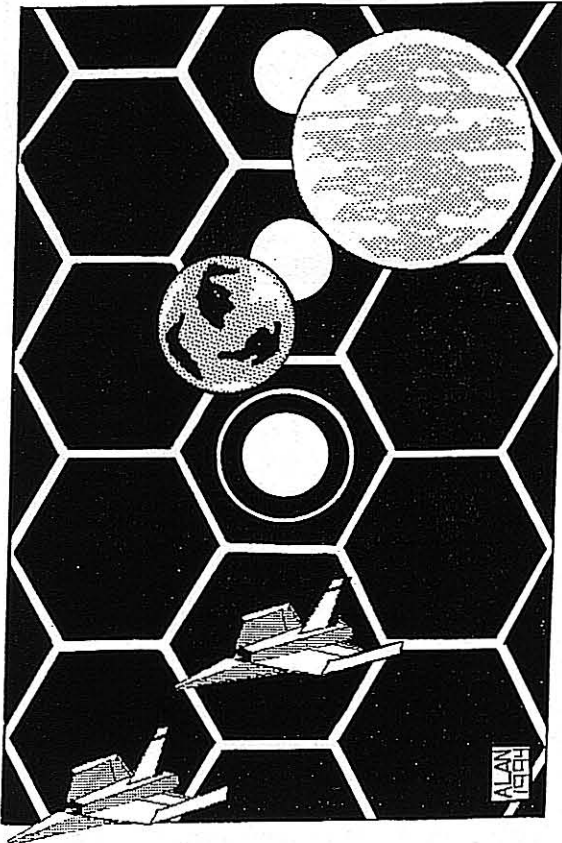
Remarks: Syke is best remembered in romantic fiction within the Principality as the world where Admiral Earl Maxwell was able to shake government pursuit after his ship crashlanded on the planet during the flight that followed his defeat at the Battle of Dunbarton. With the help of a handful of companions, Maxwell went to ground on Skye for several months, eventually linking up with a frigate from Germaine which helped him escaped from searching Caledonian marines. The story of the Earl's sojourn on SKye is now a popular subject for historical novels, ballads, and other stories.

Skye is actually not as romantic as setting as the stories might lead one to believe. Primarily ocean-covered, only 6% of the surface area is land. The primary industries are all ocean-related, as might be expected.

The two chief exports of Skye are leviemeat and matweek, two products of the world's mariculture industry. Leviement is a popular foodstuff, harveted from the planet's great levie heads. Levies (short for "leviathans") are immense creatures, massing up to 100 tons, which live deep in the ocean depths. They are hunted from small, 6-man submarines, killed, and brought to the surface by the attachment of large airbags secured by divers. It is dangerous work, both for the sub (for a flick of a levie's tail has been known to wipe out a sub and its crew), and for the divers, who must go outside the sub and risk encounters with several large scavengers which often contest a levie kill.

Matweed is a thick, tangled type of vegetation which floats on the surface in large patches. Properly processed, it is an excellent foodstuff. Unfortunately, matweed pollen is dangerous; roughly 80% of all humans who breathe

matweed pollen are subject to a severe allergic reaction which has been known to cause almost immediate death, and which is a best highly distressing and uncomfortable while it lasts. Filter masks and conditioned residences are essential to avoid exposure to drifting, airborne pollen.



Germaine

(0409 A986956-D M Hi G601 F6 V)

Primary: Beausoliel, spectral class F6V. ICN S4G0409F6V. Mass 1.28 standard. Stellar diameter 1.326 standard. Luminosity 3.042 standard.

Planetary System: Four major bodies. One inhabited world (Germaine, II). One gas giant. No planetoid belts

II Germaine: Mean orbital radius, 324.46 million kilometers (2.17 AU). Period 1045.1 days (2.86 years). One satellites. Diameter, 15923 kilometers. Density, 1.03 standard. Mass, 1.47 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1.16G. Rotation period: 21 hours, 41 minutes, 44 seconds. Axial inclination 1° 58' 41.7". Albedo, 0.24. Surface atmospheric pressure, 22 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 63%; composition, liquid water and water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 20° C.

Remarks: Germaine was colonized at about the same time as Caledon, by an offshoot group disenchanted with the leadership of the Caledonian colony. They settled Germaine, a warm, dense-atmosphere world which offered excellent opportunities to the new colonists.

Ther Germaine colony turned its back on interstellar travel eraly, and had a hard time during the Long Night. Raiders occasionally harrassed the world, causing periodic destruction and needless death. On the whole, though,

Germaine remained fairly stable and civilized. The colonists merely had no great urge to look outward, concentrating on improving their own world rather than exploring others. Caledonian traders "discovered" Germaine during the heyday of the commerical expansion of the Principality, but Germaine was not particularly interested in offworld trade. In 578, an incident occurred in which a Caledonian merchant, who had insisted on attempting to sell his wares despite official warnings that he did so without government sanction, became involved in a small riot and ended up killing two citizens. He tried and imprisoned under local law, but not before another vessel took the story to the Principality.

Caledon had been looking for an excuse to force Germaine to accede to the Principality's demands, and used "gunboat diplomacy" -- a squadron of naval ships dispatched to Germaine -- to free the imprisoned merchant and force a trade agreement on the isolationists on the world. Germaine's government had no choice but to accept the Caledonian demands. However, the incident was the beginning of a history of ill-feeling between Caledon and Germaine.

Since that time, Germaine has modernized, building a respectable space navy. The planetary population, and great strides forward in technology, make Germaine strong enough to now be able to resist Caledonian threats. There hasn't been any actual warfare, but Germaine has refused to renew the various economic treaties with Caledon, and has been more than willing to offer refuge to members of the Maxwellian party after the defeat of Earl Maxwell (or Prince David V, as he was and is styled by his faction). The current Maxwell heir, who called himself Prince Roger I, remains on Germaine today, and is reputedly planning to exploit tensions within the Principality to attempt a new Maxwellian rebellion.

Lhshami

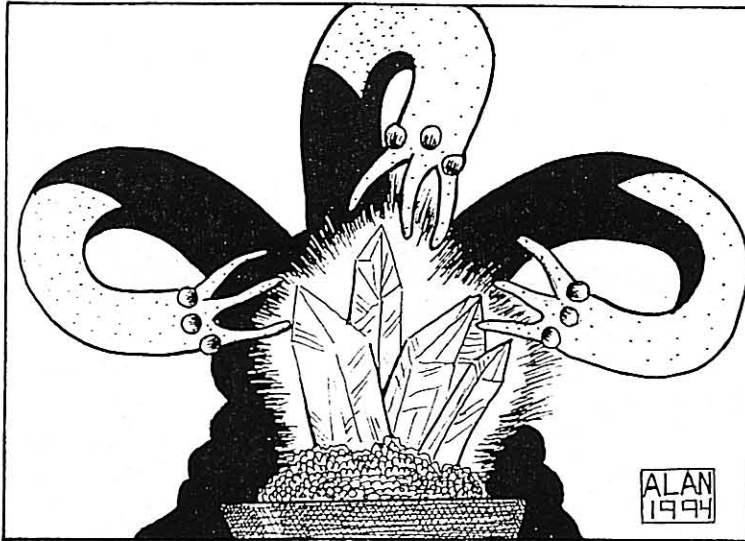
(0501 C47794-9 Ag Rs G702 F0 V M1 D M5 V)

Primary: Trinary star system (two close companions, one distant). Hsmeilha, spectral class F0V. ICN S4G0501F0V. Mass 1.7 standard. Stellar diameter 1.7 standard. Luminosity 8.1 standard. Close companion Shleihsi, spectral class M1VII. ICN S4G0501M1VII. Mass 1.11 standard. Stellar diameter .006 standard. Luminosity .00003 standard. Far companion Ekhana, spectral class M5V. ICNS4G0501M5V. Mass .331 standard. STellar diameter .358 standard. Luminosity .007 standard. Orbital radius 4968 AU.

Planetary System: (Itsmeilha/Shleihsi): Eleven major bodies. One inhabited world (Lhshami, VI). Two gas giant. No planetoid belts

IV Lhshami: Mean orbital radius, 324.63 million kilometers (2.17 AU). Period 696.5 days. No satellites. Diameter, 6634 kilometers. Density, 0.98 standard. Mass, 0.123 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.49G. Rotation period: 19 hours, 17 minutes, 10 seconds. Axial inclination 25° 47' 44.6". Albedo, 0.41. Surface atmospheric pressure, .95 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix with oxygen imbalance.

WARNING: HIGH OXYGEN CONTENT CAN CAUSE OXYGEN INTOXICATION! Filter masks advised for atmospheric breathing. Hydrographic percentage, 70%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 5° C.



Remarks: Like Tsanesi, Lhshami is home to an intelligent sophont race. Unlike the Yn-tsaï of Tsanesi, however, the Lhshana people are definitely native to the world, and their evolution and history can be traced with some confidence. The Lhshana are descended from omnivore/gatherer stock. They are a trilaterally symmetrical race, standing upright on three short, muscular legs. Tentaclelar appendages over each leg given them excellent manipulative abilities; a sensory cluster on each tentacle provides organs for sight, hearing, smell, taste, and infrared vision for each limb. The mouth is located ventrally, and serves only for ingestion; breathing is through a number of breathing orifices located in pairs under each tentacle. The average being stands perhaps 1.2 meters in height.

Lhshanna are generally passive, contemplative, and rather fatalistic in nature. Their pre-civilized ancestors were enslaved by the Saie (and much of what we know about that race is derived from oral traditions of the Lhshana, distorted over the centuries into a body of folklore and mythology). They received a considerable boost in civilization thanks to Saie technology, and also absorbed knowledge from Reaver spacecraft which visited the world during the Long Night. When first contacted by Caledonian merchants, the Lhshana had a flourishing tech level 9 civilization, though they had no knowledge of (and little interest in) space flight.

Though not possessed of true psionic abilities, some Lhshana artists are capable of shaping certain native crystals into designs which, aside from an intrinsic beauty, are capable of producing certain specific emotional responses in those who thought the artwork. Representational art is virtually unknown on Lhshami, but Lhshan touchstone sculptures are a highly prized art form commanding high prices throughout known space.

Gash

(0506 DAF8573-7 Ni F1 G012 F1 V)

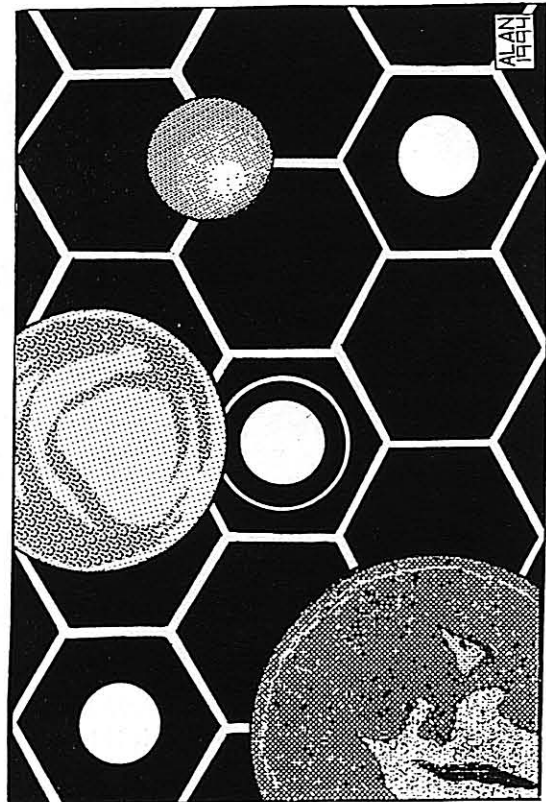
Primary: Fury, spectral class FIV. ICN S4G0506FIV. Mass 1.62 standard. Stellar diameter 1.62 standard. Luminosity 7.18 standard.

Planetary System: Three major bodies. One inhabited world (Gash, I). Two gas giant. One planetoid belts

I Gash: Mean orbital radius, 254.32 million kilometers (1.7 AU). Period 636.1 days. One satellites. Diameter, 169.36 kilometers. Density, 1.0 standard. Mass, 1.95 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1.25 G. Rotation period: 22 hours, 36 minutes, 24 seconds. Axial inclination 20° 3' 4.7". Albedo, 0.35. Surface atmospheric pressure, .45 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance in valley floor (respirator required at surface pressures). Hydrographic percentage, 81%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 32° C.

Remarks: This world is largely remarkable for the feature that gives it its name -- a deep valley running like a scar across the face of the major continent.

This valley averages 1.2 kilometers in depth, 8 kilometers wide, and 117 kilometers in length. Sheer walls delineate it on each side, while the ends are somewhat gentler slopes. It is believed that the Gash (the local name for the valley) was created by some awesome weapon used during the war which is believed to have shattered the domains of the Ancients hundreds of thousands of years ago. No sign of Ancients ruins has been discovered on the world, but it is

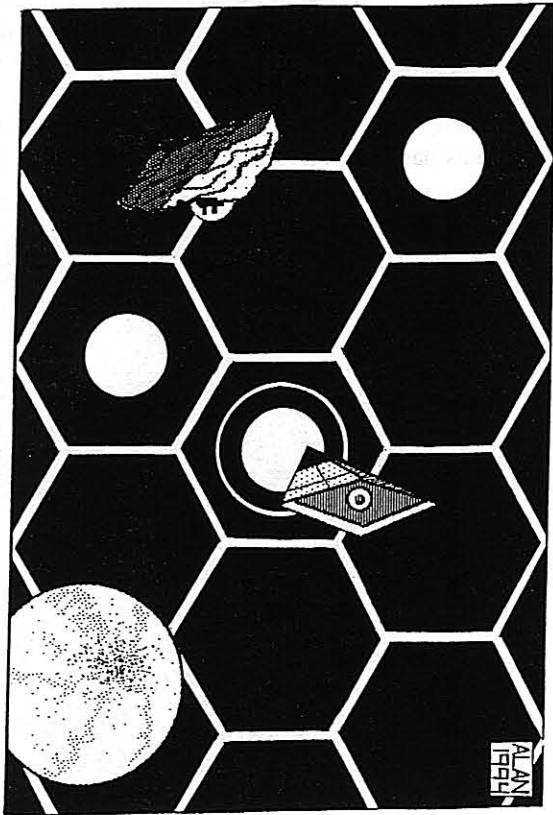


believed that the only complex on the world may have been somewhere along the path of the Gash. A disintegration weapon of unbelievable power is usually theorized as the agency for the destruction.

At any rate, the Gash exists. The atmosphere at the planet's sealevel surface is too thin to support human life, but, along the valley floor, is sufficient (if still rather thin). Settlements have been established along the valley floor.

The walls of the Gash are a veritable treasure-trove for miners; exposed veins of silver, gold, platinum, iridium, and other metals are found in abundance on the sheer cliffs. It is frequently thought that mineral wealth might have been the attraction for the vanished Ancients site; in fact, though this is sheer guesswork. At any rate, mining is the major industry on Gash today.

Each of the four mining settlements on Gash (the fifth settlement, Touchdown Starport and its environs, is a neutral facility accessible to all) is independent and fiercely competitive, sending out mining teams to locate, claim, and exploit new veins in the cliff walls. Claim-jumping is common, and most expeditions go out expecting, and often looking for trouble. Escalation of conflicts between these parties leads to frequent but short-lived wars between cities; most such conflicts end with resolution of the specific dispute, but the balance of power makes it unlikely that the cities will ever actually unite.



Rock

(0604 B400364-A Ni Lo Va O: 0703 G201 Im M5 V)
Primary: Flicker, spectral class M5V. ICN S4G0604M5V.
 Mass 0.331 standard. Stellar diameter 0.358 standard.
 Luminosity 0.007 standard.

Planetary System: One major bodies. No inhabited worlds. One gas giant. No planetoid belts. Rock, Ib, is a satellite of the gas giant designated Cronos.

I Cronos: Mean orbital radius, 74.8 million kilometers (5 AU). Period 224.5 days. Five satellites. Diameter, 108000 kilometers. Density, 0.2 standard. Mass, 120.1 standard. A large gas giant.

Ib Rock: Mean orbital radius, 5.94 million kilometers (5r radii). Period 146 days. No satellites. Diameter, 7234 kilometers. Density, 0.98 standard. Mass, .123 standard. Mean surface gravity, .49G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with Cronos). Axial inclination 24° 6' 0.6". Albedo, 0.2. Surface atmospheric pressure less than 0.01 atm; vacuum suits required outside colony domes. Hydrographic percentage, 1%; composition, frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, -151° C.

Remarks: Rock is a rather unremarkable world, a satellite of a gas giant which has had a small starport administered by the Kolan Hegemony (an autonomous member of the Imperium) for nearly a thousand years. The port was mostly a stepping stone for trade between the Hegemony and the Principality of Caledon (which have always got on well despite radical cultural dissimilarities). This function was largely superseded by the construction of the great trade ports at Concorde in the Imperium and victory in the Principality, which became the main trade links.

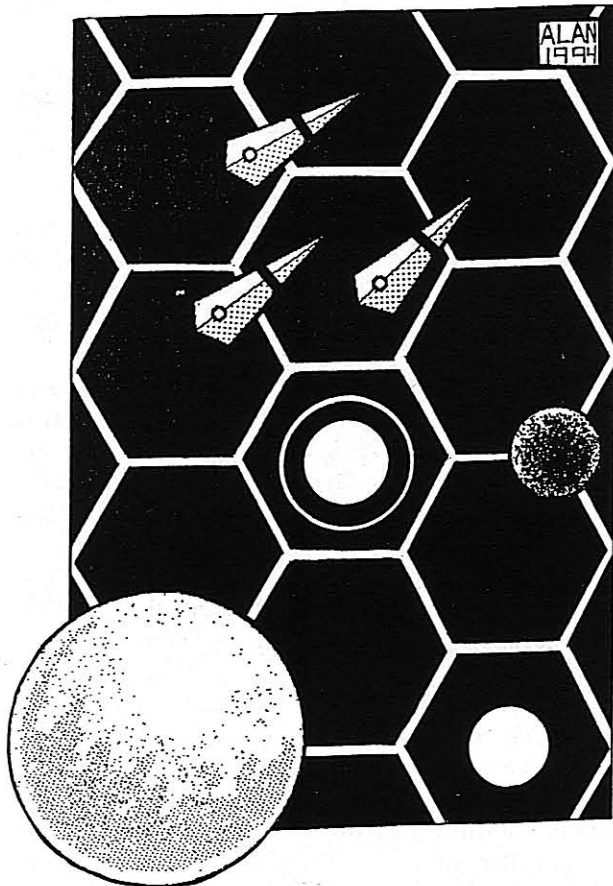
Recently, though, Rock's small port has been expanded; new settlement (largely by colonists from outside the Hegemony) has been encouraged by the Imperium. Plans are in preparation to construct a new naval base near the port, as well, and the upgraded port has already been incorporated into the Imperial X-boat system. This is perceived within the Hegemony as part of a deep Imperial plot to strip away the Hegemony's few remaining holdings, and is bitterly resented. Twice already surveyors working on the site proposed for the naval base have been ambushed, and a rash of minor acts of sabotage has broken out as well, putting the project almost a year behind schedule already. The perpetrators of these acts have not yet been traced.

The Imperium is not able to secure the site with Marines, since this would violate Hegemony autonomy; only after the base is completed can the military move in (unless permission -- so far not forthcoming -- is first obtained from the Hegemony). The local colonial governor has been recruiting mercenaries, ostensibly to serve the same purpose, but more probably to cause additional problems. Imperial planners are still developing ways to counteract this turn of events without a direct confrontation.

Concorde

(0608 A999587-E N Ni G313 Im F3 V)
Primary: Lukagim, spectral class F3V. ICN S4G0608F3V.
 Mass 1.54 standard. Stellar diameter 1.58 standard.
 Luminosity 6.26 standard.
Planetary System: Ten major bodies. One inhabited world (Concorde, V). Three gas giant. One planetoid belts.
V Concorde: Mean orbital radius, 230.98 million kilometers (1.54 AU). Period 562.5 days. One satellite. Diameter,

14062 kilometers. Density, .98 standard. Mass, 1.40 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1.11 G. Rotation period: 21 hours, 55 minutes, 36 seconds. Axial inclination 27° 35' 27.2". Albedo, 0.45. Surface atmospheric pressure less than 1.7 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix tainted by potentially dangerous gas compounds; filter mask required to breathe atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage, 95%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 28° C.



Remarks: Concorde is chiefly important as the major link between the Imperium and the Principality of Caledon, and has a long history as an advanced outpost of the Imperial presence in Reavers' Deep.

The world was originally settled around -200 by a small band of Aslan clansmen, Ihatei searching for a landhold of their own. It was not exactly choice real estate, but the Aslan were not strong enough to take better property away from the various Reaver warloads who dominated the better worlds. The Asland colony prospered, and established good relations with the emergent Principality of Caldeon as the latter began to expand into space.

The Third Imperium arrived in the region just over 400 years after the Aslan settlement was established, and Concorde was the scene of one of the many conflicts which made up the Imperial phase of the Aslan Border Wars. Strangely, in those conflicts the humans of Caledon sided with the alien Aslan, against the Imperium: the Caledonians were unwilling to see themselves consumed by the

expanding Imperial frontier as the Kolan Hegemony already had been.

Eventually, though, sufficient guarantees of independence and good faith were offered, and the Principality agreed to withdraw from the conflict. The Aslan on Concorde ultimately chose to accept the Emperor as their new overlord, and Concorde joined the Imperium. The world, given its name to celebrate the new spirit of fellowship that followed this agreement (its previous, Aslan name was Wyaseakhtai), continues today to support a mixed population of humans and Aslan.

It is a major port for trade with Caledon; farflung Caledonian mercantile interests in turn ensure that goods from a far away as the Hierate border worlds wind up passing through the trade docks of Concorde. Lately, competition between the Caledonian merchants and various Imperial firms (especially Delgado Trading, LIC, a megacorporation) has led to slight downturn in trade through Concorde, and consequent economic and political concerns.

Loren

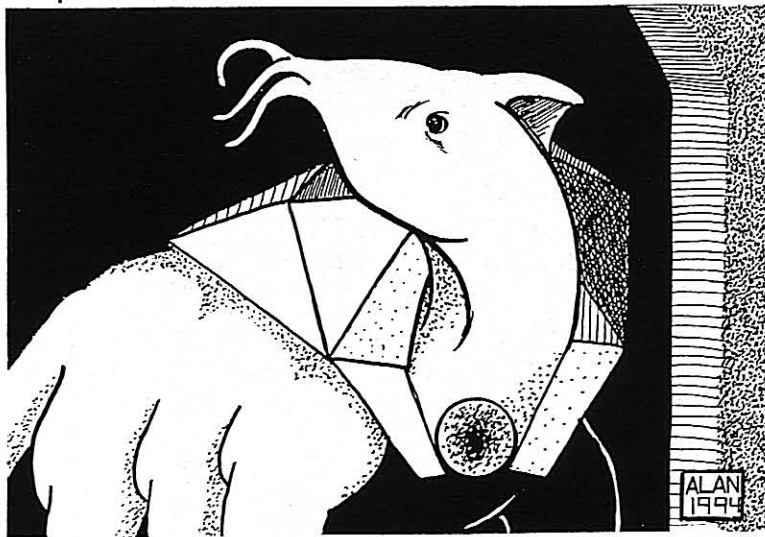
(0701 C57459C-7 S Ag Ni A601 M0 V)

Primary: Prometheus, spectral class M0 V. ICN S4G0701M0V. Mass, 0.489 standard. Stellar Diameter, 0.549 standard. Luminosity, 0.04 standard.

Planetary System: Four major bodies. One inhabited world (Loren, I). One gas giant in system. No planetoid belts in system.

I Loren: Mean orbital radius, 26.93 million kilometers (.18 AU). Period, 39.9 days. No satellites. Diameter, 8552 Kilometers. Density, 1.01. Mass, 0.247 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.63 G. Rotation period: none (tidal lock with primary). Axial inclination 2°49'20.2". Albedo, 0.26. Surface atmospheric pressure, 1.1 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix with suflur and sulfur compounds taint; filter mask required to breathe atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage, 40%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, dayside, 50C; nightside, -124°C.

Remarks: Loren is a fascinating world, an example of a highly unusual ecology at work. Locked with one side



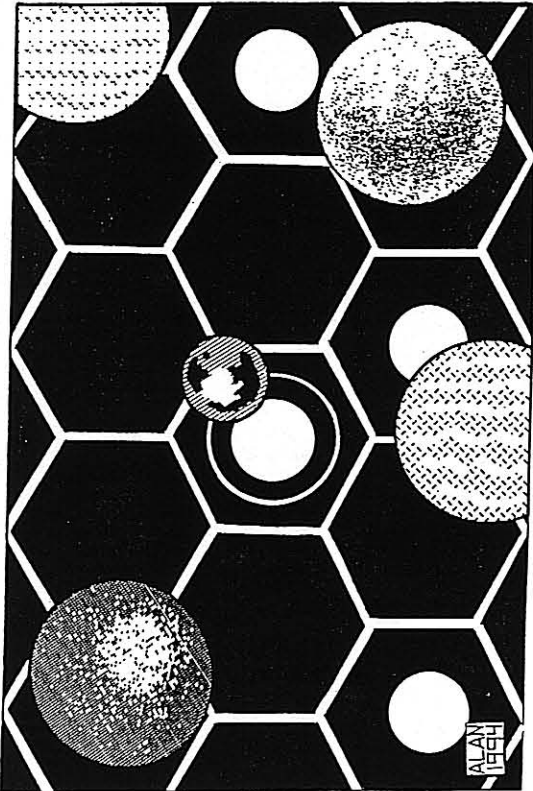
constantly towards its star, the world is not the classic "twilight zone" planet, because even the dayside temperatures under the feeble light of Prometheus are barely over freezing. Twilight zone temperatures are far below the range for human comfort.

Nonetheless, this singularly inhospitable world does support life. In the absence of an effective form of photosynthesis, the plant life of Loren relies on a chomosynthetic base; life flourishes even in some portions of the nightside, where volcanoes supply sufficient heat and a source for a variety of chemicals necessary for the world's life-processes. Higher forms of animal life also exist, in a complex food chain not entirely unlike our own, but with intruiging variations.

The world has been colonized, albeit lightly by a nonhuman Imperial race originating in the Daibe sector, the Bruhre. The Bruhre are a massive, hexopedal race who themselves are accustomed to a high atmospheric sulfur content (they find the tainted atmosphere of Loren breathable, but rather bland and tastless). Their body chemistry is such as to permit them to eat the plants and animals of Loren with relish; humans find such food highly poisonous. Thus, the planet is a Bruhre agricultural colony.

The Bruhre are a complex and often unfathomable race, bound to a life of ritual and ceremony. They have complicated laws covering almost every aspect of their lives; it is said that a Bruhre can go for days on end and never say, do, or think a single thing that is not strictly regulated by law and custom. They are also a remarkably intolerant race, and outsiders are expected to comply with their ways totally. For this reason, the Bruhre usually are isolated from the mainstream of other Imperial cultures.

Loren is not actually part of the Imperium, but an IISS base



is present, and the Bruhre government of the world is answerable to their own homeworld. Imperial membership is likely to be granted withing the next fifty years.

Kolath

(0703 C7678CB-8 S A924 Im G4 V)

Primary: Thor, spectral class G4V. ICN S4G0703G4V. Mass 0.96 standard. Stellar diameter 0.934 standard. Luminosity 0.778 standard.

Planetary System: Ten major bodies. One inhabited world (Kolath, II). Four gas giants. Two planetoid belts.

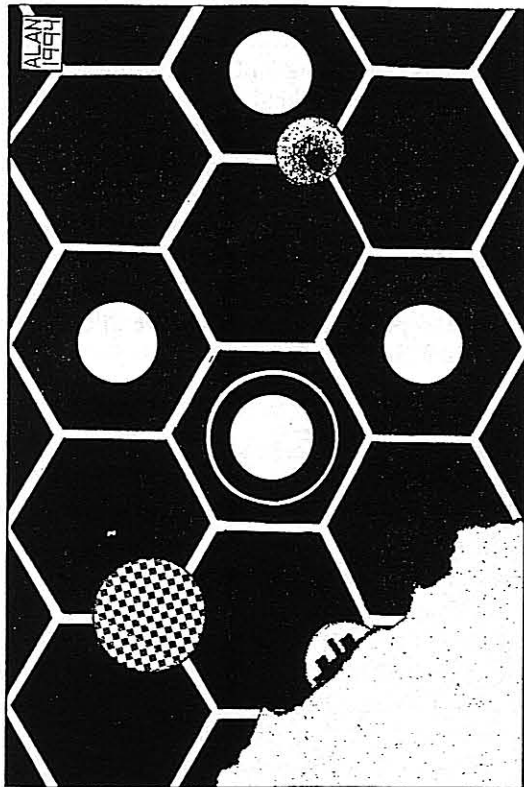
II Kolath: Mean orbital radius, 106.22 million kilometers (71 AU). Period 223.0 days. Two satellites. Diameter, 12405 kilometers. Density, 0.97 standard. Mass, 0.650 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.85 G. Rotation period: 27 hours, 7 minutes, 32 seconds. Axial inclination 28° 34' 12.1". Albedo, 0.26. Surface atmospheric pressure 0.95 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 71%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 20° C.

Remarks: Kolath is the capital of the Kolan Hegemony, which includes Kolath, Kurat, and Rock. The Hegemony is considered a part of the Imperium, but is administratively independent from the authority of the neighboring Nightrim subsector, which governs, other Imperial territory in this area. This local autonomy is a long-standing arrangement; it dates back to the lattter part of the Aslan Border Wars period (the Imperial phase, 200-380), when the Imperium was just beginning to expand into Reavers' Deep in the face of oppositions from various Aslan clans. Kolath at that time was a late Reaver Kingdom, encompassing its present area plus Gash, Garim, and Mer. Already organized, the region served as an excellent springboard for an Imperial presence in the area, so treaties wre signed binding Kolath to the Imperium, but with a grant of local autonomy. As time went on, Gash pulled out of the Hegemony, and the Imperium found it expedient to detach Garim and Mer. Current trends hint that Rock will be the next to go. Still, Kolath remains set in its insistance on internal autonomy, ruling its possessions in accordance with tradition.

The government of Kolath is the Council of Warlords, a body which was originally a military junta of Reaver leaders. It is an elected body, but members of the 15-man council are elected fro life. Military service is a prime prerequisite for election, for Kilath is a martial cultrue. It has been some time since the Imperium permitted Kilath a sizable interstellar fleet, but recruitment for Imperial armed forces (especially the Navy and Marines) is high on Kolath, and their personnel have a justifiable famous reputation as superb fighters.

Society on Kolath is highly regimented, and outsiders find it easy to run afoul of local laws. There is considerable turmoil in the Hegemony at present, since it seem likely that the Imperium is working to strip away Kolath's remaining possessions. Although no one could expect to rebel successfully, there is much agitation against Imperial policies, making the world a veritable powderke about to be

set off.



Kurat

(0705 CAA7667-7 FI Ni O:0703 G713 Im A8V)

Primary: Thalen, spectral class A8V. ICN S4G0705A8V. Mass, 1.94 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.76 standard. Luminosity, 12.84 standard.

Planetary System: Eleven major bodies. One inhabited world (Kurat, VIII). Three gas giants in system. One planetoid belt in system.

VIII Kurat: Mean orbital radius, 1615.68 million kilometers (10.8 AU). Period, 9307.3 days (25.48 years). Two satellites. Diameter 16728 kilometers. Density, 1.02. Mass, 1.99 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1.27 G. Rotation period: 20 hours, 44 minutes, 31 seconds. Axial inclination 18°44'8.8". Albedo, 0.64. Surface atmospheric pressure, 3.0 atm. Composition, methane-ammonia mix, an irritant atmosphere requiring both an oxygen supply and full-body protective clothing. Hydrographic percentage, 75%; composition, liquid ammonia and frozen ammonia ice. Mean surface temperature, -141°C.

Remarks: Kurat is one of the two remaining territories subject to the Kolan Hegemony. The world is far from pleasant for humans, having been settled originally by Reavers who saw the planet as an excellent hiding place for ships in need of repairs between raids. It was reasoned that such a hostile environment would be unlikely to be considered by searching naval forces.

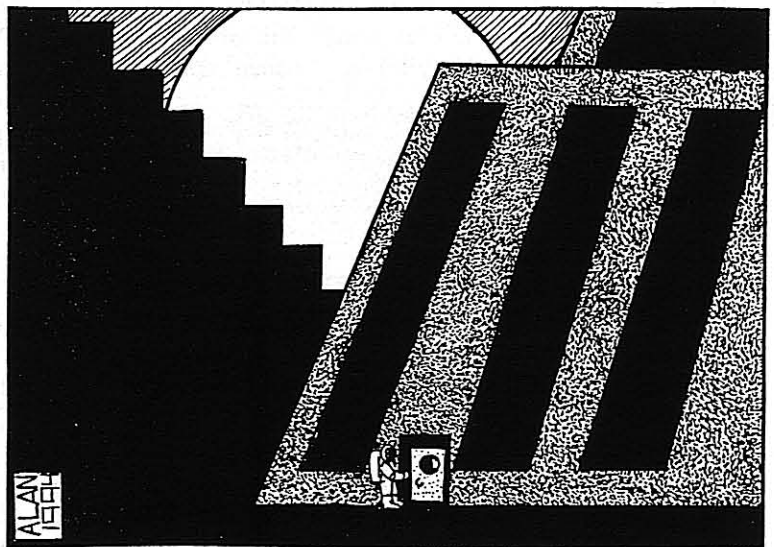
When the Reaver warlords of Kolath moved from raiding to empire-building, Kurat was incorporated early on, and

remained part of the Hegemony when Kolath became an autonomous member of the Third Imperium. The original purpose of the world was long abandoned; the populace now turned their attentions to mining, light industry, and the like, rather than supporting raiders. Unlike Mer and Garim, both of which were eventually separated from the Hegemony and directly incorporated into the Imperium, Kurat had nothing much to offer the empire, and so was left alone.

The colonial government installed by Kolath on Kurat has absolute control over the populace. The environment is extremely hostile; with a very high atmospheric pressure, an irritant methane-ammonia "exotic" atmosphere, and an average surface temperature of -141°C, life on Kurat goes on strictly at the whim of the powers that be. A particularly ruthless governor, confronted with rioting and unrest, once made an example of an entire colony dome by shutting down the life support systems. Over 1,000 people were killed, and the riots ended promptly. The current administration, luckily, is less harsh, and restrictions have been greatly eased.

There is still discontent, however; local "patriots" have engaged in periodic acts of sabotage and defiance, taking advantage of the relatively benign colonial government. To succeed in their schemes for liberation, however, they must first find a way to take out the threat of a life support shutdown.

It is rumored that the Imperium is giving covert support to these activities, so that the Hegemony may be dismembered and absorbed without direct confrontation.



Lurammish

(0710 C512755-9 S Na Ic G300 Im M3 III M0 V)

Primary: Close binary system. Gurumashi, spectral class M3III. ICN S4G0710MIII. Mass, 6.96 standard. Stellar diameter, 162 standard. Luminosity, 1556 standard. Mashakim, spectral class M0V. ICN S4G0710M0V Mass, 0.489 standard. Stellar diameter, 0.549 standard. Luminosity 0.04 standard.

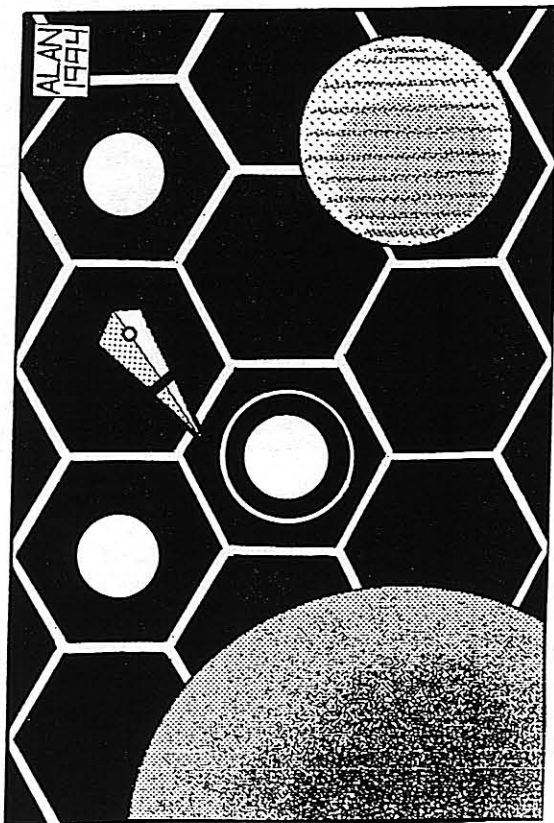
IX Lurammish: Mean orbital radius 7629.6 million kilometers (51 AU). Period, 48,742.6 days (133.45 standard

years). One satellite. Diameter, 9309 kilometers. Density, 1.04 standard. Mass, 0.254 standard. Mean surface gravity, 65 G. Rotation period: 25 hours, 10 minutes, 53 seconds. Axial inclination, 3°23'10.2". Albedo, 0.23. Surface atmospheric pressure, 0.08 atm. Composition, carbondioxide-nitrogen mix. Oxygen supply and pressure gear required outside colony complex. Hydrographic percentage, 25%; composition, frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, -20°C.

Remarks: Lurammish is an unattractive world orbiting a class M subgiant (and a smaller companion) at a distance of over 7 billion kilometers. IT is an unpleasant place, with a trace atmosphere and an unpleasantly cold surface temperature. Nonetheless, it supports a sizable colony. Originally Lurammish was a rather small mining community, but it has grown over the four centuries since it was settled to become a substantial frontier settlement.

The reason for the success of the colony is the presence of large lanthanum deposits. Lanthanum, a rare element, is the first of the "inner transition" metals, and is vital to the construction of inner coils in jump drive units. The abundance of lanthanum ore on Lurammish has made the colony wealthy.

The Lurammish colony is concentrated in a cluster of large arcologies, huge buildings housing over half a million people each. For the hostile environment of the world, the arcologies are a logical solution to problems of life support, housing, and similar considerations. Each arcology is individually ruled through a caste hierarchy of technicians and administrators, with a network of duties and obligations reminiscent of feudal ties of fealty. The overall world government is conducted by a grand council representing



each individual arcology in an essential democratic form of government, but the grand council makes decisions only when the outcomes are to effect more than one community. Up until recently, all mining on Lurammish was conducted by locals and exported; within the past decade, however, Ling-Standard Products, the Imperial megacorporation, has begun exerting pressure to operate lanthanum mines independently, a move which threatens the planetary economy. In response to protests and cross-claims of sabotage and harassment, the IISS Scout Base recently underwent expansion to provide barracks for a battalion of Marine peacekeepers. This seems to have diluted, at least temporarily, the buildup of tension.

Doom

(0802 X400200-4 Ni Va Lo R101 K0 V)

Primary: Omen, spectral class K0V. ICN S4G0802D0V. Mass 0.25 standard. Stellar Diameter 0.908 standard. Luminosity 0.42 standard.

Planetary System: Three major bodies. One inhabited world (Doom, II). One gas giant. No planetoid belts.

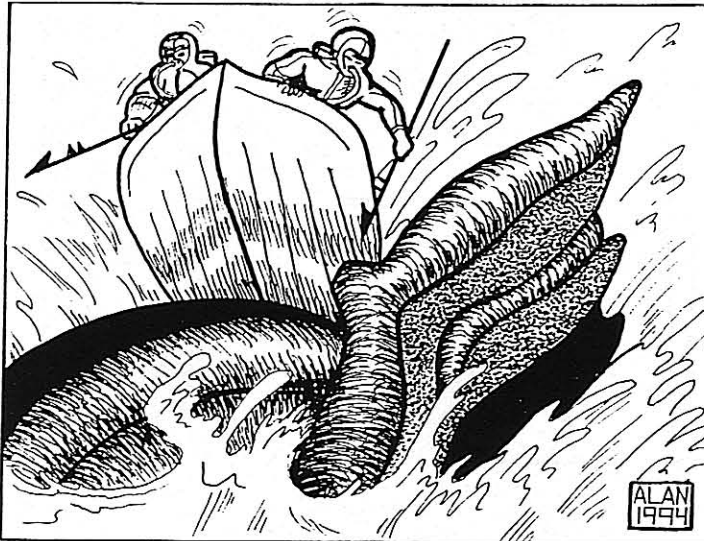
II Doom: Mean orbital radius, 88.26 million kilometers (0.59 AU). Period 182.2 days. Two satellites. Diameter 7048 km. Density 1.05 standard. Mass 0.131 standard. Mean surface gravity 0.53G. Rotation period: 30 hours, 41 minutes, 44 seconds. Axial inclination 20° 0' 15.0". Albedo .20 standard. Surface atmospheric pressure, less than .01 atm. Vacuum suits required for surface EVAs. Hydrographic percentage 0%. Mean surface temperature 40°C.

Remarks: The names given to the bodies in this system ("Omen", "Doom", etc.) are said to have first been applied by the superstitious Caledonian merchant who made the first recorded visit to Mt. Orodruin, the great and terrifying enigma of the planet. That merchant arrived on Doom with a crew of ten; he escaped alone, gravely wounded, and it was only by the merest good fortune that his ship made a successful jump to neighboring Kolath. The injured crewman died on the jump back, leaving behind recordings of his experiences. These, however, are the largely incoherent ravings of a deranged and frightened man, and are of little value in unravelling the secrets of Doom.

Something, apparently, lies within the great dead volcano Captain Donald Morrison christened Orodruin. It is uncertain just what it may be, from the content of the tapes, but Morrison seemed to be describing an artificial complex of some kind. By piecing together the rambling, incoherent statements made by Morrison and certain supporting information from later expeditions, scientists believe Orodruin is the site of an abandoned military base, probably belonging to the Saie. Morrison's account seems to indicate that one of his men accidentally reactivated a long-dead geothermal generator, which powered up the automated base defense system of this long-forgotten complex. These defenses worked with frightening effectiveness.

And, it seems, they continue to work today. No fewer than ten major expeditions have visited Doom since 678, when Morrison's visit occurred; none have successfully penetrated Orodruin. Every person who has attempted to enter has been

killed, and vehicles outside the underground complex have been destroyed when they ventured within a given radius of the base entrance. Twice, ships have been brought down by effective particle beam weapons, as well. The Imperium has posted Red Zone warnings for Doom as a result, though a small, semi-permanent research colony is maintained hoping to crack the base and learn its secrets. There is little hope of this, based on past experience, though at least one researcher has advanced the theory that individual defense systems might be disarmed by a crystal key fitted into any of several locking devices near complex doors. A shattered version of the key was discovered at Crash Jura on Glenshiel; so far, attempts to duplicate it have failed.



Mer

(0804 C79A520-8 Ni Wa G324 Im F8V)

Primary: Daybright, spectral class F8V. ICN S4G0804F8V. Mass 1.144 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.178 standard. Luminosity, 2.125 standard.

Planetary System: Ten major bodies. One inhabited world (Mer, III). Four gas giants in system. Two planetoid belts in system.

III Mer: Mean orbital radius, 101.73 million kilometers (0.68 AU). Period, 191.5 days. One satellite. Diameter, 11565 kilometers. Density, 0.96. Mass, 0.643 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.84 G. Rotation period: 22 hours, 50 minutes, 8 seconds. Axial inclination, 4°49'48.4". Albedo, 0.52. Surface atmospheric pressure, 2.2 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix with oxygen imbalance. Respirator masks required to breathe atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage, nearly 100%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 30° C.

Remarks: The water world of Mer is a large planet which is practically without land. Several very small islands have been discovered, but these are little more than small rocks dotting the otherwise unbroken expanse of a world-girdling ocean.

Settlement on Mer has taken an unusual form. Early visitors discovered that vast schools of small aquatic omnivore/

eaters, known as lancesharks, were a highly palatable form of seafood which quickly caught on as a marketable foodstuff. The behavior of lanceshark schools, which are migratory creatures who can cover half the globe in the course of a lifetime, made it most economical for fishing communities to follow schools on their travels. Hence the great raft communities of Mer.

In general, a raft community is a large, powered, town-sized ship which can hold several hundred people. Communities follow specific schools on their migrations, trawling for lancesharks as they go; the lancesharks have a high reproductive rate which makes it possible to harvest large numbers without significantly damaging the school's basic strength. Raft communities support more than just fishermen; they are complete towns sailing the high seas.

The raft communities generally cooperate in a loose planetary government; they form a sort of participatory democracy in which "ship's officers" of each community have a franchise, and a direct vote by radio in all matters concerning the planet as a whole. One of the larger islands holds the starport, and other islands hold repair facilities for raft communities damaged by storms or by encounters with the human's main competition for lanceshark schools, the large, stupid, but danerous gulperwhales.

In addition to these natural hazards, there are occasional problems of human origin. The fishing culture of Mer is clannish and prone to disputes; vendettas are common, not only between individuals, but between whole communities. Incidents of piracy or vandalism against raft communities are reported, usually prompted by some long-standing grudge between communities.

From time to time, too, outsiders have been know to attack rafts, pillage the community, and then attempt to lay the blame on a vendetta situation.

Garim

(0806 A888A97-E N Hi G124 Im B1 V)

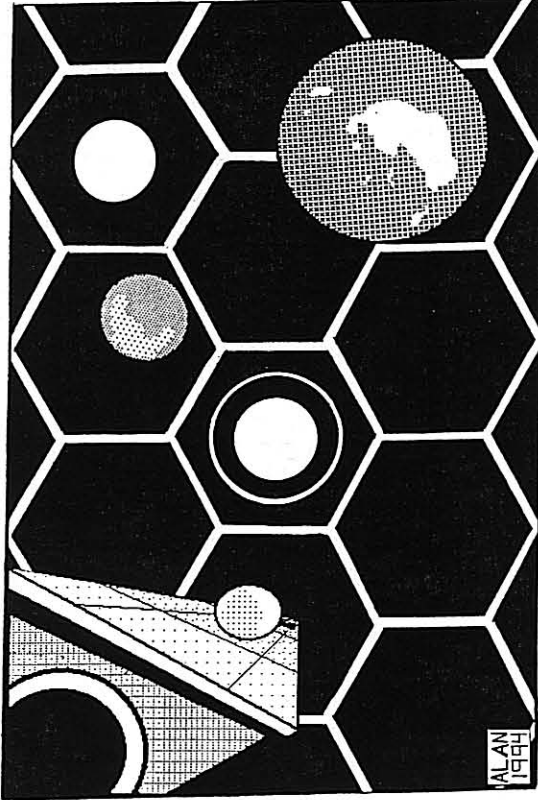
Primary: Kammishuga, spectral class B1V. ICN S4G0806G1V. Mass, 1.02 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.01 standard. Luminosity, 1.1 standard.

Planetary System: Eight major bodies. One inhabited world (Garim, IV). Four gas giants in system. Two planetoid belts.

IV Garim: Mean orbital radius, 164.56 million kilometers (1.1 AU). Peroid, 417.2 days. No satellites. Diameter, 13224 kilometers. Density, 1.0 standard. Mass, 1.0 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1 G. Rotation Period: 25 hours, 7 minutes, 37 seconds. Axial inclination, 20°53'56.4". Albedo, 0.28. Surface atmospheric pressure, 1.95 atm. Composition, standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 85%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 29°C.

Remarks: Garim is an extremely earthlike world which forms the natural hub of th elmperial presence in the subsector. Though not the capital of these territories (the Imperial frontier in the region is administered for the

adjacent Nightrim subsector), it is important as a center of administration, communications, and military presence.

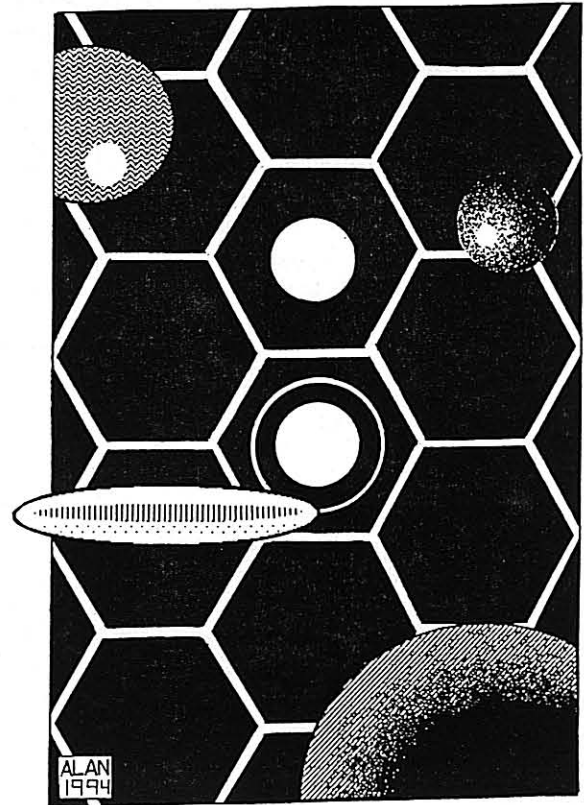


The world was once controlled by the Kolan Hegemony, but in 458 the construction of an X-boat link and a naval base at Garim prompted the Imperium to annex the world. A sizable grant of money to the Hegemonic government won the concession easily, and the local (Kolan) population was quickly submerged in a massive immigration program. The world is now the most heavily populated planet in the subsector, boasting a population of over 19 billion.

There is even today a Kolan minority, who bitterly resent the way in which their own proud, martial culture was stamped out in favor of the mix of cultural and ethnic heritages of the immigrants. A few hotheads have been attempting to resurrect the lost heritage of Kolath on Garim, through secret societies, political protests, legislative drives, and so forth. The usual crop of do-gooders is actively supporting these protests with money and political backing. By and large, though, this "revival of Kolan culture" is more an excuse to organize small groups of uniformed stormtroopers and practice political demagoguery than it is a genuine attempt to preserve a lost heritage; and, as some scandalized Imperial socialogists have pointed out, the Kolan culture these people are trying to "preserve" is "a militaristic, aggressive, violent, fascist society that makes the Drexiltharan Star Empire look like a pack of devout altruists."

It is suspected that Thuvar Sen, the leader of the major Kolan movement, is seeking a political powerbase from which to gain prominence, rather than simple revival of old Kolan Language and ways for those who want to embrace them. Unfortunately, the local government is reluctant to take

heed of the waring signs, and Sen's Kolan Heritage League is a growing political force all out of proportion with its actual numbers.



Bryn

(0807 B4268B8-B G914 Im F0 V)

Primary: Elwynd, spectral class F0V. ICN S4G0807F0V. Mass, 1.7 standard. Stellar diameter, 1.7 standard. Luminosity, 8.1 standard.

Planetary System: Nine major bodies. One inhabited world (Bryn, V). Four gas giants in system. One planetoid belt in system.

V Bryn: Mean orbital radius, 344.08 million kilometers (2.3 AU). Period, 977.1 days. Two satellites. Diameter, 7099 kilometers. Density, 1.0 standard. Mass, 0.125 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.5 G. Rotation period: 32 hours, 15 minutes, 56 seconds. Axial inclination 11°44'33.6". Albedo, 0.22. Surface atmospheric pressure, 0.18 atm. Composition, oxygen-nitrogen mix tainted with various industrial pollutants. Filter mask required to breathe atmosphere. Hydrographic percentage, 63%; composition, water and frozen water-ice. Mean surface temperature, 50°C.

Remarks: Though not yet classifiable as an "Industrial" world according to the standards generally set down for such planets, Bryn is well on its way towards being a major industrial center of the Imperial frontier. Though small and unattractive physically, economic opportunities of this "boom system" have attracted a large number of new colonists over the course of the past century, and it is anticipated that the next Imperial Grand Census will show the population well over the 1 billion mark required for an "industrial" classification. Current population is estimated at close to 920,000,000 already.

The government of Bryn is currently headed up by one Richard Kulagin, son of the popular Life-Tribune Eneri Kulagin, a reform politician who ended the excesses of the megacorporations, including Naasirka, GSbAG, and Instellarms, which for a time dominated planetary industry. The elder Kulagin's reforms won the support of the people, forced government by corporate syndicates to withdraw in favor of government by the will of the people, and put Eneri Kulagin in the newly created tribuneship, at the head of the planetary government, for the rest of his life.

After the elder Kulagin's death, his name still had magic on Bryn. His son Richard, a comparatively obscure politician, ran to succeed his father, and was elected overwhelmingly as the new Life-Tribune. Unfortunately Richard Kulagin is not the man his father was. He is commonly referred to as "Deadbrain Dick", and has proven to be totally inadequate to hold office. However, the extraordinary powers granted with the title Life-Tribune make it unlikely that he will be replaced save by voluntary resignation or an untimely death. There are those on Bryn who are not above arranging for the latter.

However, Richard Kulagin's office is now receiving the full support of the megacorporations his father once ousted, who find him easily manipulated and highly useful. A consortium of megacorporations and other prominent businesses have been pulling the strings for Kulagin for some time, and would be very disturbed to see their puppet replaced by a less pliable character.

134.64 million kilometers (0.7 - 0.9 AU). Ikuna starport mean orbital radius 127.16 million kilometers (0.85 AU). Period of LSP Management Facility, 175/7 days. Belt composition, primarily nickle-iron bodies of varying sizes.

Remarks: The Ikuna asteroid belt is a small and not particularly rich region in an unusual star system. The belt is located between the orbits of the two stars, Ikuna and its smaller companion, Gakur. Probably gravitational stresses between them created the belt; the remaining worlds of the system lie outside the orbit of Gakur, and are quite devoid of interest.

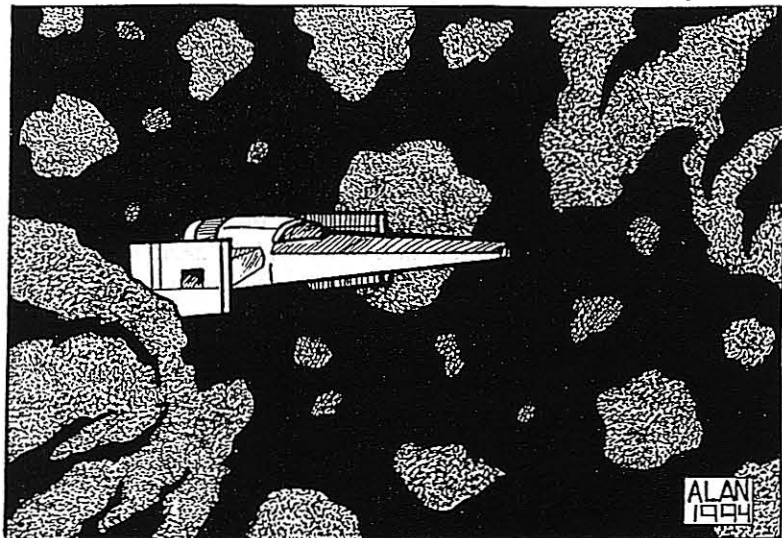
The Ikuna Belt is wholly owned by the Imperial megacorporation Ling-Standard Products, which bought all rights to exploit the star system from the Imperium 200 years ago. In addition to mining activities, the belt boasts several fairly large manufacturing centers, including an LSP starship plant specializing in the construction of planetoid-hull vessels.

In fact, the LSP operation at the Ikuna Belt is far larger than might be expected for an E-class port. The facilities at Ikuna are actually far more sophisticated; the belt easily qualifies for status as a class-A port, but LSP managers refuse to open the belt's facilities to non-LSP vessels. Visitors must make do with some primitive facilities located on the moon of the outermost gas giant, over 1,000 astronomical units out from the belt's orbit. Private vessels venturing closer to the belt without express permission are turned away by patrol cruisers crewed by tough mercenaries in the pay of the megacorporation.

This extreme concern with security has led to a great deal of speculation as to the "secret of the Ikuna Belt." Rumors abound; some of the most common include a rich minerals strike which LSP wishes to keep secret both from outside prospectors and from Imperial tax collectors, the presence of a secret testing area for new, high-tech ship designs, the discovery of an Ancients site filled with technological wonders, and many even sillier notions.

The belt, of course, is big enough to make it difficult to police, and other ships could get in among the LSP-restricted belt. However, several incidents have occurred already in which intruders were destroyed without warning if they were found to have ignored the general signals restricting visitors from the belt zone. Whatever LSP is hiding

in the Ikuna Belt, the corporation is determined to keep hidden. ✂



Ikuna

(0809 E000410-? Ni Lo As G312 Im F5 IV M0 D)

Primary: Binary star system. Ikuna, spectral class F5IV. ICN S4G0809F5IV. Mass, 2.5 standard. Stellar diameter, 2.6 standard. Luminosity, 12 standard. Gakur, spectral class M0VI. ICN S4G0809M0VI. Mass, 0.154 standard. Stellar diameter, 0.256 standard. Luminosity, 0.011 standard. Orbital radius, 5.2 AU.

Planetary System: Eight major bodies. No inhabited worlds. Two gas giants in system. One planetoid belt (inhabited) in system.

The Ikuna Belt: Mean orbital radius, 104.72 million to

Weapon's Locker

By Guy Garnett

Based on requests from the Security Chief, the GUESS quartermaster has approved Fidelity for issue of the following weapons and ammunition. All weapons are to be signed for by the Security Chief on receipt, and stored in an approved manner aboardship.

<i>Weapon Description</i>	<i>Qty</i>	<i>Ammo Total Qty and Type</i>
HANDGUNS		
9mm Magnum Revolver	10	1200 rounds Ball 600 rounds P/T
10mm Auto Snub	18	100 magazines HEAP 50 magazines HE 50 magazines Tranq
10mm P/T Auto Snub	4	50 magazines P/T
5cm Laser Pistol	2	4 50-shot DEI Power Packs 4 Laser Maintenance Kits
SUBMACHINEGUNS		
9mm SMG	10	200 magazines Ball
9mm Supressed SMG	2	40 magazines Low-vel Ball
SP-9 Experimental	8	1600 rounds Ball 400 rounds DS 200 rounds HE 200 rounds HEAP 200 rounds Tranq
RIFLES		
7mm Assault Rifle	10	500 magazines Ball
7mm Adv Combat Rifle	4	80 magazines DS 80 magazines HEAP 40 magazines HE 20 magazines Tranq
8cm Laser Rifle	2	4 50-shot DEI Power Packs 4 Laser Maintenance Kits
GRENADES		
Hand Grenades		100 HE 50 Smoke
4cm RAM Grenades		50 HE 25 HEAP 25 APERS (flechette)
OTHER WEAPONS		
Standard-Issue Bayonets	14	
18mm Auto Shotgun	3	40 magazines Shot 10 magazines Slug 5 magazines HE
2cm Light Assault Gun	2	36 magazines DS 36 magazines HEAP 18 magazines HE 18 magazines Flechette

6cm Assault RL	2	20 magazines HEAP 10 magazines HE 10 magazines Flechette 5 magazines WP
7mm M MG w/ Tripod	1	25 100-round belts
9cm Plasma Bazooka	1	20 CPC cartridges

EXPLOSIVES

Demolition Kit	2	
Plastic Explosives		100 kg
Primer Cord		50 kg

OTHER EQUIPMENT

BW Uniform Suits	28
Visored Helmets	28
3km Radio Sets	28

Quartermaster's Comments:

Body Pistol: Request denied.

Ammunition: Ammunition mix was altered to conform to supplies on hand and packaging limits.

Practice/Training: P/T ammunition and weapons were added at your service's request, to provide for handgun familiarity training and practice while shipboard.

Silencers for 10mm Auto Snub: These items are not available.

Silencers for 9mm SMG: These items are not available. In order to fill your requisition, suppressed SMGs and subsonic ammunition were requested from Special Forces.

SP-9X: Strasse Weapons Systems has made these weapons available for field-test. Each is a full "kit" including the basic SP-9X, with both the 9cm and the 23cm barrels, two each of the 14, 20, and 32 round magazines, and the carbine stock.

7mm ACR: Marine quartermaster claims there are insufficient stocks of the new 7mm ACR to fill your requisition (and he's probably right - most Marine units don't have this weapon yet). The balance of your requisition was filled with standard-issue 7mm Assault Rifles.

Bayonets: Standard-Issue bayonets fit lugs on 7mm Assault Rifle and 7mm ACR. No bayonet lugs on (and therefore, no bayonets issued with) the other weapons.

3km-range radios: No helmets with built-in radios available; separate radios with headsets were substituted, and can be worn under the helmet.

Referee's Comments and Notes:

FF&S: The release of Fire, Fusion, and Steel has included an "upgrade" booklet (a 16 page errata book for T:TNE). The above weapons list is from the updated rules. For more information about these weapons, consult FF&S.

P/T rounds and P/T weapons: The P/T rounds are special reduced-charge loads with plastic frangible bullets, specifically intended for shipboard practise and training use.

The cases and projectiles are colored a bright blue, to easily distinguish them from any other type of ammunition. The 9mm Magnum Revolver P/T loads may be fired from the service revolver without any special precautions. The 10mm Auto Snub P/T rounds must be fired from the 10mm P/T Auto Snub, they will jam an unmodified weapon (the P/T rounds have insufficient recoil to cycle the action of the standard weapon) The P/T automatics have been modified to operate reliably with the reduced load of the P/T round; a standard load would destroy the weapon. P/T ammunition has a damage of -1 and a penetration of Nil at all ranges.

Supressed SMGs and Low-velocity Ammunition: These are special versions of the standard SMG, and have integral supressors. The actions are modified to cycle reliably with low-velocity ammunition (standard SMG ammo is not approved for use in these weapons, and may damage them). They are also designed with folding stocks and front handgrips (overall similar to the MP-5 series). Standard SMGs will not reliably operate with the low-velocity ammunition. Consult FF&S for further explanation of subsonic loads for silenced weapons.

DEI Lasers: DEI stands for Direct Electrical Input (in other words, electrically powered lasers that use power packs, as opposed to chemical "laser cartridges", or CLC lasers). DEI

lasers have several advangates, including an integral laser sight, and several selectable fire modes. However, they also require periodic maintainance, primarily to ensure that the coolant system functions effectively. Maintainance should be performed every 1000 combat turns of operation (after every 20th power-pack recharge). Consult FF&S for further explalation of DEI lasers. ✂

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Far Frontiers

by James Kundert

Far Frontiers Timeline

(The dates given in TTC#5 for the Lenj colony are wrong. The following dates are correct. This article and the one before it use Imperial dating for reader convenience.)

c-300,000 Ancients first enter sector.
c-298,000 Ancients vanish all over known space.
c-5000 Zhodani first enter sector.
c-4200 Loeskalth "Sky Raiders" enter sector. After some years of terrorizing Vlazhdumecta worlds, a faction of Sky Raiders fractures from their worldship and settles on six worlds (the "Raider Worlds") in the coreward half of the sector.
c-4000 The Zhodani discover the significance of the map projector artifact, causing High Council interest in the Consulate's other borders (including Afachtiabr) to decrease considerably.
-3915 Raider Worlds expansion comes to attention of Zhodani.
c-3890 Zhodani begin suppressing Raider's expansionism by force and psychology.

c-3500 Zhodani suppression of the Raider Worlds becomes less effective.

c-3440 Raider Worlds begin space travel development.

-3400 Raider Worlds enter six-sided war.

-3319 Yereng wins supremacy among the Raider Worlds, forming the "Empire of the Sky Raiders."

-3285 Lenj colonized by Raiders in search of new resources.

-3107 Empire of the Sky Raiders collapses due to resource depletion and Zhodani manipulation. Term "Raider's Blight" used for first time.

-3093 Zhodani Consulate discovers difficulty of absorbing Raider Worlds and ceases expansion into the Blight.

-2962 Second Rise of the Vlazhdumecta.

-2893 Lenj colonized by the Zhodani, opposite the existing Raiders colony, which has fallen to subsistence levels.

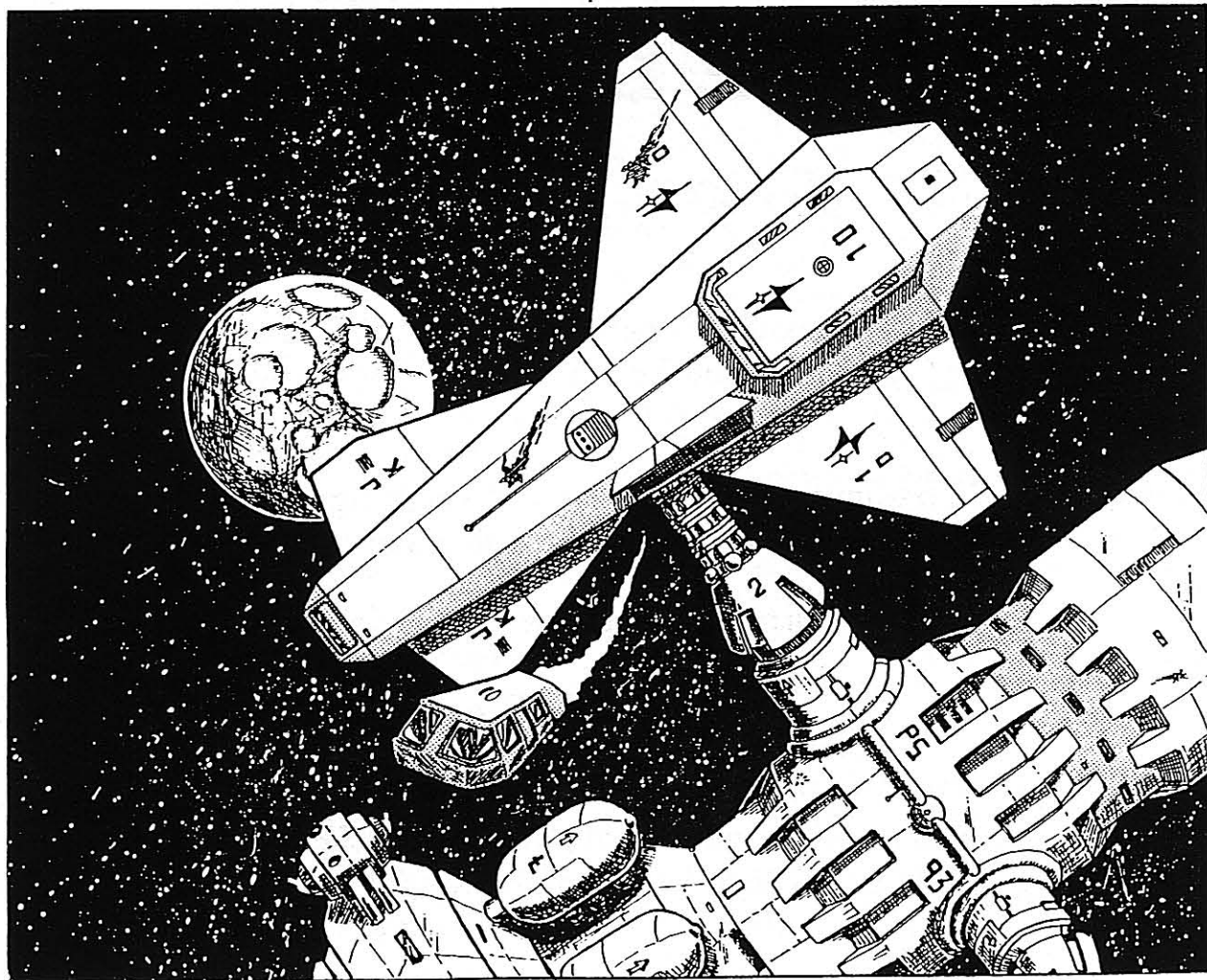
c-2800 First Zhodani contact with the Vagr.

-2511 Lenj Zhodani meet Lenj Raiders colony.

-2467 Lenj colonies unite in single government.

-2402 Lenj becomes Client State of Zhodani Consulate.

-2388 Merchant's War begins.



c-2000 First Zhodani contact with the Vilani.
 c-1000 Darrian/Solomani traders enter trailing edge of Far Frontiers.
 -925 Darrian trade traffic ceases due to Maghzi.
 c-200 First Zhodani contact with Sword Worlds and Darrians.
 -200 Solomani/Vilani pioneers begin to appear in Far Frontiers.
 58 Zelpic Primacy begins trade with Zhodani Consulate.
 536 Protectorate founded.
 576 Colonade Administration District (CAD) formed.
 600 Colonization boom from Spinward Marches.
 626 Zhodani colonists moving through the CAD form the Driantia Steblenzhtia.
 695 Union of Garth gains independence from the Protectorate.
 700 Nation-states begin to appear in Far Frontiers.
 750 CAD ends its long policy of open immigration.
 753 Salinaikin Concordance splits off from the Colonade.
 785-788 The Four Worlds split from the Union of Garth, becoming a Zhodani ally.
 788 Protectorate gives up neutral status for alliance with Imperium.
 795 The Darrian "Invasion" of the Blight.
 c 800 Federation of Alsas formed.
 819 League of Suns rebels from Domain of Alntzar.
 873 CAD signs first mutual aid pact with Zhodani Consulate.
 879 CAD merges with the Driantia Steblenzhtia in Vanguard Reach sector.
 912 Protectorate begins expansion to current boundaries.
 937 Haladon Cooperative formed.
 941 Duchy of Trelyn formed.
 1050 Zelpic Primacy clashes with Buimvirate over several worlds.
 1079 Mnemosyne Principality revolts against its hereditary rulers.
 1103 Descaroth Hegemony grows to three worlds, and then to five.
 1109 The Sky Raiders world-ship is discovered in open space, heading coreward through Inverness subsector.

Far Frontiers sector has had many names over the centuries, but only two remain in common usage during the Third Imperial era and beyond. "Far Frontiers" is the Galanglic designation, and appears on charts as far away as Capital and Terra. The other commonly used name is the Zhodani designation "Afachtiabr."

Second Rise of the Vlazhdumecta

Proudly called the Zhupek Shirkaa (trans. "Phoenix Empire") by its members, the Second Rise of the Vlazhdumecta in -2962 was a brief and bloody war followed by a short period of Zhodani tolerance and then Zhodani efforts to collapse the nascent Empire. Rising on D'rarayi (1815) before the Zhodani traders could notice them, the Zhupek Society succeeded in building several in-system warcraft. Using these and several units of sympathetic

ground forces, the Zhupek took control of the world government. With the starport firmly in their control, several Zhodani traders fell before the lack of return traffic was noticed. The Zhupek quickly consolidated control of their entire system and began using the expanded resource base to build more ships. The slow nature of Zhodani mercantile traffic in the Blight caused this activity to go largely unnoticed until, in -2960, several Zhupek warships appeared in the Berebirinol system (1716). Unlike the quiet, well-prepared-for take-over of their home system, the conquest here was bloody. Within three months, however, the system fell, and the Zhupek fleet moved to other systems. By -2959, the Zhupek ruled 9 systems with an iron hand: D'rarayi, Berebirinol, Tetwumsid (1816), Bale (1714), Itsuya (1813), Yereng (2014), Gebhara (2015), Yahrudis (2016), and N'Genaranino (2214). The Zhupek gained a great deal of personal satisfaction from conquering Yereng, the former capital of the Raider's Empire.

At this point, the Zhupek opened their borders to Zhodani traders again. It did not take the first ships long to figure out the Zhupek's source of Jump Drives, but the traders were not prepared to deal with such a sizeable force.

News of the Zhupek travelled back to Consulate space quickly, but was met with bureaucratic ennui. Determined to cut through the bureaucracy with enough intelligence work, the traders continued to deal with the Zhupek, collecting their damning evidence all the while. Several were caught by the Zhupek and vanished.

Two years later, in -2957, the Consulate began to move against the Zhupek. Because of the cunning learned by the Zhupek before the first coup, they were able to resist the effects of the Zhodani for some time. In -2954, the Empire passed into the hands of its second Zhupek-Kehnai ("Phoenix Emperor"), the first having died violently by Zhodani action.

By main force of will and a brilliant counter-spy network, he was able to halt most of the Zhodani efforts to collapse his realm. When he died in -2930 by an assassin's dart, the defiance of the Zhupek Shirkaa died with him. The Zhodani then began reducing the Empire's existing ships and crippling their ability to make more. By -2915, the Zhupek homeworld was all that remained of the Zhupek Shirkaa, the rest having fallen to internal strife and isolation. The last Zhupek-Kehnai died in -2898 during a pyrrhic coup by a democratic underground group. "Kehnai" is still known as an archaic term for a conqueror-ruler on all of the former worlds of the Zhupek Shirkaa.

Vargr contact

Following the Zhupek Shirkaa, the Blight returned to its normal state: isolated worlds served by a small horde of Zhodani free and company traders. A desire for better preemptive intelligence led to a rise in the number of merchants plying the Blight. This was not to last, however, as the Zhodani Consulate shook with the discovery of the Vargr in -2800. The first real technological equals the Zhodani had ever met, the Vargr had developed Jump drive on their own, and had been expanding for nearly a thousand years.

The first contacts with the Vargr caused great trepidation in the Zhodani government, as their long-held policy of neighborly suppression or absorption could not be applied to this case. After long deliberation the Qlomdlabr, the Consulate's ruling council, adopted a much longer-term plan that would eventually lead to a stable border between the two peoples. This plan was cautiously put into action, and is still going on today.

By comparison, the Zhodani merchants were ecstatic, and their actions immediate. New markets and new sources had just appeared. The effect on the Blight was immediate. Many of the larger company traders pulled up stakes and vanished from the Blight. Within five years of the first contact with the Vargr, the Blight had lost two-thirds of its shipping traffic. This did not go unnoticed, however, and new Zhodani entrepreneurs flowed into the near-vacuum. Within fifteen years traffic had risen nearly to its previous level, though it was now dominated by the single ship free traders.

Merchant's War

In -2388, worlds all through the Blight began plotting ways to better their own products at the expense of their neighbors and competitors. By whatever means available, these worlds developed a variety of "letter bombs" that could be innocently sent out as trade goods only to cause harm to property, people or ecology once delivered. The world which started this "war" is popularly thought to be Gebhara (2015), and its first target was its former conqueror D'rarayi (1815; see above). In a stunning ecological blow, the Gebhara package wiped out several of the plants and microscopic animals at the base of D'rarayi's native food chain. Large portions of the native ecology collapsed, including some animals that formed an important part of the human economy. The D'rarayi were thrown into a scramble for planetwide survival. Many people died before the next Zhodani trader arrived and discovered the world's plight, and many more died before the cause was traced and a solution found.

The news of the decimation of D'rarayi spread quickly, and many other worlds with similar desires began to emulate the methods, if not the technology, of the Gebharai. Zhodani traders, despite being alerted to the problem, were seldom successful in detecting or stopping the attacks that traveled on their ships. Nor were they getting any help from Consular authorities, who merely increased their own customs activity to keep any attacks from crossing into the Consulate.

Finally, in -2381, the general mental state among the traders was sufficiently agitated that the Tavrchedl', the Zhodani "Thought Police," were forced to act for their health. Appropriately talented Tavrchedl' were attached to many ships, serving as both "bomb sniffers" and as gunboat diplomats to the more belligerent worlds. War packages were detected and returned, dire threats delivered, and examples made. Within a year, all war package traffic had stopped.

Several worlds that had been hard hit in the "Merchant's

War" applied for client status with the Consulate, hoping to gain some insulation from further assault. Taking this as a good sign, the Qlomdlabr approved the requests of three worlds, and purposely did not deny several more. In -2365, Zeyiri (1512) was formally accepted as a Client of the Consulate. Thapek (2315) was accepted in -2361, and Ralatela (2018) in -2357. The worlds left hanging were Yereng (2014), U'kihr (1211), and Nikopelenos (2112).

Unfortunately, the three worlds left without approval were perceived with some jealousy by their neighbors. In -2355, the deadly cargos began to appear again, concentrated mostly on Yereng, U'kihr, and Nikopelenos. Several close calls prevented Yereng from being utterly depopulated by bio-war packages. Nikopelenos was hit hard by high explosives on three occasions. U'kihr managed to erect a strong customs barrier just in time to catch an extremely dirty nuclear weapon.

Several abortive strikes against the three new Clients were stopped by the Consular Navy presence in each system. Using these three systems as bases, the Consulate again cracked down on the war package trade. With real bases in the region, the Zhodani were able to shut down the practice in only a year. Worlds guilty of particularly nasty attacks were placed under interdict and their starports were destroyed. The examples these systems made, and the constant presence of Consulate Interdiction ships, was quite sufficient to end the Merchant's War for good.

Vilani contact

Over the next four hundred years, many of the worlds interdicted for their parts in the Merchant's War were reopened. Commerce had reached a fever pitch as long-forbidden markets and products became available once again. This period of economic boom for the Blight meant that the impact of the first Vilani contacts was relatively minor. The vast distances involved were also a factor, as it became apparent that the Vilani encountered were also at the far edge of their territory.

Another factor was the obvious slowing of Consulate expansion. Most obvious to the merchants who operated beyond its borders, the Consulate was expanding at only a world or two a century in any given territory. The drive to expand was being held back by the realities of communication. The farthest reaching traders knew that the Consulate would no longer be expanding by their efforts.

Finally, the initial contacts with the Vilani brought plague to the Zhodani for the first time in millenia. Carrying Terran diseases that they were only beginning to get used to, the Vilani thoughtlessly passed these maladies to the Zhodani. Not used to diseases in such staggering variety, the Zhodani medical community nonetheless acted quickly. Relatively few lives were lost, but any trust the Zhodani might have had for the Vilani had vanished. The Zhodani kept their distance. Within three hundred years the Vilani had vanished from the Zhodani frontier.

The Zhodani expansions came to a final end around -1000. In the Blight, this was represented by the induction of Meikadobask (2716) and Kiat (3218) into the Consulate.

Also during this time, some worlds at the trailing edge of the Blight reported contact with another race of humanity who had arrived in unfamiliar ships, spoken unfamiliar tongues, and traded in things never before seen. The Zhodani, seeing a ploy for more naval protection, did nothing. The Darrian traders went undiscovered, and would not be seen within the Blight again for many years.

In -810, the Blight was treated to the sight of a bright flare star in Tloql sector. Seen more than a hundred years after the event, this was the "Maghiz" that had swept the Darrians from space.

New Neighbors

The next six hundred years were fairly quiet ones in and around the Blight, interrupted only by the launching of another Zhodani Core Expedition in -600, and by occasional border skirmishes between the Consulate and states further spinward.

The era of peace was ended by the near simultaneous discovery of the Sword Worlders in Tloql sector (the Spinward Marches), and of Sword Worlds traders as far spinward as the Blight.

Searching fearlessly along the flanks of the Zhodani Consulate for new resources and markets, the Sword Worlders quickly disrupted the balance of power and trade within the Blight. The Zhodani were able to suppress further development, but not before several worlds in the Blight had bought or built starships and entered the Blight's mercantile community. When it became obvious that these new ships were traders instead of warships, the Zhodani relaxed somewhat.

The discovery of the Darrians, and their subsequent re-emergence into space, caused another sensation. Before too long, the Blight was also seeing Darrian merchants. Within two decades, however, the friendly rivalry of Sword Worlder and Darrian merchant turned ugly. With Zhodani support, the Sword Worlders prevailed and the Darrians withdrew, turning their explorations elsewhere. They occasionally returned to the Blight, but rarely for long or in great numbers.

The next three hundred years saw rising alarm in the

Consulate, as a steady wave of human colonization flowed into Tloql sector from trailing. Coming through the straight of stars between the two rifts, these colonists showed some resemblance to the long-vanished Vilani. They settled worlds at a furious rate, and eventually brought the Third Imperium with them.

The settlement didn't stop with Tloql, either. A survey of the three sectors on the Consulate's rimward border revealed little colonies springing up all over. Some welcomed Zhodani contact, and in Imperial year 58 the Consulate began regular trade with the first of the new states in the Far Frontiers: The Zelphic Primacy (see TTC#4).

The Blight entered a period of relative prosperity. Long experience had taught its people that the Zhodani would squash any imperial-istic tendencies. Several expansionists

arose during this time, but were suppressed by the merchants before they spread to more than one world.

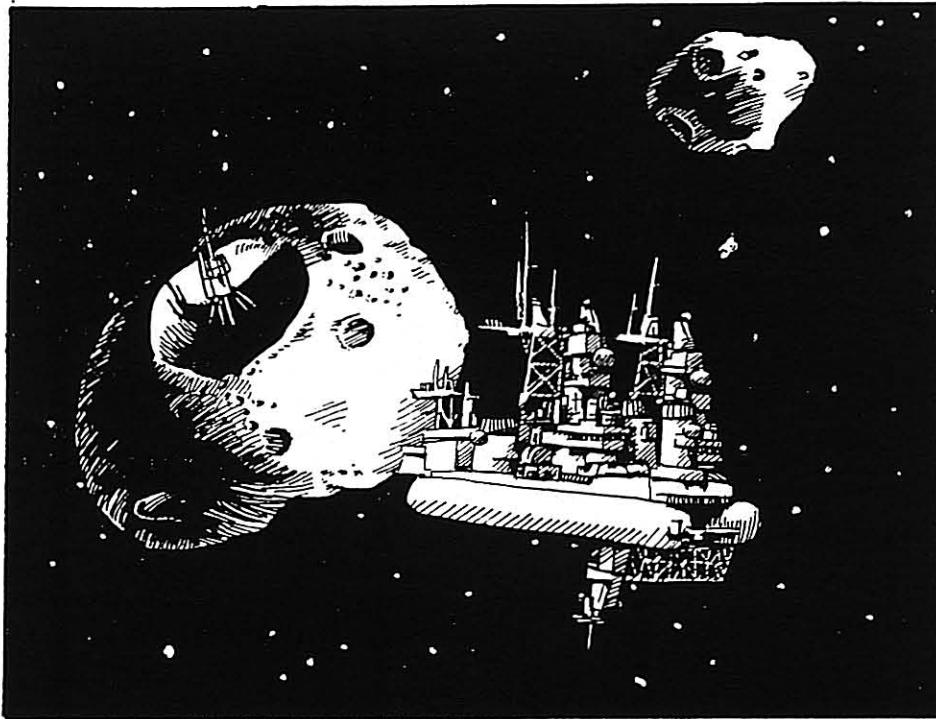
The Zhodani hadn't finished with surprises, however. In 461 yet another race was contacted that had developed jump drive on its own. These were the Fteirle, known to the Imperium as Aslan. Seeing

the instinctive need to colonize in the Aslan, the Zhodani stopped trying to hinder the Imperial settlers, hoping that the two would meet and cancel each other. As it turned out, the Aslan and the Imperium had already established their borders in 380. The Zhodani gambit had failed.

As the years went by, the Zhodani saw their previously secure borders become cluttered by dozens of little states. One of the most alarming within the Far Frontiers was the Protectorate, which expanded from one world to four during 536, and continued to expand until it almost choked off the Blight from the rest of the sector. The formation of the Colonade Administrative District in 576 (see TTC#3) was further proof that the Zhodani were losing control of their old zones of influence.

The Frontier Wars

In 589, the Zhodani decided to curb Imperial expansion more forcefully, starting what would become only the First



M. Sorensen

Frontier War. The distraction caused by this and the Second Frontier War led to a covert colonization boom from the Spinward Marches. Multi-system states began to appear all across the Far Frontiers. The Protectorate reached its "full" size of 39 systems in 690, only to lose the ten world Union of Garth to an independence movement in 695. Most of the nation states appeared in the rimward half of the sector, and are covered in more detail in the articles by Dale Kemper in TTC#2-4.

Very little of this affected the Blight, except to increase or decrease the trade in particular goods. With a few of its own ships, and the Protectorate's shipyards to build more if needed, the Blight was somewhat less dependent on the Zhodani, and even worlds without their own ships reveled in the perceived freedom.

The Darrian Invasion

In 788, political pressure from local Zhodani governors caused the Protectorate to give up its neutrality for an alliance with the distant Third Imperium. The aid flowing from the Protectorate into the Blight faltered briefly, then increased. The Blight worlds were delighted. In 795, this aid changed from direct industrial assistance to a flood of technical advisors imported from the Imperium. In a direct snub of the Zhodani, a number of these advisors were Darrians.

Their long and mysterious history in the Blight lent the Darrians a powerful mystique. Prolonged exposure to the technical advisors caused a tidal wave of cultural imitation the likes of which the Blight had not seen since the Sky Raiders. A surprising number of worlds re-spelled their names to sound more Darrian-like, and Darrian names became the rage among new babies, ships and businesses. The Zhodani, though long aware of this aspect of the Vlazhdumecta psyche, could only look on in shock as the Blight they had shaped for millenia vanished around them. Four years later, as quickly as they had arrived, the Imperial

technical advisors were gone. They left behind a Blight in cultural turmoil. Thapek (2315), a client of the Consulate for three thousand years, turned its back on the Zhodani way of life. Its client status was removed by the Qlomdlabr in 804. Ralatela (2018), also a client for three millenia, suffered revolution against its governing council, which fell in 798. Its client status was immediately revoked. Both worlds soon fell into self-destructive civil wars, and remain without world governments to the modern day.

With the Darrians gone, the Zhodani began attempts to regain cultural control of the region. Despite Protectorate efforts, many of the "Darrianisms" had been removed or reversed by 855. Many of the world names retained their new spelling as a mark of independence, and Daryan remained a popular second language. Even today, the Protectorate continues to do very well selling Darrian goods in the Blight.

The Modern Balance

In 912, the Protectorate began to expand its economic power into Retan subsector. While the Protectorate denied that it was expanding its borders, both the Zhodani and (later) the Imperial Second Survey refused to believe them. The Protectorate exerts such power on these nine worlds in Retan that all political maps of the region show them to be Protectorate worlds. The other four worlds, two in Dalesabandagh, two in Zezhpae, were all acknowledged by the Protectorate in 1001.

In response to perceived Protectorate expansion, the Zhodani granted probationary Client status to Zehripan (0915) and Zihlzedhe (0918) in 941. This status was changed to full cliency for Zihlzedhe in 1004. Zehripan was given full client status in 1089. The political boundaries have not changed since that time. As of this writing, in 1121, there are no signs of it changing any time soon. The distant Imperial Rebellion will not reach this far...

NEXT: The Rebellion and the New Era. ✨

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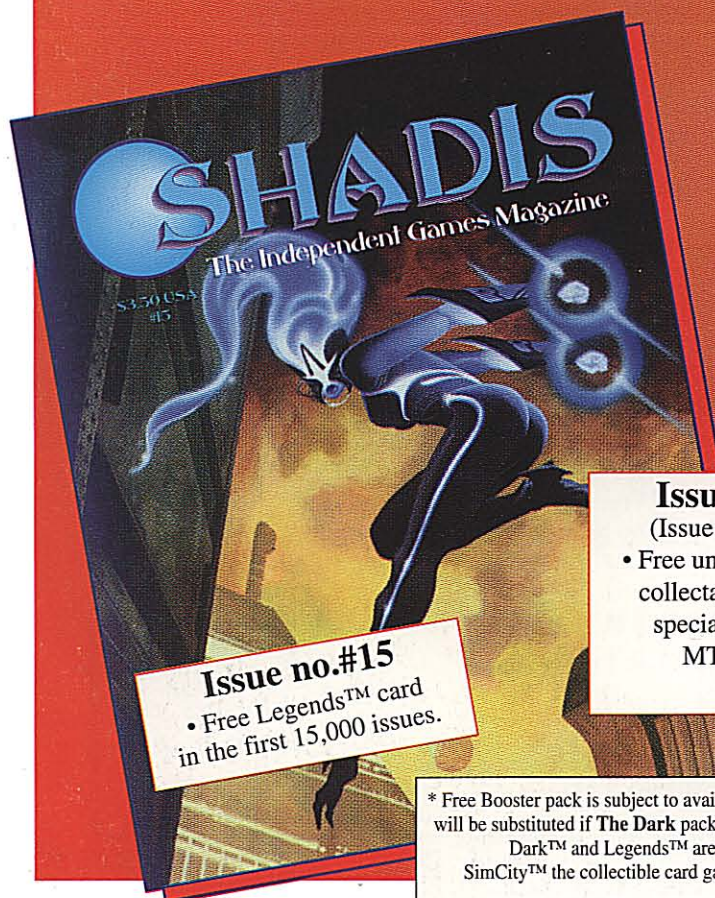
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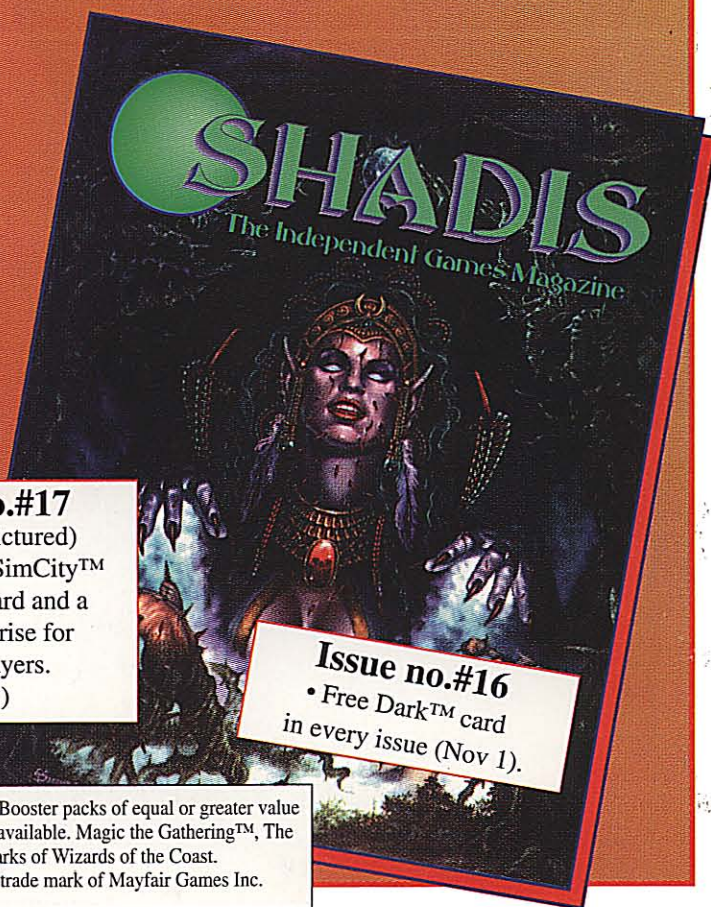


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