

Archipelago

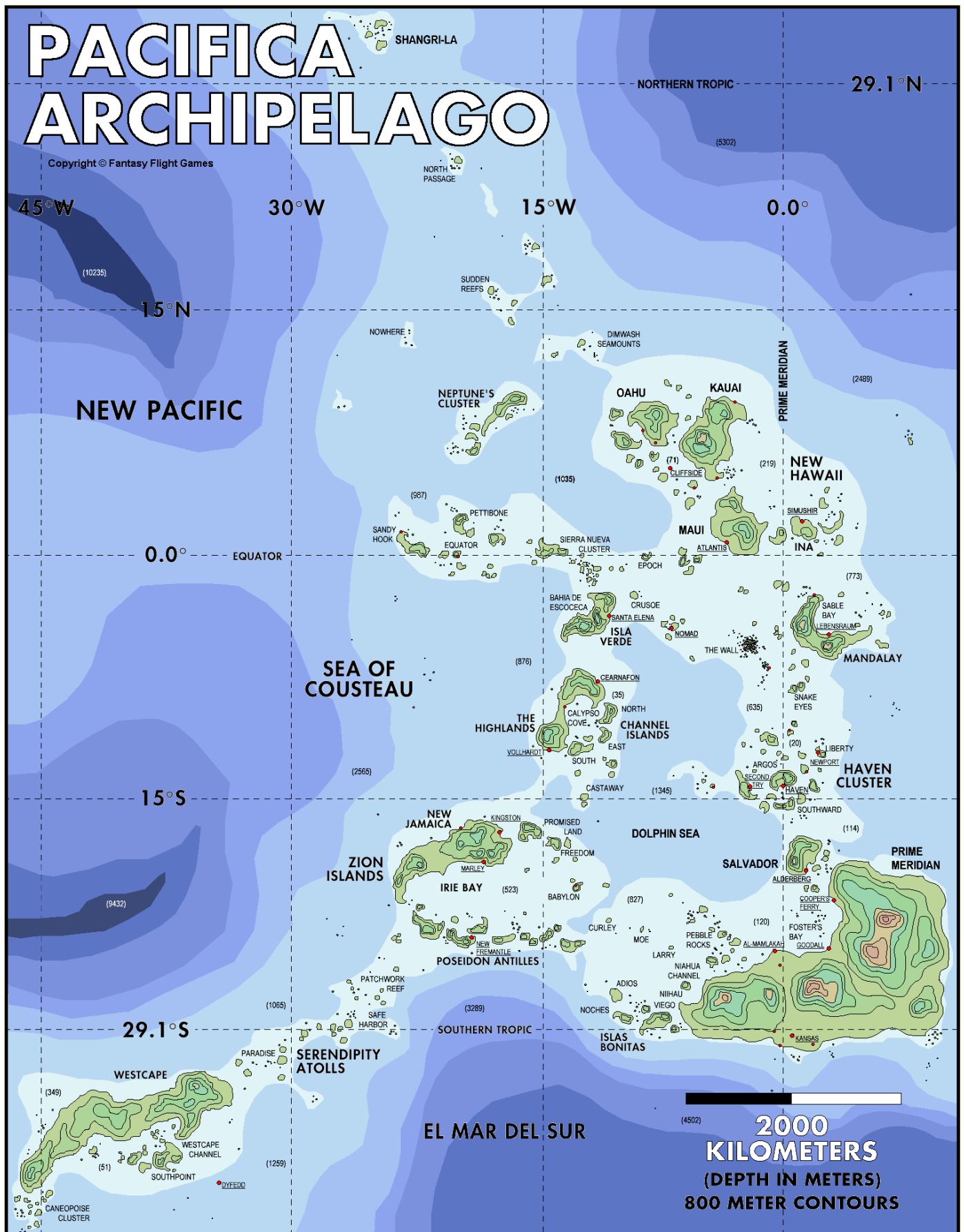
A GUIDE TO
THE ISLANDS

OF Blue
Planet



PACIFICA ARCHIPELAGO

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Archipelago

A GUIDE TO THE ISLANDS OF BLUE PLANET

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EASTER

n the one hundred and eighty-third day, he rose from the dead. No Mary Magdalene there to see him, no Julia, only a medtech to admin

ister post- hibernation drugs. Textbooks called the miracle Induced Hypothermic Metabolic Suppression. His skin itched and he wanted to puke up the gray odorless soup they gave him.

Where was Julia?

There had been a malfunction, the medtechs told him. Then they shrugged. Ramon Ortega had come to Poseidon in his sleep, across six months and a gulf of stars, but somewhere along the way, his wife had slipped away. A problem with Julia's hibernation canister. Something about a lapse in automatic drug injections, lack of circulation to the brain, and million-to-one chances, they said.

He found to his surprise that he could not weep. Maybe it was a side effect of the hibernation. But neither did he weep in the weeks that followed. As he underwent physical therapy aboard Prosperity Station, there were no memories of her, no dreams, only the path ahead and the planet below.

The National Geographic Society - they sent their condolences - had paid too much for the expedition to have a Pulitzer-winning photographer return empty-handed. They still wanted a Poseidon aborigine on their magazine cover. When he was released from Customs and Immigration, Ramon Ortega numbly boarded the shuttle, carrying his wife's cameras as well as his own, and descended to the blue planet. He had risen from the dead, but he was no longer one of the living.

In the colonial capital of Haven, beneath a cloudy sky, he sought out scientists and officials. Where, he asked, could he find the aborigines? There were a few old records of sightings, lots of stories and recent rumors, but little else. After nearly thirty years of exploration, scientists still knew little about them. The ray-like creatures lived in the vast reaches of the oceans, while humanity had only settled the islands and shallow seas around the archipelagoes. The few encounters between them had often ended in mysterious violence and death. That was fine with him. Just fine.

In the Sea of Cousteau, beneath the yellow glare of Lambda Serpentis, he rode with field researchers, followed the caneopoise herds, and dove in the kelp fields where aborigines had once been sighted. Fierce storms threatened to capsize them. A four-jawed eel ripped his thigh with poisoned fangs. Ramon Ortega survived; he'd lived through worse. He did not think back to the year he had spent in the war-torn New Balkans. He did not remember his brushes with death: minefields, snipers, and fellow journalists bleeding in his arms. He did not recall that he'd first met Julia there, in the ruins of a firebombed town. Two photographers preserving the moment, trying to awaken the world's weary conscience.

Julia. When he and Julia had been courting for two months, she asked him about the scars on his back. He told her what his parents had done, long ago: the worst demon of a past he'd traveled the globe to escape. The story told, it was lifted from his shoulders, gone from his mind. Julia became his memory.

She had memory enough for the both of them. She was Memory incarnate. She remembered Esperanto, an artificial language nobody spoke anymore. Her aunt had taught it to her, as a child. She remembered the antique techniques of black-and-white photography, a lost art in an age of holographic imaging. For ten years, she carried both their pasts: laughter, nightmares, anniversaries, sunny days in the park. Now, Memory was dead.

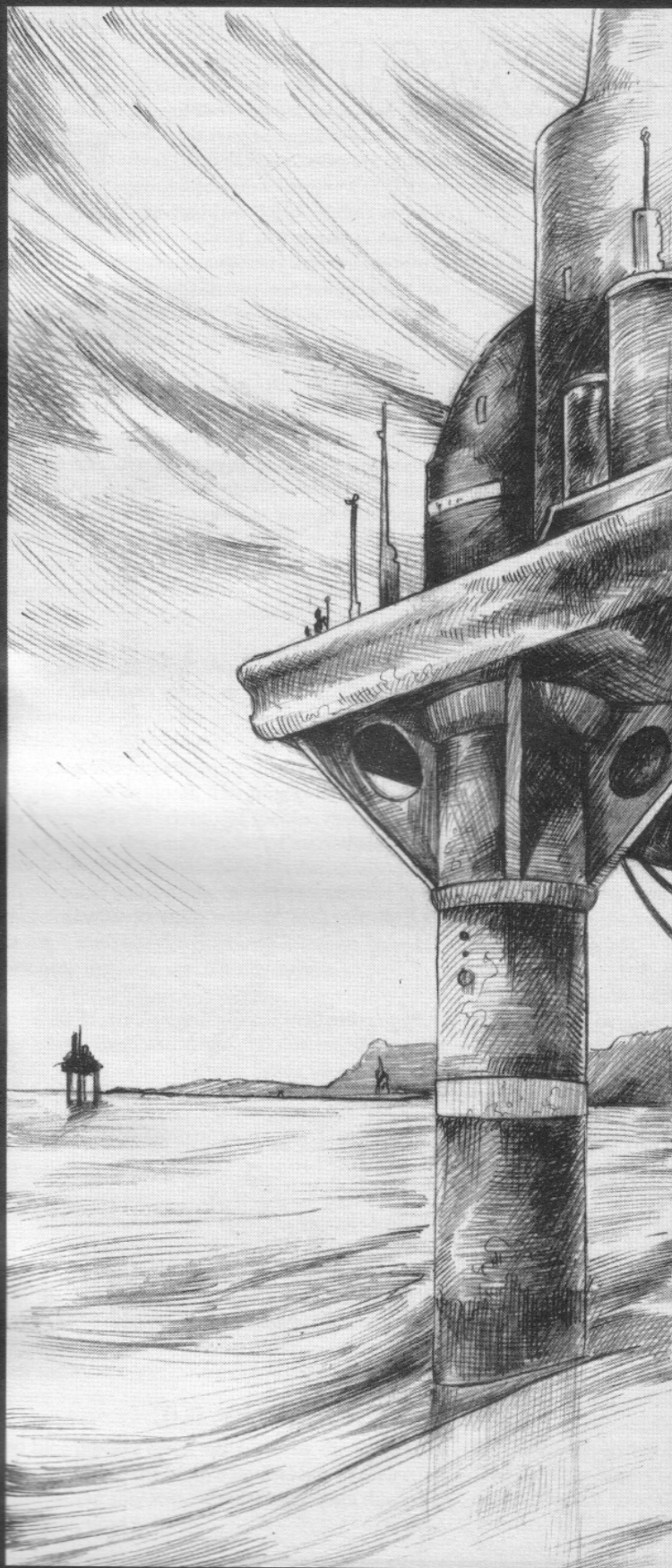
In the shanty town of Nomad, beneath a chaotic web of walkways and teetering wood and plastic structures built on houseboats and stilts, he questioned poachers and smugglers and prospectors. There were rumors of a place where aborigines frequented; for an exorbitant price, a dolphin guide would show him where. He sensed that after all these months, his search was near an end. Poseidon had not killed him. If he came out of this alive, what then?

In the sprawling roots of a stand of Poseidon mangroves, beneath the surface of the Dolphin Sea, he reached the end of his quest. The alien trees grew from the shallow sea floor, twenty meters up to the surface, to form organic islands with their palm-like fronds. Millions of tiny phosphorescent creatures flitted in the dark beneath the mangroves. Organic debris - remains of leaves and dead animals and other, unrecognizable things - floated down, getting stuck between the roots, forming the walls of a labyrinth of decaying matter. Ramon negotiated the root chambers alone, gill mask hissing, his camera light barely illuminating the way.

They were waiting for him, in the heart of the trees, ten meters below the surface. Unspeakably majestic, built like giant stingrays, but poised like lions. Emanating both history and timelessness at once. They circled him with ease and agility, despite their size. And then, he simply knew: the aborigines were the memory of this world. They kept a secret history, one too beautiful and unimaginable for humans to comprehend. Yet he finally realized that there existed a more beautiful memory. Just as Poseidon's past was the foundation of what the aborigines were, Julia had been a living port of him.

The aborigines seemed to say - You have forgotten yourself. You chose not to grieve, and so you are missing part of who you are. Go back. Find what you have lost. You cannot live on and grow without it.

Or perhaps they said nothing. It didn't matter. The camera slipped from his fingers, and Ramon Ortega swam up out of the darkness. Breaking the surface, alien sunlight dappled around him, he heard the cries of eel dragons and the whisper of warm winds through the leaves. He took off the mask, breathed deeply, and wept. On the two hundred and sixty-third day, he ascended to the living.



NEW HAWAII

EL MAR DEL SUR

NEW HAWAII

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(2590)

(4662)

15°N

(1307)

CALLISTO STATION

SANTIAGO BASE

{012}

OAHU**KAUAI**

EQUATORIAL SPUR

0.0°

(2135)

PRIME MERIDIAN

7.5°N

(122C)

GULF OF HAWAII

HAWAIIAN GULF STREAM

1000 miles

GULF OF KAU

THE CAYS

**OCEANUS
STATION**

7.5°W

NEW HAWAII WASH

EQUATOR

EPOCH

(14)

NEPSU
1070

ICARU

MAUI

ATLANTA

ANTIS :
REFE

0.0'

11050

- COLONIAL SETTLEMENT
- INCORPORATE HOLDING
- ✕ NATIVE SETTLEMENT
- ▲ MOUNTAIN PEAK
- △ VOLCANIC PEAK
- MAJOR REEF

500 KILOMETERS
(DEPTH/HEIGHT IN METERS)
400 METER CONTOURS



NEW HAWAII

New Hawaii consists of a chain of four large islands - Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and Ina, along with their attendant smaller clusters, islets, and atolls. All four of the principal islands are volcanic, and Kauai is crowned with two volcanic peaks. While several of the smaller islands are also volcanic, most are formed of upthrust basalt or limestone and some, like the Cays off of Kauai, consist entirely of exposed coral. The islands of New Hawaii huddle close to the intersection of Poseidon's equator and prime meridian, placing them in the very heart of the Storm Belt. Luckily for the region's inhabitants, the tall peaks of the principal islands and the relatively shallow surrounding seas provide some protection from harsh weather.

The cataloged volcanoes of the region vary widely in tectonic stability. Some, like Fafnir, Ilopango, and Nessus average several small eruptions annually. Kiluea and Fasolt, in contrast, have never shown any sign of activity and have been tentatively classified as dormant. Seismologists still watch these peaks closely, however, as the eruption of Mount Odysseus in 2124 showed just how ferocious a "dormant" volcano can be. Odysseus and several others have been classified as intermittent volcanoes, whose eruptions are less frequent but far more devastating.

Ecologically, the islands of New Hawaii are a tropical paradise. Nearly every landmass in the region is carpeted in lush jungle or rain forest, thanks to the combination of rich volcanic soil and ample rainfall. Many of the smaller islands serve as anchors for mangrove forests, while others are bleak heaps of volcanic rock or coral. The jungles and plains are home to a dizzying array of terrestrial species, many still unclassified. In addition to the vast number of marine plants and fish that thrive in its shallow seas, New Hawaii is also home to vast kelp forests and some of the largest reef systems in the Pacifica Archipelago. For nearly a century, biologists and zoologists have been studying the flora and fauna of New Hawaii, and have only begun to scratch the surface.

The islands of New Hawaii were first explored and named by a team of surveyors from the Argos 12 mission during the initial planetary survey. The stunning vistas of emerald forests, cloud capped peaks, and turquoise ocean prompted the navigator to comment "It's like Hawaii ...only huge." The name stuck, although the islands of New Hawaii would wait a decade for their next human contact.

The arrival of the Cousteau and the Athena colonists had little immediate effect on the region. In 2091, a group of two hundred colonists set out for New Hawaii and founded the town of Atlantis on the south shore of Maui. Most who made the trip were rugged individualists and die-hard field researchers who found life in Haven, even at that early stage, too "civilized" for their tastes. Of the first wave of secondary colonies, Atlantis was one of the most distant, over 2,500 kilometers from Haven. Isolation was exactly what the Atlantis colonists wanted. Fired by a pioneer spirit and lured by the promise of studying new ecosystems, the Maui colonists hoped their "lost City" of Atlantis would stay lost, or at least far from the center of things, for a long time.

The first years in New Hawaii were hard for the colonists, and not without setbacks. Within five years, however, the colony was firmly established, the islands had been extensively mapped, and biological and oceanographic surveys were underway. The colonists maintained contact with Haven via uplink and radio, and monthly shuttle flights brought supplies and an occasional visitor. Over time, however, these visits grew more infrequent. After the last shuttle flight in 2115, radio contact with Haven became intermittent at best. The hardships following the Abandonment were easier to endure for the New Hawaii colonists, as they had long since gotten used to rationing power, discarding worn out electronics, and using local food sources to survive. The abundance of the islands and the seas made self-sufficiency easy, and soon the colonists had settled into a new way of life, busy but comfortable in their tropical paradise.

All of that changed on 7 August 2124 (94.33 SP by the local calendar). Just after 1200 hours, Mount Odysseus erupted, devastating the south face of Maui. Atlantis was buried under a massive pyroclastic flow of hot mud and ash, and 196 people died in a matter of seconds. When the smoke cleared, nearly half of New Hawaii's population was dead. The colonists in Haven were instantly aware of the tragedy, but there was very little that they or the other Athena colonists could do. The survivors were devastated by their loss, which they came to call the Calamity.

Destructive as it was, the Calamity was not as total as it might have been. Odysseus had given some warning before the eruption, and the leaders in Atlantis had begun transferring the most essential computer records, specialists, and supplies to a new settlement, named Augusta, before the volcano erupted. Soon new communities sprang up across the region. A few colonists even returned to Atlantis to start again. The new community they built in Odysseus' shadow was as much a testament to their honored dead as it was a refusal to acknowledge defeat.

Tempered by the hardships of the past, New Hawaiian natives tend to be aloof and suspicious of outsiders, even other Poseidon natives. The Abandonment and the Calamity have taught them that Poseidon can be as cruel as it is beautiful, and that the only thing the natives can count on is each other. Consequently, Recontact in New Hawaii was particularly stormy, and the GEO classified at least three-quarters of the native communities in the region as hostile. Most of the natives simply want to be left alone.

Fate, it seems, will not grant their wish. The discovery of Long John triggered a population explosion all over Poseidon, and New Hawaii was not excluded. Rich Long John deposits in the Gulf of Kauai attracted thousands of newcomers, who turned Atlantis into a rough boomtown. On their heels came the Incorporate. Biogene raised the towers of Cliffside out of the sea, and Simushir soon sprouted from the marshes of Ina. The GEO has been slow to react to the changes in the region, its efforts hampered by the natives' reluctance to cooperate. The close proximity of GenDiver's holdings and the rebellious Sierra Nuevas have also served to divert the GEO's attention, but that is beginning to change. Last year, the GEO's Justice Commission redrew the judicial zones at the north end of the

Pacifica Archipelago, and installed a new Marshal based in Atlantis. New Hawaii is likely becoming a flashpoint, with Incorporate tensions at an all-time high, piracy on the rise, and a GEO crackdown imminent.

SIMUSHIR

No family, community, or nation can succeed without the success and prosperity of the people who comprise it. The citizens of the Nippon Industrial State are no different, and the NIS is absolutely committed to the welfare and well-being of our people. The NIS provides advancement and career opportunities, housing, food, entertainment, and competitive wages to its member employees, as well as security in the face of change. If you would join your efforts with ours, we welcome you. The Nippon Industrial State can provide you with more than just a wage - it can give you a community, a home. - NIS promotional and recruiting literature

Arbeit Macht Frei - Anonymous graffiti, Simushir Residential Stack 27

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Simushir is located on the island of Ina at 2°7'32" north latitude, 0°57'23" east longitude. The company town is built on the north shore in the midst of a wide tidal plain. The shoreline consists primarily of shallow marsh and muddy tidal swamp. The weather is invariably hot and humid, and the briny odor of the marsh is inescapable.

HISTORY

The Nippon Industrial State was quick to join the Incorporate stampede to Poseidon, applying for a GEO colonial charter in 2189. The long-standing rivalry between the NIS and GEO, however, led to long delays in the approval process. After lengthy negotiations and a very expensive settlement, the NIS charter was finally approved in 2192, and the NIS found itself among the last of the Incorporate states to build facilities on Poseidon, running years behind many of its competitors. The NIS was given the right to develop the island of Ina and surrounding regions. The location was a favorable one. It was close enough to the Biogene facilities at Cliffside for the NIS to monitor their rivals and share New Hawaii's rich Long John deposits, and far enough from Haven to avoid close scrutiny by GEO authorities.

Within two months of the first orbital component drops, Simushir's fusion reactors and first manufacturing facility were online. A relentless media campaign aimed at Poseidon's booming newcomer population brought in droves of indentured laborers, who were quickly put to work on countless construction projects. By the spring of 2195, an artificial island had been raised in the marsh to support the settlement's industrial core, the NIS arcology was complete, and the spaceport was averaging ten orbital launches a month. The city reached its present state in early 2197, when the NIS began shifting its developmental focus away from Simushir to outlying sites around Ina.

Simushir's early growth phases were plagued with a host of technical difficulties. Impossible construction deadlines led the governing directors to cut corners, and the designers relied

almost entirely on prefabricated components and established designs, which were often approved and implemented with little testing. Adapting specialized structures designed for use in Asia or on Luna to life on Poseidon was a challenge. After several setbacks, delays, and disasters, the indentured laborers were left with housing that was, at best, barely adequate. Presently, basic services are intermittent, and the quality of life in the residential stacks hovers near the level of a terrestrial prison. Appeals to the Executive Body have met with continued promises of improvement. Actual change, however, has been slow in coming. From the point of view of the NIS board back on Earth, Simushir is operational and productive, but the state as a whole is still lagging in the race to develop Poseidon. Expensive quality-of-life improvements will have to wait. The patience and diligence of the NIS's laborers will be rewarded later.

The workers may not wait much longer. The vast majority of Simushir's indentured population had little idea just how binding their employment contracts would be. Conditions worsen, dissent is flourishing among the stacks in Simushir, and "accidents" are growing increasingly common. The NIS is implementing tighter security measures, which only make the workers angrier. Productivity is beginning to drop, which has the Executive Body worried. Even more worrisome, the new Marshal in Atlantis is threatening an investigation. Simushir hovers at the edge of a crisis.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Simushir is a decentralized city composed of several distinct components: the industrial core, residential zones, arcology, and forward facilities. Each component is self-contained, and linked to the others by a maglev system, which also connects Simushir to other NIS sites on Ina.

SIMUSHIR'S COMPONENTS

Forward Facilities Known as "the boardwalk" by Simushir's populace, the forward facilities are the point of entry for most of the city's visitors. Massive biocrete pylons support an array of platforms above the waters of the bay. The eastern half of the facilities house docks for surface shipping, submarine mooring and service facilities, and the city's airport. The western half consists of a massive xenosilicate refinery. Between the two lies an administrative complex and maglev station. The forward facilities bustle with activity all hours of the day, and at night, its massive arc lights make the sky over Simushir Bay glow a sickly orange.

Industrial Core The industrial stacks of the core form the heart of Simushir. The core rests on a massive man-made island raised twenty meters above the surrounding marsh. The perimeter is ringed with massive walls two meters thick and over fifteen meters high that act as wind breaks, protecting the precious facilities against cyclonic storms. Inside, massive factory stacks huddle together, linked by trceries of piping and scaffolding. The massive walls also block any outside breezes, trapping vented gasses and fumes. The air at ground level in the core is often toxic, and few ever leave the interior of the stacks. Over two-thirds of the city's population works here daily.

Residential Zones Home to Simushir's indentured workforce, three residential zones are currently operational, with a new one under construction. They are nearly identical: a cluster of residential units or "stacks" with attendant facilities huddled on top of massive earthworks. The zones are raised twenty meters above the plain to protect against flooding; the arrangement also serves to limit the movements of the indentured workers and keep them secure. The quality of life for the indentured workers who live in the residential zones is truly reprehensible: power, sanitation, and other services are at best unreliable, and at worst, totally absent. The stacks themselves are also notoriously vulnerable to fast fungus and rust - older units cannot keep out the rain, and some are in danger of collapse. Conditions in the residential zones have earned them the nickname "the shame of Simushir."

The Dome Initial concerns about cyclonic storms prompted Simushir's designers to design the residential areas with domes - the same kind used at NIS facilities on Luna and Mars. The designers did not know, however, that the bioplastics used in the domes are particularly vulnerable to several varieties of fast fungi. Only one dome was ever finished: within two weeks of completion, half of the structure collapsed, killing over a hundred laborers. As a result, the dome idea was abandoned in favor of a system of raised mounds to counter flooding, and sturdier - if more expensive - housing units.

The Arcology Towering over the other components of the city, the NIS arcology is an inescapable reminder of the Incorporate's authority. The massive, fifteen-story structure houses all 6,000 of the site's NIS employees, and incorporates recreational spaces and support facilities, making it a city unto II itself. The arcology also serves as the administrative hub of the Nippon Industrial State's venture on Poseidon. In stark contrast to the city outside, the arcology is fully functional and meticulously maintained. It is not uncommon for the children of an NIS executive never to set foot outside the arcology's walls. Rather, they attend the company schools inside, live in massive suites on the upper levels, and shop in the enclosed malls. Indentured workers who are brought inside as maintenance workers and technicians can only stare in envy at the opulence.

DEMOGRAPHICS

More than 6,000 citizen/employees of the Nippon Industrial State live in Simushir, comprising less than one-fourth of the total population. All of them reside in the NIS arcology, forming an upper class that distances itself from the indentured population both socially and geographically. The life of an NIS citizen is defined by the company. The state provides food, lodging, and comfort, and few have any goals beyond their careers. Every morning the citizens sing the Incorporate anthem and exercise together, rituals that have been part of Asian corporate life since the twentieth century. A rigid social hierarchy exists within the corporate population, with the executives at the top, research scientists and senior engineers just below them, and various lower management positions on the bottom. This hierarchy is reflected in the layout of the arcology: an employee's status can be gauged by the floor on which he lives and works.

Just over 20,000 indentured laborers live and work in Simushir. The vast majority of them live in personal utility units, or coffins, in a residential stack, and work six days a week in one of the industrial stacks in the core. Others act as administrative assistants, technicians, and support personnel. Before signing on with the NIS, these workers came from a variety of backgrounds - ex-Long John prospectors, unlucky colonists, failed entrepreneurs, and even sell-out natives have all been known to join. Indentured workers sign on for a five-year term, and during that time, the NIS provides for all of the worker's needs.

Since food, housing, and recreation are all provided, and travel outside of the NIS enclave is prohibited, the indentured are not paid a wage or salary of any kind. The Nippon Industrial State assigns each worker a wage value based upon his occupational skills. The cost of all food, electricity, and any medical treatment consumed by the worker are tallied as consumption points. At the end of a worker's term, the consumption points are converted into a monetary value, and deducted from the wage value. The balance is paid to the worker in NIS scrip. The indentured worker has the option to receive one-fifth of his wage value annually, minus living expenses. Many workers with families outside of Simushir favor this option, sending their wages home to feed a spouse and children.

The system seems fair enough to most applicants and is designed to encourage good behavior. Workers who use less energy, spend less time in the rec centers, and are less wasteful, will accrue fewer consumption points and be rewarded with more pay at the end of their terms. Consumption point credits can be awarded for high productivity, and additional points can be tacked on to a worker's total as a disciplinary measure. Most indentured workers, therefore, are obsessed with their point totals, and a thriving black market has sprung up for goods and services that can be bought without being registered. It is also possible for a worker to end his term with very little to show for it, and a few have even ended their terms in debt to the NIS, requiring them to apply for another term to pay it off.

Each indentured worker has a microchip implanted under the skin of his right wrist when he signs on. These chips are recognized by detectors on every food dispenser, door, computer terminal, and toilet in Simushir. The chips allow the NIS to accurately compute each worker's resource consumption, and permit NIS security to monitor his activities. In Simushir, privacy is virtually nonexistent.

Most of the corporate citizens see little of the city beyond the arcology. Those who do regard the indentured population as unskilled labor, interacting with them as little as possible. A small segment of the Incorporate citizenry works full time in the residential zones, however, acting as zone administrators or providing social and medical services to the residents of the stacks. These few are at the bottom of the NIS social hierarchy, and their association with the indentured marginalizes their stations. Such positions are usually assigned to employees as punishment. Virtual ostracism from the NIS and firsthand experience with the squalor in the slums has led more than one zone administrator to question NIS policy and think the unthinkable: rebellion.

GOVERNMENT

Simushir is governed by the Executive Body, a board of ten senior administrators charged with implementing NIS policy and ensuring the success of the colony. The current chairman of the Executive Body is Tagana Kobmatsu, a middle-aged executive who has directed several lucrative ventures for the NIS in Burma and Micronesia. Tagana is very set in his ways, and is convinced the methods that have worked on Earth will also succeed on the new frontier. While many younger executives feel constrained by Tagana's attitudes, none have ever voiced objections.

A labyrinthine bureaucracy of committees, departments, and advisory boards handles day-to-day administration of Simushir. Citizens with a complaint or grievance often spend days just trying to find the right office to help them, and communications between the various branches is erratic at best. Competition over budget allocations can lead to bitter infighting, and most bureaus are constantly trying to outperform their rivals.

A force of over 900 NIS military operatives provides security for the city. As tensions have risen, particularly in the residential zones, the security forces have raised their visible presence throughout Simushir. Surprise inspections and late-night arrests are on the rise.

ECONOMIC BASE

Simushir's economy is based on several distinct industries, reflecting the Nippon Industrial State's diversified interests on Poseidon. The Long John refinery in the forward facilities processes ninety kilograms of Long John annually, all of which is shipped back to Earth. The industrial stacks of the core comprise Simushir's second economic base, heavy industry. The factories and foundries in the core turn out electronic components, consumer goods, and building materials, which are exported to sites all over Poseidon. Commercial profits have risen sharply as more NIS products have become available in Haven and Kingston, and the company town's future depends on their continued success in the colonial markets.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Conditions in Simushir display stark contrasts. In the arcology, energy is readily available, facilities are well maintained, and health care services are easy to come by. The industrial stacks and forward facilities are also in good condition to keep them productive. In the residential zones, however, life is very different. The residential stacks are plagued with constant maintenance and supply problems. The residential units are prone to sanitation failures, and the bioplastics used in their manufacture are particularly vulnerable to several varieties of fast fungus. The fungal infestations weaken the structures, raising worries over their durability in the face of a major storm. Jammed doors, leaky roofs, electrical shorts, and sanitation problems are endemic.

Simushir's energy is supplied by five fusion reactors located ten kilometers inland from the city. Water is provided by vast desalination plants that crouch among the reeds of the marsh. While the NIS arcology uses some internal hydroponics facilities, Simushir depends on imports for over seventy-five percent of its food. Site C on Ina is devoted solely to producing food for Simushir, mostly processed kelp and soy. Other sup-

plies arrive weekly, either by transport from the NIS complex in Haven or dropped from orbit.

MAP KEY

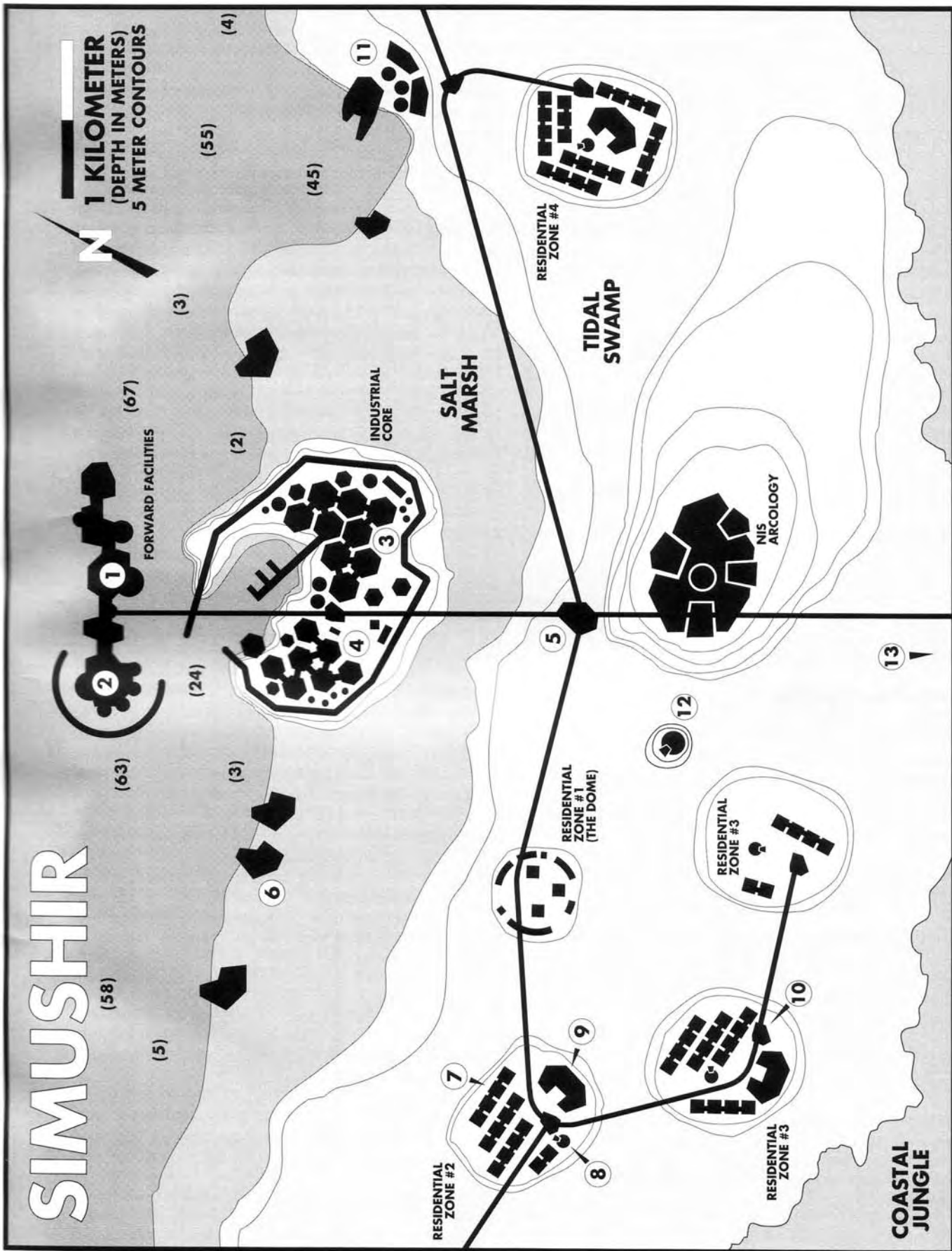
1. Shipping Facilities This stack of biocrete platforms and derricks forms the eastern half of the forward facilities in Simushir Bay. The upper decks, over 100 meters above the waters of the bay, serve as landing pads for VTOL transports and jumpcraft. Extensive supply and repair bays occupy the levels below. At sea level, a maze of piers sprouts from the massive biocrete pylons to accommodate surface shipping. Massive cranes load and unload the various boats in port, and storage bays crowd between the shoreward pylons. The easternmost third of the facility has three decks extending below water, the primary NIS submarine base on Poseidon. The shipping facility is the hub of the NIS's supply and distribution network, and keeping the NIS air and shipping fleets going is essential to the colony's success. Complete repair and dry-dock facilities for any kind-of transport vehicle are available here, although outsiders can expect to pay a high price for NIS services.

2. Long John Refinery A dense tangle of catwalks, scaffolding, and tubing, the refinery occupies the western end of the forward facilities. The active drilling tower forms the core of the structure, processing over fifty metric tons of bay floor a day. The lower levels house the docks for Simushir's submersible prospecting fleet. All Long John mined by the NIS is refined, purified, and processed in this facility. Therefore, it is the most secure structure in Simushir.

3. Bioplastic Farms Half of the industrial stacks in the core are devoted to bioplastics production. Each stack is a massive hexagonal structure, six levels tall, linked to the other stacks by sealed walkways and kilometers of pipes and conduit. The interiors of the stacks are full of culturing labs, vast nutrient vats, and manufacturing and assembly facilities. Over two-thirds of the output consists of heavy components for the other NIS sites on Ina, and the remaining twenty percent are consumer goods, from vehicle parts to electronics and furniture.

4. Electronics Plant The balance of the industrial stacks within the core is devoted to producing electronic components. Workers in clean suits manage robotic assembly systems building and configuring various computer components. Other stacks contain huge genetic labs for the construction of DNA memory cores. Simushir's electronics production has only recently reached expected levels. Within five years, the NIS is confident that it will be the largest supplier of electronic components on Poseidon. Many of the substances used to prepare the components - gallium arsenide, to name one - are toxic, and up until now, the NIS has been very lax in its waste management. The wildlife of Simushir Bay and the marsh suffer as a result.

5. Transit Nub The nexus of Simushir's maglev system, this massive station is always crowded with passengers awaiting transport to the core, the arcology, or the stacks. The hub is also the first stop for most visitors to the city, and looks appropriately impressive.



6. Desalination Plants Five in all, these massive desalination plants pump in the salt water of the coastal marsh and purify it for consumption. Most of the allocated resources are spent on maintaining the plant that supplies water to the industrial core and the arcology, the largest of the five.

7. Residential Block 2.27 The twenty-seventh Residential stack built at Simushir, located in Residential Zone 2, Block 2.27 is a typical residential stack. This stout, square building is made of bioplastic, is four stories high and seventy square meters, and has no windows. Each wall is a self-contained unit, and residents are classified by the wall in which they live. The lower three floors are lined with the personal utility units in which the indentured live. N.3.58 is a typical worker's address, meaning north wall, third level, coffin fifty eight. Each coffin is a bioplastic tube, two meters long by one meter wide, lined with temperfoam padding and equipped with a miniature CommCore terminal. Indentured workers are actually issued two coffins, one to sleep in, and the adjoining one for personal effects. There are 150 coffins to a floor, stacked three ranks high. The fourth floor of each wall is lined with apartments for indentured families. These units are only ten square meters, and the waiting list to receive one is very long. The central space in a stack contains a fifty-square-meter communal habitat, featuring dining, lounge, and shower facilities.

8. Administration/Security Post A prominent feature of each residential zone, these large structures contain various supply and maintenance facilities, as well as administrative offices and medical clinics. What few social services are available to Simushir's residents are provided through these offices. These buildings also contain a garrison of security troops for rapid response to any crisis in the stacks.

9. Recreation Center Each residential zone also features a Rec Center, a large facility that features movie theaters, large athletic courts, and a small shopping mall where workers can spend consumption points. They also house various bars and restaurants, and even a dance club. As the only alternative the indentured have to their work and their solitary lives in the stacks, the Rec Centers are usually packed with off-duty laborers.

10. Maglev Station These stops for the city's maglev system are heavily guarded.

11. Spaceport All incoming orbital craft land at sea and are towed through an artificially deepened channel to Simushir's spaceport, which contains massive cargo handling facilities, three launch pads, and service bays capable of maintaining all types of orbital craft.

12. The Tower This massive structure serves as the central headquarters for NIS security, coordinating the efforts of the residential zone security posts. The tower also coordinates external defense, monitoring the input from satellites and sonar early-warning systems. Not quite as tall as the NIS arcology, the tower is nonetheless a visible symbol of the security forces, and a constant reminder to the indentured workers that security is watching.

13. Reactor Complex A quintet of starfire reactors provides power for Simushir and the other Ina facilities. The reactors are located ten kilometers inland in a massive underground facility. The oldest of the five fusion cores is plagued with maintenance difficulties, and only runs at full efficiency about forty percent of the time. Of course, energy priority is given to the arcology, the core, and Ina's outlying facilities. The indentured living in the stacks are left to deal with frequent brownouts and energy rationing programs as best they can.

ATLANTIS

Once upon a time, this was nowhere. I mean, sure, this isn't like Pinpoint or Little Fish, but Maui's far enough away from Haven to be its own little world. That's why my great grandfather came out here. Except for troubles with the mountain or the storms, they had the world to themselves. It was quiet. Now? Now we've got new people coming in every day, and Haven's only a few hours away by airbus. It's not as busy as it was when the Long John started coming in, but we're still plenty big. We're still somewhere. Most natives don't like the changes much. Me, I like a crowd. I like vids and trids and CommCore and ice in my drink and temperfoam cushions for my chairs. Just wish the VTOLs weren't so damn loud.

- Sallow, co-proprietor of The Hole

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Atlantis is located on the south shore of the island of Maui, at 0°48'28" north latitude, 3°29'41" west longitude. Atlantis dominates Easter Bay, a deep-water inlet that provides excellent anchorage for shipping. The city sits on a wide, flat plain left by a series of pyroclastic and magma flows from nearby Mount Odysseus.

HISTORY

The first Athena colonists arrived on Maui in 2091, and christened their base camp Atlantis. The pioneers came to conduct an extensive biological survey of New Hawaii and welcomed their geographic isolation from Haven. Within five years Atlantis was a thriving, self-sufficient town. The eruption of Mount Odysseus in 2124 changed everything. The volcano had given enough warning for essential systems and personnel to be evacuated to nearby Augusta, but nearly two hundred people and most of the colony's medical and hightech supplies were buried under tons of ash and boiling mud. Not long after, a band of determined colonists returned to Easter Bay and refounded Atlantis. For two generations, the settlement prospered as a village of farmers and fishermen.

Recontact changed everything - again. The Long John rush flooded Atlantis with newcomers, die-hard prospectors, and the opportunists who moved in to cater to their needs. Soon Atlantis was a boomtown of casinos, bars, and brothels, and a crucial supply point for anyone heading north to the fabled riches of Shangri-La. Many of the prospectors stayed on as shopkeepers and some enterprising natives cashed in by entering the lucrative pharium trade.

The boom would not last, however. Soon Biogene and the NIS arrived in New Hawaii, squeezing most small-time prospectors out of the Long John business. Even worse, the high-tech

facilities at Cliffside drew the northern transport lanes away from Maui, and soon Atlantis had declined to half of its former size. In the wake of the bust, Atlantis has acquired a reputation for lawlessness. The recent establishment of a GEO Patrol precinct in the town is going to bring more changes, but by now most residents are used to change.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Atlantis is built on a wide, flat plain. Most structures in the town are raised on meter-tall stilts for protection from flooding during the rainy season. The town's commercial center, known as the Cluster, hugs the shoreline and contains most of the town's stores and hotels. Inland from the Cluster is Dead Town, a collection of abandoned buildings left over from the bust, long since stripped and left to fast fungus. The remnants of Atlantis' native population dwell inland from Dead Town in a neighborhood of wooden houses dubbed the Sticks. To the east of the Cluster stretches a wide tidal swamp that serves as a junkyard for the town, and is filled with the half-submerged wrecks of many failed smugglers. The city's landing strip is located on a slight rise to the west of town, near the power station.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Atlantis supports a population of between 8,000 and 9,000 - transient and seasonal residents make a firm count impossible. Of only 500 or so are natives, the assimilated descendants of the second settlement. The remainder are newcomers, Long John prospectors, retired thrill seekers, or budding entrepreneurs. The local GenDiver facility hosts only a dozen GenDiver citizens, the city's only Incorporated population. Deputy Marshal Lightfoot and small post of Patrol officers are the extent of the town's GEO presence.

GOVERNMENT

Always something of a frontier town, Atlantis became a haven for smugglers and criminals following the bust. Never as lawless as nearby Nomad, Atlantis has always been informally ruled by a coalition of the biggest bosses. The most influential, Leo Nantz, a professed businessman and salvage operator, acts as the mayor of Atlantis. Nantz has grandiose dreams for a second rebirth of Atlantis: he hopes to take the fortune he's made in pharium and build a spaceport in Atlantis, giving new arrivals to Poseidon an alternative to Haven, while jump-starting the local economy. Newcomers, as Nantz sees it, are the key to the city's future greatness.

A new wrinkle in local government is the recent arrival of GEO Deputy Marshal Rachel Lightfoot. Many of the local bigwigs who long been used to getting their own way and conducting their business in back rooms find the Deputy Marshal's zeal unsettling and her crackdown on the local drug trade galling. A confrontation will not be long coming.

ECONOMIC BASE

Atlantis survives primarily as a way station, a place air or sea transports can stop for resupply. Recently, the beauty of the nearby islands has drawn a steady influx of tourists from Haven and Atlantis has become a magnet for bush pilots and excursion outfitters. Atlantis has no manufacturing facilities - all consumer goods are shipped in from Haven or Cliffside. GenDiver opened a small facility in Atlantis in 2190 that col-

lects and stores Long John, acting as a combination bank and company store. Would-be prospectors can obtain equipment from GenDiver on credit, in return for a percentage of all ore collected. The outpost ensures that GenDiver scrip carries the most purchasing power in Atlantis, although both Biogene and NIS scrip are also competitive. However, most transactions in the town depend either on Long John wafers or barter.

Taking a cue from the natives who have fished in Easter Bay for generations, the Atlantis Fish Company opened a large fishpacking facility in 2195, harvesting the bounty of the seas and sending marine delicacies all over Poseidon. Processed fish is Atlantis' largest legal export. Pharium, however, is where the town's real money is. The rich volcanic hills of Maui contain dozens of hidden pharium crops and the drug forms the secret backbone of Atlantis' economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Atlantis has been slow to build up its infrastructure. Most locals still rely on cisterns for rainwater, and have their own solar generators for trickle charging storage batteries. A ramshackle power plant, left over from an early GEO development effort, supplies power to all who can pay Colby Ahearn, the plant's owner and one of Atlantis' more influential citizens. Brownouts are all too common. Limited aircraft and boat repair facilities are available from Lowden Poole, who runs the city's only mechanic shop and scavenges the swamp for spare parts. Only about half of the streets in the Cluster are paved or in good repair.

THE UNDERGROUND

The ruins of the original Atlantis, long buried in clay, still exist near the Sticks. Occasional washouts uncover part of a bulkhead or the corner of a buried structure. The natives revere the ruins, but many of Atlantis' less scrupulous residents have scoured the buried chambers for equipment to scavenge or have used them to stash contraband. The most famous feature of the ruins, however, is The Hole.

Despite the dirty looks he got from the natives, stranded exprospector Bryan Steeg scrounged through the half-buried sections of old Atlantis, digging for spare parts and buried supplies he could sell or trade. Around this time, Steeg met a native named Sallow, who introduced him to the fine arts of pharium horticulture. The two started a friendship and business partnership that lasts to this day. In late 2195, while digging a new pharium cache, Steeg stumbled across one of the old colony's main habitats. The ex-prospector quickly managed to fix it up and turn it into a place to meet and drink, a bar he named the Hole. The local brews and other "entertainments" quickly turned the Hole into the most popular dive in Atlantis. Most visitors from distant islands pay their tabs in trade, and Steeg has quite an assortment of odds and ends piled up in the Hole's back rooms. The bar doubles as a trading post - almost as reliable as a hypermart, and ten times as eclectic.

CORONADO STATION

Wondrous as Long John may be, Poseidon has so much more to offer humanity. Here at Coronado, we're meeting the New Frontier head-on. The discoveries we're making here about

Poseidon's biology and geology will not only give us new insights into the workings of Mother Earth and how better to rebuild her, they will also show us how to reap the bounties of Poseidon without harming this beautiful world. This is not just another Incorporate strip-mining station. Coronado is so much more." - Director Gutierrez, from his interview on "Biogene Now!" CommCore documercial

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Coronado Station is a Biogene multipurpose research complex located on the north shore of Kauai, at coordinates 9° 35' 20" north latitude by 3° 20'43" west longitude. The station is located in a shallow cove walled with tall cliffs, offering the base excellent protection from the elements as well as easy access to the sea beyond.

HISTORY

Construction on Coronado Station began in the summer of 2196, and the station went online six months later. The two years since have been challenging but not particularly eventful. The various scientific teams are still in the initial stages of their work - no major discoveries are expected anytime soon. Now that all the bugs and technical kinks that arose during the first year have been resolved, life at Coronado has settled into an easy routine.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Coronado Station consists of several distinct components, each supporting a different facet of the facility's diverse operations. Coronado Station's Main Complex is a multilevel, prefabricated colony unit that rests on biocrete stilts in the center of Coronado Cove. All station personnel are housed in Coronado Main, which also contains extensive geoscience and bioscience labs and limited recreation facilities. The lowest level of the complex houses the station's sub and boat bay, along with special lab and habitat facilities for the station's cetacean personnel. Unlike many Incorporate facilities on Poseidon, Coronado has no xenosilicate processing facilities. The station serves as a way station and service hub for Biogene's mining operations in the oceans to the north, but all harvested Long John is delivered to Cliffside for refining and processing.

A reinforced causeway connects Coronado Main to Coronado Shore, built on the nearby beach. Coronado Shore consists primarily of support structures - storage units, the station's main power generators, and the satellite uplink tower. It also features the station's transit port, with a VTOL/jumpcraft hangar and service bay, and an elevated landing platform. Lack of space in the cove prohibits construction of a runway, leaving Coronado Station inaccessible to conventional aircraft. A dirt road leads from Coronado Shore up a steep incline to the island beyond, granting ground vehicles access to the interior.

Coronado also supports a series of science stations inland on Kauai, with no direct connection to the complex. Sierra Station, the field camp for the geoscience team built high on the shoulder of Mount Fafnir, is only accessible by air. Several field observation posts are scattered throughout the jungles of Kauai's north face, and are periodically used by Coronado's bioscience team. The largest of them, Dos Hermanos, can house the entire team and is permanently staffed by a crew of four. The other jungle outposts are only occupied as needed.

A recent discovery in Coronado Cove indicates that the Biogene crew is not the first to settle here. The remains of a sizable native village lie under the sands of the cove's beach. An anthropological survey team has recently arrived from Cliffside to study the remains.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Fifty-five people and two dolphins live and work at Coronado Station. All are Biogene citizens, and most have been in place since the station was established. Spanish is the station's official language, although the individual research teams are much more cosmopolitan, and reflect Biogene's multinational diversity. All of the station's staff are bilingual, and most researchers speak at least three languages fluently. In all, station personnel, who often communicate in strange mixtures of Spanish, English, German, Russian, and Interspec, converse in seventeen different languages.

When classified by occupation, Coronado's population breaks down as follows:

Administration	4
Support/Technical	10
Security	10
Oceanography	8 humans / 2 dolphins
Geosciences	6
Biosciences	12
Archaeology	5

Though the research teams are rather insular, *esprit de corps* among the various teams runs high. Station-wide mixers are frequent, and often focus around the monthly series of hydrosbot matches. The games provide an excellent means for letting off steam and promoting healthy competition between the station's personnel.

GOVERNMENT

Mario Ruiz is the Director of Operations at Coronado Station, and the final onsite authority. He is advised and assisted in his duties by a board of the various department heads. The directors of the science teams have very little influence over the station, save for materials requests and progress reports. Director Ruiz tends to micromanage station affairs, preferring to dictate policy rather than take input. Security Chief Gerhardt Ritter's opinions, however, are heeded more than most. The stoic German seems to have a monopoly on the Director's ear.

ECONOMIC BASE

Coronado Station is by no means self-sufficient, and relies on weekly deliveries from Cliffside for food and other supplies. In addition to its research activities, Coronado also serves as a main transit point for Biogene operations north of the Archipelago, refueling and servicing air and sea transports inbound to Cliffside or outbound to remote facilities in Shangri La. Nearly a dozen flights land at Coronado Shore each month, but visitors are rarely allowed across the causeway to Coronado Main.

INFRASTRUCTURE

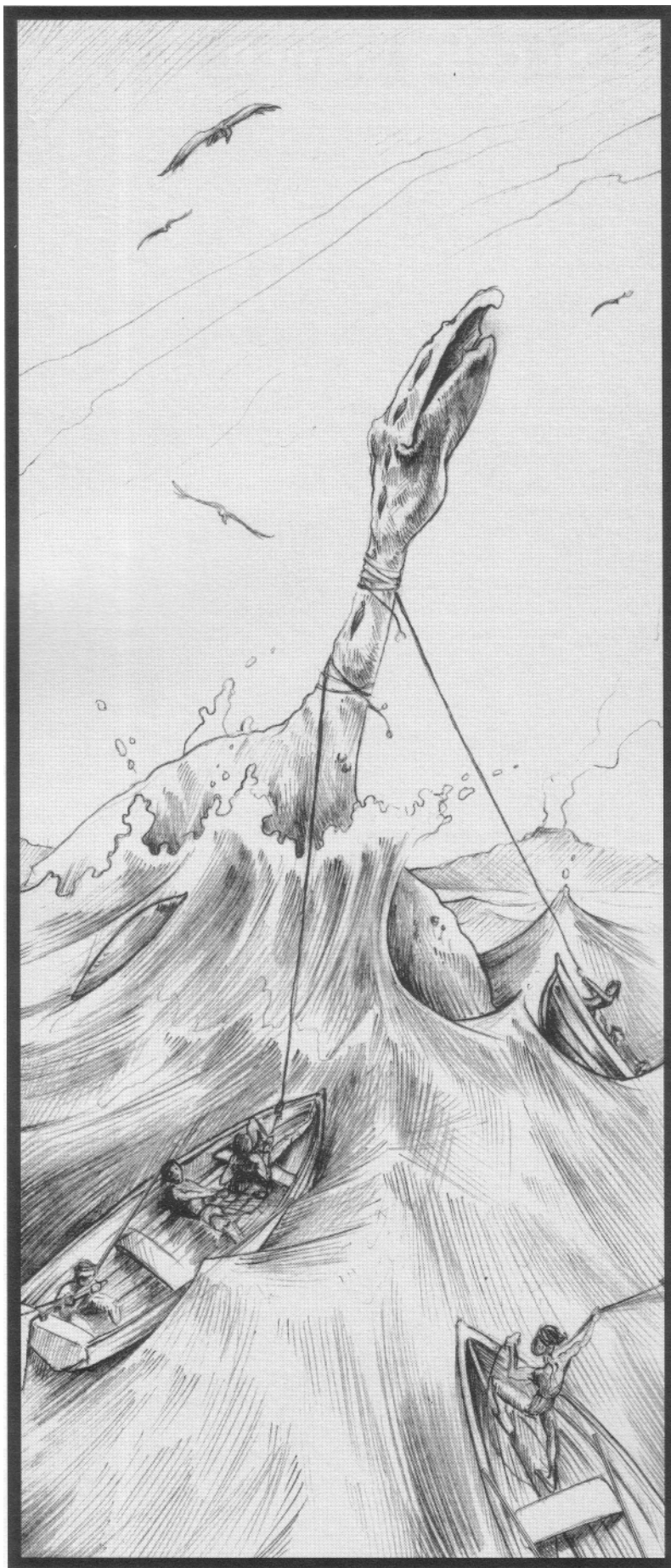
Biogene's investment in Coronado Station is considerable, and the station's technological resources are quite extensive. The base features cutting-edge, networked computers, advanced lab facilities, a state-of-the-art infirmary, sophisticated sensors and communications gear, and living quarters far more lavish than one would expect to find in a remote research station. All of Coronado's secondary facilities are equally well equipped, even the remote jungle outposts. A small fusion generator, supplemented with solar collectors, provides power for the station.

The base also maintains a small fleet of support vehicles. Four rugged land rovers ferry the bioscience team to and from their jungle camps, and two utility VTOLs provide quick air transport to the geoscience station, or anywhere else, all the way to Cliffside. Three research submersibles, a utility submersible, three motor launches, and a dozen power skis give Coronado personnel access to the oceans. There is enough equipment to support twenty divers at once, and ten hardsuits for deep-sea research. A small but well stocked armory is available for station defense, and in the event of a hostile takeover, a self-destruct hot switch has been wired into the primary computer network and the fusion generator. .

MEMBERS ONLY

Coronado Station is a Biogene facility, and the potential value of the research conducted there renders the base off limits to all outsiders. Even Biogene citizens are not allowed inside Coronado -Main without the proper security clearance, which is hard to come by. Biogene transport crews have nicknamed Coronado "the ice house," referring to the reception they usually receive from station security. All others who approach are quickly identified by the station's powerful sensor network and warned away. If push comes to shove, one of the station's VTOLs -and two of the surface boats are armed, and will drive intruders away by show of force.

Recently even Biogene transports have been denied access to Coronado. Reports of a potentially dangerous systems failure in Coronado Shore have led to the rerouting of all transports through other stations. Rumors have circulated that Coronado is actually under some kind of quarantine and the team of engineers and specialists recently sent there are actually doctors. It is unclear what would happen to a vessel in distress if it tried to put in at Coronado - under GEO law. the station is still required to lend assistance to parties in trouble. A medical emergency at the station would change things considerably but so far, officially at least, no such emergency exists.



ACCESS DENIED

Log Entry 27: Day 6 03:38

It's late. Had another long discussion with Holmes, and we went over the testing data again: Six times: There's no doubt at least forty people are now showing same form of psycho-logical distress. After dinner I sent a squirt transmission to Cliffside recommending a full quarantine. Holmes has dubbed the phenomenon "the Coronado Effect." Dramatic. We still don't have any clue what might be causing the troubles.

Theories: Holmes and I brainstormed for quite a while, and so far, this is what we've come up with. What's causing the mental breakdowns?

1) Natural Causes - A widespread case o f "cabin, fever." While occasional cases of emotional trouble at remote outposts have been reported, the odds of such breakdowns happening to virtually the entire crew at the same time are too remote for serious consideration. Also, said causes would indicate that Biogene's psychological screenings have' failed on a massive scale. Holmes and I discarded this theory rather quickly.

2) An Environmental Factor - our current favorite. His statistical analysis of the cases hints that the instability has passed from person to person - he's still trying to find a vector o f transmission. The science teams all manifested symptoms first, with admin and support staff f among the last that are free of symptoms. Hopefully, the next tests will determine which team manifested symptoms first, and hence which team brought the agent into the station. This seems the only real option, and is the theory under which we'll proceed.

Of course, we still have no idea what type of environmental agent we're dealing with, or its point o f origin. Here again, there are several possibilities:

A) A biological factor - some kind o f bacteria or virus native to the area. This is the first known incidence of the Coronado Effect anywhere on Poseidon, or at least in Biogene territory. Whatever it is, our bug is local. Holmes doubts that any kind of biologic could have escaped detection, but has assigned Martin to go look for one.

B) A chemical factor - something in the water of the cove, or trace elements o f some geothermal compound tracked back in from Sierra Station, or some kind of compound produced by the local flora or fauna; This is Holmes' favorite. He thinks that the cause will probably be very complicated - an interaction of three or four cofactors, each of which are harmless on their own, but which act together to destabilize the victims neurochemistry. Holmes is going to coordinate with every team on-station as well as the support engineer to try to unravel the mystery. He realizes that he is hunting for a needle in a haystack. Anything from the granite content -of the beach sand, to the lining o f the air ducts, to the pollen of the local wildflowers could be a culprit,

C) An artificial factor - the scariest option. Coronado Station could be on the receiving end of some kind-of psychoactive weapon delivered by a competitor to compromise the station. The nearby presence of the NIS makes them a likely suspect, although this kind of thing isn't exactly their style. GenDiver also isn't very far away. The fact that the agent is so elusive is one thing in this theory's favor - whoever designed it would design it not to be easily found. Is this the first shot in some new corporate conflict? The death of the bioscience team in` the jungle may not be a coincidence.

D) Something else - off the deep end and over the rainbow. Sightings of the mysterious manta-like "aborigines" by the oceanography team have been frequent. The things seem attached to the nearby reefs, and are much more common here than elsewhere. Holmes told me that he's read classified files documenting the strange effects these creatures have had on those who encounter them. Is the Coronado Effect merely some residual byproduct o f their presence in the area? Holmes thinks that they may be one of his cofactors. Another possibility: if the aborigines are as smart as some speculate, is this some deliberate action that they're taking? By far the least likely option, but we mulled it over for the sake of completeness.

All o f the above will go into my formal report, which I'll prepare and encrypt tomorrow for handoff to the next supply transport. There are a few things, however, I'm not going to mention, except here.

I'm up typing this so late because I've had another nightmare. The dream came again - I'm running through the corridors o f the station, and there's something chasing me, something ... big. I can never look directly at it, but it has long, spindly legs like a spider. No doubt it's lust nerves, a sympathetic neurosis arising from my exposure to the crew o f the station. The last thing Holmes and I discussed, however, leaves me wondering. Whatever is causing the Coronado Effect, odds are it won't be long before we begin to be affected as well. Little use trying to sleep with that hanging over my head. - Excerpt from the personal files of Dr. Stephen Hill, Biogene field psychologist.

WHO CAN YOU TRUST

The research conducted at Coronado Station is classified, of course. Biogene is optimistic, however, that the results of several of the projects will revolutionize the rapidly growing xenosilicate industry and ensure Biogene's continued domination in the field of biotechnology. Dr. Rios of the geoscience team is conducting an extensive seismic survey of Mount Fafnir, and is trying to ascertain the geological influences on the formation of Long John, and unlock the secrets of the ore's synthesis. So far, he has met with little success.

Dr. Gabrielle Hester of the bioscience team is conducting an extensive survey of Kauai's jungles targeted at locating new pharmaceutical compounds. Several interesting leads have turned up, and over a thousand new species of flora and fauna have been cataloged. The oceanography team is conducting similar surveys of the massive reef systems directly north of Coronado Cove. As a pet project, Dr. Escobar, leader of the team; is also trying to determine what effect, if any, xenosilicates have had on Poseidon's organisms and ecosystems. So far, he has been unable to identify a single biological process or organism that utilizes the ore.

All is not well at Coronado station. So far, Biogene has clamped a tight lid on all news of events at the station - the sensitive nature of the research done onsite made it easy. Conditions are rapidly getting out of hand, however, and it is unclear how long the station can remain operational:

Troubles began a short time ago when both of the cetacean crewmembers vanished. Curiously; an investigation discovered that the two dolphins had reprogrammed the microsurgical implements in the oceanography lab to disable their personal data transmitters, leaving them untraceable. The present location of both dolphins remains unknown.

Only a few days later, four members of the bioscience team were lost during a deep jungle survey: The missing botanists were quickly located using their PDT signals, but the search team was not ready for what they found. All four scientists had been killed - autopsies revealed multiple stab wounds, and all suffered crushed skulls. Natives are the obvious suspects, but none of the nearby villages are classified as hostile.

In addition to the troubles with the survey teams deep in the jungle, the crew has started having problems simply working together. Most at the base are on edge, and more than sixty percent report chronic nightmares. After the fifth crewman in six months suffered an emotional collapse, Biogene intervened: A team of psychologists and neurologists from Cliffside has just arrived, and is finishing up their first wave of examinations. The results are startling: almost all of Coronado's staff are deviating from psychological norms, and the head neurologist suspects the action of some kind of psychoactive agent. No recommendations have yet been made, as the psych team is a little nervous about their position - they are surrounded by dozens of potential psychopaths.

Worse, Director Ruiz is growing increasingly paranoid and obsessed with the success of his operation. More than ten of his crew are now out of commission; and he has staked his entire career on Coronado's success. Any suggestion or move to shut Coronado down could leave him suicidal - or homicidal. Ruiz is convinced that the troubles are the result of sabotage, probably perpetrated by the NIS. Security Chief Ritter finds the notion highly unlikely but is conducting a thorough investigation. If Ruiz becomes unstable, he realizes he may have to take steps. Unknown to anyone, one of the Coronado Main technicians is a spy, a deep cover mole from GenDiver. He's also been feeling a bit paranoid lately - and understandably so.

answer to this enigma lies in the reefs off shore from Coronado. The plentiful fish attracted the original native settlement, and the biological diversity drew Biogene as well. Deep under the reef system, however, lies a Creator cache. A large group of aborigines acts as custodians of the cache, and they have moved to protect it each time humans have settled in the area.

Thirty years ago, the aliens tried to make peaceful contact with the natives of Coronado Bay, with disastrous results. After a frightened fishing party attacked the aborigines and killed one, the creatures responded by flooding the bay with a number of psychoactive compounds, hoping to drive the humans away. Widespread madness and terror resulted and the natives ended up slaughtering each other in a violent orgy of paranoia.

The aborigines had watched the natives' carefully, trying to learn about the workings of the human mind in the process. Biogene's arrival has given them a new opportunity for study. The aborigines have released an entire suite of psychoactive compounds into the waters around the reefs. The toxins have no effect whatsoever on life forms native to Poseidon, but upon absorption into a human system; they subtly affect the victim's brain chemistry, driving - them to eventual depression, paranoia, or psychosis. Worse still; the chemicals target the victim's endocrine system, altering the metabolism in certain glands so that the cells produce more of the compound. Within a week of contact, the unwitting victim has turned into a walking chemical factory, secreting tiny amounts of the agent and leaving it behind in every fingerprint.

Subs and divers returned to Coronado crawling with the stuff, and have since spread the compounds through casual contact. The particles are not airborne, but it makes little difference: in the weeks before any of the staff showed symptoms, the particles were smeared over most of the internal surfaces in the station; The dolphins were the first to succumb to the toxins, and fled from the station in a fit of paranoia. Now, the rest of the station is beginning to feel the heat; and the Biogene psych team is very close to discovering the toxins. When they do, director Ruiz will be convinced that his sabotage theories are true. Biogene will be much more concerned with possible contamination at Cliffside. Developing an antidote before the station staff slaughters each other will be a difficult task.

THE ABORIGINES

GENEPOOL

Something is happening to the natives of a few scattered settlements in New Hawaii. More and more babies are being born ...different. For most, the differences are subtle: newborns are taking longer to talk, and some never speak at all. In the last five years, however, there have been even stranger births - hairless infants with a second set of gill slits under their arms, or rows of eyespots down their backs. About one child in four exhibits strange behavior, and one in ten shows physical abnormalities.

Native reactions to the births have varied from community to community. Some of the more isolated natives have welcomed the changes in their young, believing that Poseidon itself is changing them, stripping away the last vestiges of their earthly origin. In other villages, the strange children are regarded with fear and suspicion. Some have gone so far as to "euthanize" any such infants at birth: Most children born different have been hidden from outsiders, and only one incident of this abnormal behavior has been reported to the GEO. Many natives wonder what the children of these children will be like; Looking to the future with either joyous anticipation or deepening dread.

A group of aborigines who act as the stewards of a New Hawaii Creator cache are the architects of this strange new breed of native. When the Athena colonists first arrived on Poseidon in 2086, the aborigines began to consider the impact the new arrivals would have on the planet in their charge, and what steps to take regarding the strange bipeds. It was

decided that since these new animals appeared intent on remaining, they should be completely integrated into Poseidon's ecology.

Examination of several specimens living and dead led to a thorough understanding of human genetics and physiology. These analyses presented an interesting possibility. While other aboriginal groups around the planet began to actively resist human encroachment on Poseidon, the aborigines of New Hawaii took a complementary, long-term approach. They began to consider how humans might be adapted to a more harmonious and integrated existence on the waterworld.

It was decided that an isolated population of humans would serve as the subject of an experiment in directed evolution, which began in 2132. New Hawaii's distance from the center of human population and its proximity to a large Creator biotech cache under the vast reefs north of Kauai made it an ideal staging ground. The wishes of the Athena colonists were never a factor in the decision. Gradual alterations of the humans' gene pool would be much easier and require less intensive uses of Creator biotechnology. The program would take generations to complete and even longer to implement on a planetary scale, but for the aborigines, time had never been a concern.

The enclave of aborigines in New Hawaii used various xenosilicate templates to program suites of bio-reactive nanites. They subsequently targeted a few small outlying villages with infestations of these artificial mutagens. The nanites infected the reproductive cells of mature adults, subtly altering the genetic material they passed on to their children.

By the third generation of the experiment, the first significant results began to appear. Many of the native children born in targeted villages since 2170 are first-stage hybrids: their physiology and genetic makeup are still human, but their brain chemistry varies from the norm. These children are completely receptive to the chemo-empathic communication of the aborigines, and can receive messages without any of the confusion or fear that plagued early attempts at contact. This "aboriginal state of mind" results in strange behavior among the hybrids - most seldom speak, and all show an eerie unanimity of thought and action.

The destruction of a native village on Ina in 2186 by a team of GenDiver mercenaries provided the new humans' first major test. Warned by their mysterious mentors, the children avoided the massacre and helped the aborigines destroy the invaders (BP 153). The aborigines then took direct custody of the hybrids, raising them and eventually transplanting them to the jungles of Kauai. The hybrids are there to this day, living in seclusion as the Forest People and fiercely protecting the jungle their silent masters have entrusted to them.

The arrival of millions of humans on Poseidon has caused the aborigines to reevaluate their experiment. The possibility of protracted conflict with the newcomers has forced the aborigines to consider different applications of the hybrid humans, and has created a need for advanced forms much sooner than expected. First-stage hybrids are already being employed as spies by the alien rays, infiltrating newcomer cities and bringing back detailed intelligence. The rate of mutation among the New Hawaiian natives, and the number of targeted communities, have also been increased. More hybrid children are being born every year, and the first second-generation hybrids have begun to emerge.

Several different hybrid forms are being produced in the hopes of creating a diverse population of hybrids who can work seamlessly with the

aborigines. The most advanced stage-two hybrids are actually able to send chemo-empathic messages to each other and to the aborigines, releasing communicative chemicals from modified lymph nodes through the gill slits under their arms. Other stage-two hybrids are partially photosynthetic, with chromatophoric skin. The aborigines estimate that within four years, twenty percent of the native infants being born in New Hawaii's more remote villages will be stage-one hybrids, and that the first stage three hybrids will be born within the next six years.

THE FOREST PEOPLE

A secret lurks in the jungles of Kauai. Unseen by any satellite, hidden from aerial survey, and so far unnoticed by any visitors, an extraordinary group of natives calls these dense jungles home. These shadowy tribesmen are a tangle of mysteries and seeming contradictions, and offer perhaps the most extreme example of human adaptation to life on Poseidon. Here is a group of aquaforms who dwell exclusively on land, surviving at a completely preindustrial Level of sophistication. In many ways the most native of the natives, these elusive hunters call themselves the Forest People.

Like all of Poseidon's natives, the Forest People are genetically modified human aquaforms. Sixty-three in number, the Forest People are organized at the tribal level and live as nomadic hunter gatherers in a lifestyle reminiscent of the Amazon tribes on Earth who survived into the 20th Century. Kauai's hidden forest dwellers consist solely of systemic osmoforms, or "squids" - most have never seen a pure strain human until recently, although the eldest of the group have always told stories of these strange outsiders. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Forest People, however, is the relative youth of the tribe. Most of the natives are in their late teens, and the oldest member is only twenty-three. The first children of the Forest People's second generation are just being born.

The Forest People live in perfect harmony with their jungle environment. Their diet consists primarily of fruits and tubers gathered from the jungle, supplemented with game and fowl brought home by hunters. The abundant jungles provide more than enough food for the tribe to survive, and life for the Forest People is easy. Their dependence on the jungle has led to an intimate familiarity with it even the youngest children can survive quite ably, and the "elders" are veritable encyclopedias of pharmacological, botanical, and zoological information.

The tribe is careful not to over-exploit their food sources. To ensure that the jungle's ecology is kept in its proper balance, the Forest People lead a semi-nomadic life, migrating between a handful of camps spread out all over the island. Never living in one camp for longer than three months, the Forest Peoples' impact on their environment is minimized. These migrations also allow them to move into local caves to ride out the worst stretches of the annual storm season.

Technologically, the Forest People are the least advanced human group on Poseidon, possessing no traces at all of high technology. All of their clothing and implements are constructed out of local materials: wood, bone, vine, and sinew. Clothing is minimal, and camps consist of a circle of thatch-roofed shelters. Fire use, gourds for storage, and chipped stone implements represent the cutting edge of Forest People technology. Hunters use spears, blowguns, and sharp bone knives as weapons. They coat many of their weapons with poisons - carniflora (BP 126) and scorpion venom (BP 141) are most commonly used. The Forest People place a high priority on artistic expression - their tools and artifacts are well-crafted and often exhibit extensive decoration.

There is little, if any, gender-division of labor among the Forest People - as many women as men serve as hunters, and the responsibilities for child care are handled' by the entire community; in typical native fashion: The Forest People favor colorful body paint, and the hunters use a particularly effective collage of black and emerald green for camouflage. Any type of decoration involving self-mutilation - tattooing, piercing, or scarification - is forbidden. Other taboos include the eating of certain types of animal flesh building uncovered fires, and shedding a tribemate's blood. The strongest taboos include incest, murder, and a strict prohibition against swimming in the ocean.

ALL of the Forest People share a strange unanimity of thought and action: verbal communication is rarely needed, and the members of a hunting group can coordinate complex efforts in complete silence: Disagreements are rare, but a body of eight senior tribesmen; the Oldest, is the final adjudicator of all disputes and acts as the tribe's governing body. Decisions that affect the entire tribe are discussed in open council, with the Oldest directing the proceedings.

he Forest People have two dominant psychological traits: a deep respect for their ecosystem, and an almost fanatical xenophobia. The jungle is more than just the Forest People's home; it is their livelihood and their responsibility. The hunting parties also serve as scouts and monitors of the wildlife around them, counting the populations of certain species and monitoring the rhythms of life around them. Outsiders, with their plastic, are invaders, and are to be avoided at all costs. 'eu. frightening tales of the Outside and the wicked men who live there. The Forest People watch all strangers who enter their domain from a distance. If the Outsiders do the jungle no harm, they are allowed to leave without ever knowing they were watched. Outsiders who seek to despoil the jungles are dealt with, quickly and finally: Many parties of would-be poachers or smugglers have vanished in the forest, their bodies never found.

The Forest Peoples' yearly calendar pivots around two annual festivals. The first is the Remembering, a week of fasting and mourning in honor of the dead. The festival falls, coincidentally, during the time the Calamity is commemorated in the rest of New Hawaii, although the Forest People are unfamiliar with that term. The second festival; the Journey, falls at the end of storm season, and culminates in a migration to a sheltered bay on the east shore of Kauai. After a week of feasts and celebrations, the taboo restricting contact with the ocean is lifted, and the entire tribe plunges into the bay. There the Forest People are invariably met by a large group of aborigines, who commune at length with the natives, then send them back into the jungle. The Forest People call the aborigines the Silent Ones, and venerate them with an almost religious fervor as teachers, saviors, and guardians. Annual contact with the Silent Ones at the end of the Journey is one of the foundations of the Forest People's culture. The Oldest look to the Silent Ones for guidance, and return from the Journey with a new set of directives and goals for the coming year.

The Forest People have elaborate tales of their origins, which they are now passing on to their children. People originally came from the stars, from Earth, a place of death and corruption. Back in the before time, the ancestors of the Forest People came into the World to escape the evil and ugliness of Earth. For a while they Lived in happiness. But other evil men came from Earth, and destroyed the Forest People's ancestors when the Oldest were still children. Fifteen members of the tribe are old enough to remember the troubles, but will not talk about the incident in any detail. The Forest People were saved thanks to the intervention of the Silent

Ones, who took the orphans beneath the sea and cared for them, teaching them to love Poseidon and protect its natural bounties. Eventually, the Silent Ones brought the children to the forests of Kauai and charged ' them with the safekeeping of the island. The orphans gladly accepted' their sacred mission, and the Forest People were born. In the ten years since, they have never wavered in their diligence.

In recent years, the Outsiders have taken a direct interest in Kauai, much to the Forest People's dismay: The tribe watched the arrival of Biogene at Coronado 'Station with alarm, and has grown more concerned as survey teams from the station have pushed deeper into their territory. When one of the teams clear-cut a section of jungle, a hunting party reacted, killing all four scientists. The Oldest are now concerned that the Outsiders will hunt the tribe down in retaliation, and are counseling caution. The recent opening of a new resort complex at Avalon has led to another influx of Outsiders, as hunters, hikers, and campers took for adventure in the jungles at the southern end of the island. New troubles are likely when the Forest People migrate back to the south en of Kauai

There have been other recent changes as well. The first children are being born to the Forest People, and two of the most recent arrivals are different. These new infants are born with emerald green, chromatophoric skin and additional. gill slits under their arms. The Forest People have been awaiting these births - the Silent Ones told them to expect changes in their children, and have foretold that these children hold the key to the tribe's future. The first meeting between these special children and the Silent Ones will be a momentous one indeed.

Typical Forest People hunter:

Species: Human, Genie (Aquaform)

Profile;

Origin - Native

Background - Tragic

Education - Minimal

Goal - Survival

Motivation - Duty

Attitude - Disciplined

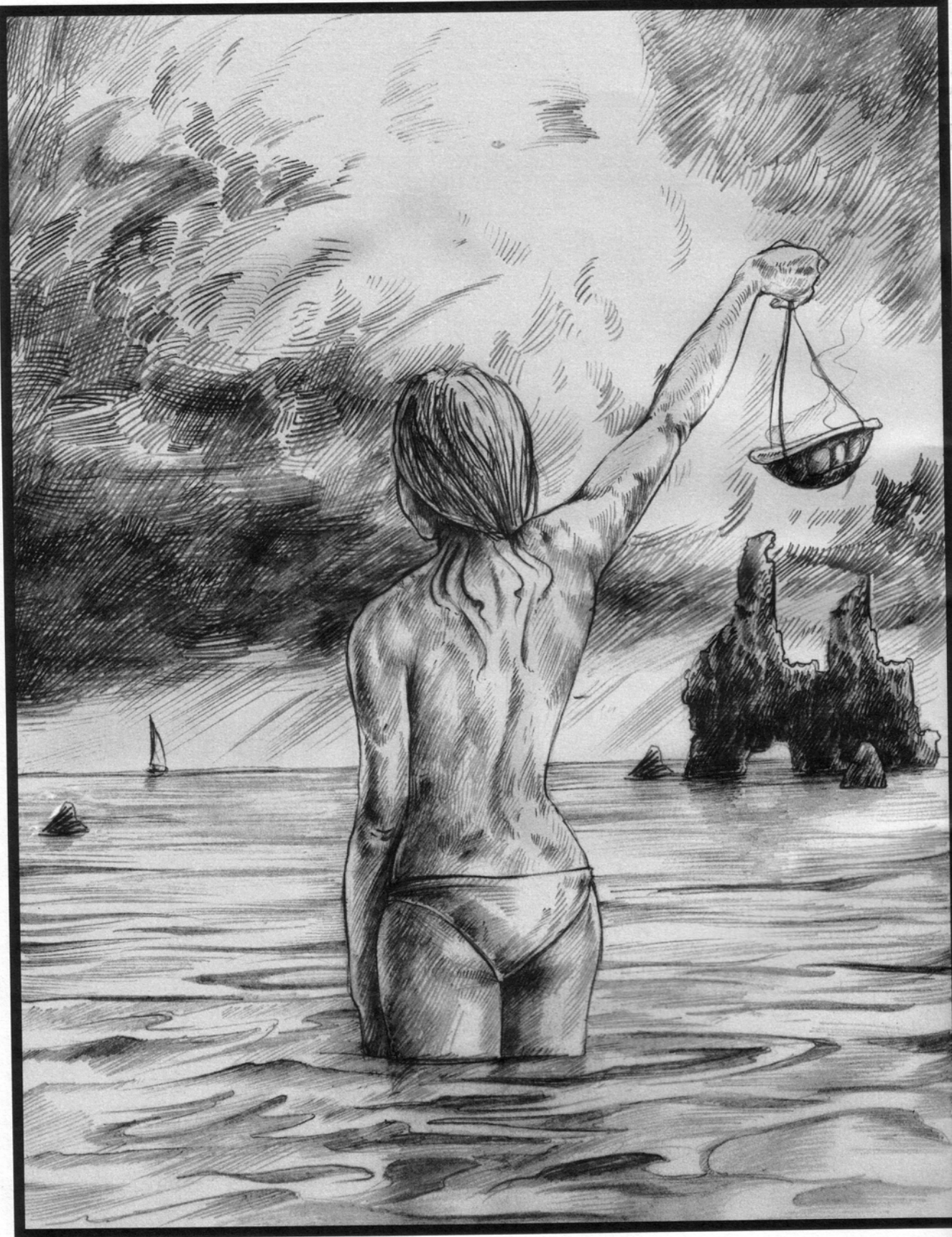
Mental Attributes: Awareness 80, Charisma 40, Education 20, Experience 17, Initiative 50, intellect 40, Will 60.

Physical Attributes: Agility 60, Appearance 50, Constitution 50, Dexterity 50, Endurance 70, Speed 50, Strength 40.

Modifications: Aquaform (Squid)

Skills: Athletics 40, Archery 100, Physical Training 70, Throwing 60, Native Culture 70, Artisan 50, Dance 10, Music 10, Painting 10, Hand-to-hand Combat 40, Brawling 100; Military Hand-to-Hand (Knife) 50, Botany 40, Zoology 40, First Aid 40, Pharmacology 40, Meteorology 40, Subterfuge 60, Stealth 110, Survival 60, Foraging 70, Tracking 70.

Equipment: Body paint, gourd full of water, loincloth, bone knife, chert scraper/adz, and either three spears, blowgun with four darts, or a bow and six arrows.



MOST WANTED

BRYAN STEEG

The Hole is the place to go if you are in Atlantis and you are looking for a good time. Bryan Steeg, owner and proprietor, is the man to talk to if you need anything else. Spare parts? Steeg can find them. Passage to Shangri-La? He knows just who to ask. Pharium? He has at least ten varieties to choose from, only the best. Just need a drink? The Hole has whiskey all the way from Kentucky and some local concoctions that have to be tasted to be believed. The stories that come with one's purchases are absolutely free. To hear him tell it, Steeg has been from one pole of this big wet ball to the other, and he is always brimming with tales about vicious pirates, angry natives, and greater whites the size of orbital shuttles. Steeg claims he is a retired freebooter himself, and he has a scar on his cheek to prove it.

The truth, though there are few around who know it, is a little less glamorous. Born and raised in Tharsis City on Mars, Steeg was a technician in a dead-end job when the *Admiral Perry* rediscovered Poseidon. At the dawn of the Long John rush, Steeg jumped at the chance to get out from under the domes. Once in Haven, Steeg won over a prospector named Ryder, and worked with him as an apprentice miner and technician for three years. The two journeyed all over the Pacifica in their battered sub, looking for the score that would set them up for life. They never found it. The two parted ways in Atlantis after a bitter argument that turned into a brawl that turned into a knife fight. Left to his wits and instincts, within a year Steeg had created the Hole and made it the most popular watering hole in Atlantis, if not all of New Hawaii.

Business at the Hole has left Steeg with a dizzying web of contacts all over the archipelago. He's acquainted with the Gorchoffs out of Haven, the syndicates in Nomad, and knows dozens of minor movers and smugglers. Steeg is not totally without principle - he will not point out hit men, cannot abide pirates, and will never betray a client's trust. Always jovial and full of bluster, Steeg extends the same hearty greeting to all of the Hole's patrons; locals, strangers, even the new GEO Marshal. The Hole will always be a place anyone can go to have a decent drink, and that's just the way Steeg wants it.

Species: Human, Modified

Profile:

Origin - Mars

Background - Abusive

Education - Undergraduate University, Vocational Training

Goal - Contentment

Motivation - Pride

Attitude - Energetic

Profession: Opportunist

Mental Attributes: Awareness 57, Charisma 50, Education 35, Experience 65, Initiative 50, Intellect 40, Will 60.

Physical Attributes: Agility 50, Appearance 50, Constitution 60, Dexterity 47, Endurance 41, Speed 32, Strength 50.

Modifications: Neural Jack

Skills: Administration 40, Law 50, Aquatics 30, Commerce 60, Economics 80, Negotiation 70, Communication 60, Persuasion 70, Computer Operations 60, Hacking 20, Culture 20, Colonial Culture 50, Native Culture 30, Spacer Culture 30, Street Culture 60, Electronics Operation 20, Electronics Repair 20, Acting 70, Firearms 20, Handguns 40, Brawling 40, Mechanics Operation 10, Mechanics Repair 20, Pharmacology 10, Psychology 50, Subterfuge 60, Fast Talk 70, Driving 10, Piloting 40.

RACHEL LIGHTFOOT

There is a new Marshal in Atlantis. Only a month off the transport from Haven, Lightfoot has made her presence felt from the back alleys of Atlantis to the stacks in Simushir, delivering a simple message: the GEO has come to New Hawaii. Eighteen Patrol Officers and the political weight of the Justice Commission back up the Marshal's transfer to the region, and she is only the first of a pair slated for New Hawaii. She has been ordered to create a new Marshal's office in Atlantis, crack down on smuggling and piracy in the islands, and investigate allegations of environmental and human rights abuses in Simushir.

Most toughs laugh the first time they set eyes on Lightfoot - she is a short, slim woman just over 1.6 meters tall, with closely cropped graying hair. The laughs stop, however, once their glance meets her icy eyes. Lightfoot has a presence that can be felt a block away, a tone to her voice that can quiet a barroom, and a stare few are able to return. She carries a pair of crossholstered, multi-ammo revolvers but seldom draws them - in most cases she just talks her target down. She has held off an entire street gang with just words and her strange force of will, and few can boast of ever besting her in an argument.

Lightfoot was born in one of the post-Blight Native American Tribal Collectives in the southwest United States, and will soon turn fifty. She joined the GEO military to pay for college, and served a term with the GEO Peacekeepers in the Far East, assisting refugees. In Asia, Lightfoot experienced an epiphany, horrified as she was by the brutal, inhumane consequences of the rampant corruption, blackmarketeering and extortion rampant in the region. At the age of twenty-four, she applied for a branch transfer and joined the justice Commission as a Patrol Officer. Her uncommon personal standards and insightful nature got her noticed and she rose quickly through the ranks. At the age of thirty-three she accepted a commission in the Marshal Service, her innate charisma and non-violent approach serving her well. In 2197, Lightfoot accepted a transfer to Poseidon, and after serving in various temporary assignments around the Archipelago she was sent to New Hawaii as part of an effort on the part of the GEO to bring order to the region.

To most, Marshal Lightfoot seems stern and unbending. In truth she is passionate about justice and human rights, and simply takes her job very seriously. She is tireless and deliberate and does not put up with back-talk, fabrication, or incompetence. Though her hair is graying, Lightfoot has been undergoing Long John treatments since joining the service, and she remains able, agile and quick-witted. She is stronger than most men her size and faster than almost anyone. She is quick to anger but never lets her temper cloud her judgment. Though her heritage and her manner have earned her all kinds of unsavory nicknames, most of her Patrol Officers simply call her

"Chief." Though others might take offense at the innuendo, she knows that most of them actually use the term with genuine respect - besides, she secretly likes the name.

Species: Human, Modified

Profile:

Origin - Earth (Rural)

Background -Independent

Education - University Graduate, Military Training

Goal - Altruism

Motivation - Compassion

Attitude - Disciplined

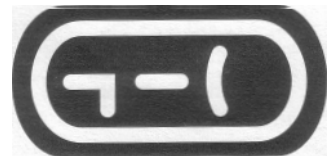
Profession: GEO Marshal

Mental Attributes: Awareness 72, Charisma 83, Education 85, Experience 57, Initiative 64, Intellect 58, Will 75.

Physical Attributes: Agility 70, Appearance 54, Constitution 70, Dexterity 65, Endurance 68, Speed 92, Strength 64.

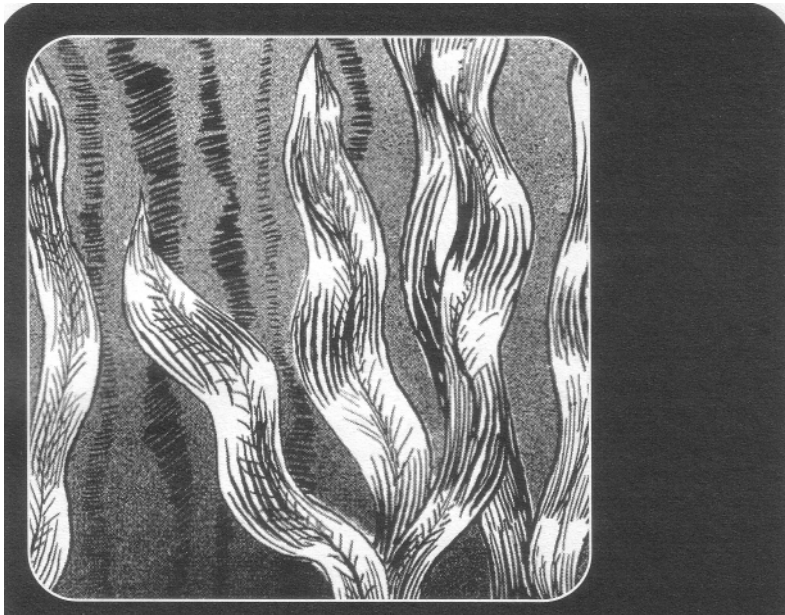
Modifications: Neural Uplink Jack, Improved Blood Oxygenation, Accelerated Neurons.

Skills: Bureaucracy 70, Law 75, Management 70, Athletics 40, Physical Training 60, Command 40, Leadership 60, Tactics 60, Economics 40, Negotiation 30, Communication 40, Oration 60, Persuasion 90, Computers 20, Computer Operations 50, Demolitions 40, Culture 40, Colonial Culture 60, Earth Culture 50, GEO Culture 60, Street Culture 60, Photography 20, Firearms 60, Martial Arts 60, Human Sciences 20, History 30, Literature 50, Political Science 40, Theology 40, First Aid 60, Forensic Medicine 40, Psychology 40, Heavy Weapons 40, Subterfuge 60, Survival 40, Foraging 50, Navigation 55, Tracking 50, Vehicles 40, Driving 50, Piloting 60.



Global Ecology Organization SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Poseidon Biological Survey #POS-103 Resource and Hazardous Species of Poseidon



Poseidon Kelp (*Gramen species*)

Range Temperate seas except for notable concentrations in the New Hawaii region.
Habitat Warm, shallow coastal waters. Length Individual vines can reach 250 meters Weight Variable
Frequency Common

Resource Value High. Some stronger varieties can be harvested for textiles and most are nutritious.
(Strangler)
Threat Level Low, (high)

Poison Strength 35 for toxic varieties if ingested.
Movement N/A
Awareness 0 (65/4)
Initiative 0 (65)
Intellect 0
Agility 0

Constitution 35/3 (40/6)
Endurance 0
Strength 0 (65) Rounds N/A (2) Attack None
(Constrict - 65, 1 per round) Damage Ranks
(1/35 2/50 3/65 4/85 5/100) Damage Scale 5
Armor 1/5

Analogous to terrestrial kelp, Poseidon kelp is a thick, leafy vine that can grow to lengths of over 100 meters. Dozens of species have thus far been classified. ALL use buoyant, metabolized gasses stored in the long stalk to keep the blades afloat in the sunlight. Several poisonous varieties have been discovered, as well as one carnivorous variety - strangler kelp. Other varieties have a high nutritional value, and are harvested by natives and newcomers alike.

Behavior Poseidon kelp, like water hemp, originates in a tough bulb firmly rooted to the ocean floor. Millions of fronds often grow in close proximity to one other, forming a dense submerged forest. Larger kelp forests, dozens of kilometers in surface area, form biomes as rich and diverse as any on Poseidon. ALL manner of marine species thrive among the dense fronds, from fish and crustaceans who live in symbiosis with the algae, to predators who find the forests rich hunting grounds.

Strangler kelp is a particular hazard of kelp forests. This variety grows dozens of long fronds from the base pod, whose leaf structures are very sensitive to touch and vibration. If anything bigger than a small fish swims through the fronds, it quickly reacts, shifting metabolized gasses to the stalk at the point of contact. The fronds constrict and become rigid. Feeding tendrils similar to those found on carniflora then go to work, digesting the prey.



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Poseidon Trilobyte (*Colacarius wernerii*)

Large, slow moving arthropods, Poseidon Trilobytes live in tide pools, mud flats, kelp forests, and ocean shallows. Poseidon trilobytes, or roaches, are apparently highly toxic to known species if consumed, and their shells are correspondingly brightly colored to warn off predators. They also have glands along their dorsal surfaces that produce a sticky, bioluminescent secretion which plays an important role in reproduction. Trilobytes can survive on land for several days, but they prefer to remain submerged except for the occasional feeding foray.

Behavior Primarily a scavenger, the Poseidon trilobyte feeds on carrion and decaying plant matter. Trilobytes use their large, formidable-looking forelegs in mating displays, and to fasten themselves to large carcasses while feeding. Docile creatures, except during their brief mating season when the males become very aggressive, trilobytes are a common sight around settlements in New Hawaii.

Trilobytes lay their egg cases among the fronds of Poseidon kelp, fixing

them to the blades with the strong natural adhesive in their glowing secretions. The resultant nocturnal glow of the egg masses seems a potent deterrent to hunters. Upon hatching, the larvae have voracious appetites and swarm over the surrounding area in search of food, leaving the kelp behind and scouring the shore. The young trilobytes continue to feed, molt, and grow over the years and can eventually reach up to three meters in size.

Early settlers found the trilobytes extremely poisonous. Other factors, however, make trilobytes an important resource animal. Their bioluminescent glands are the source of a pigment popular among natives, who use the dye to decorate their homes, textiles, bodies, and boats. When mixed with certain oils, the dye also makes a body paint capable of inducing remarkable hallucinations. Many native and newcomer communities also use pens of semi-domesticated trilobytes as a convenient means of organic waste disposal.

Trilobytes picked up their nickname, roaches, from the behavior of their hatchlings in human habitation. When the hatchlings erupt every spring, there is no controlling the scurrying, ravenous arthropods. It wasn't long before the trilobytes realized there was always food in human settlements, and started laying their eggs nearby. Not long after, someone called the scurrying young roaches, and the name stuck. Coastal settlements in the New Hawaiian chain are often assaulted by these hungry creatures for several weeks each spring. The roaches' toxicity ensures that

they usually get the right of way. Luckily, "roach season" lasts less than a month, and ends as quickly as it begins.

Range New Hawaii

Habitat Tidal pools, beaches, shallow seas, and kelp forests.
(Larva, Adult)

Length .5 meters, 1 to 2.3 meters Weight .02 kilograms, 4 to 6.7 kilograms Frequency Rare (seasonal), common Resource Value None, High: Adults serve as waste disposers, are harvested for fluorescent pigment. Threat Level Minimal, Low Poison Strength 55, 45, lethally toxic if eaten.

Movement 4/3, 1/3

Awareness 95/4, 35/3

Initiative 65, 45/3

Intellect 10/2, 25/2

Agility 65, 25/3

Constitution 45/2, 60

Endurance 70/3, 65

Strength 10/1, 80

Rounds 1, 3

Attack None, fore claws - 45, grade 3,1 per round.

Damage Ranks 1/25 2/35 3/65 4/80 5/95 6/100

Damage Scale 1, 5

Armor 1/10, 2/15



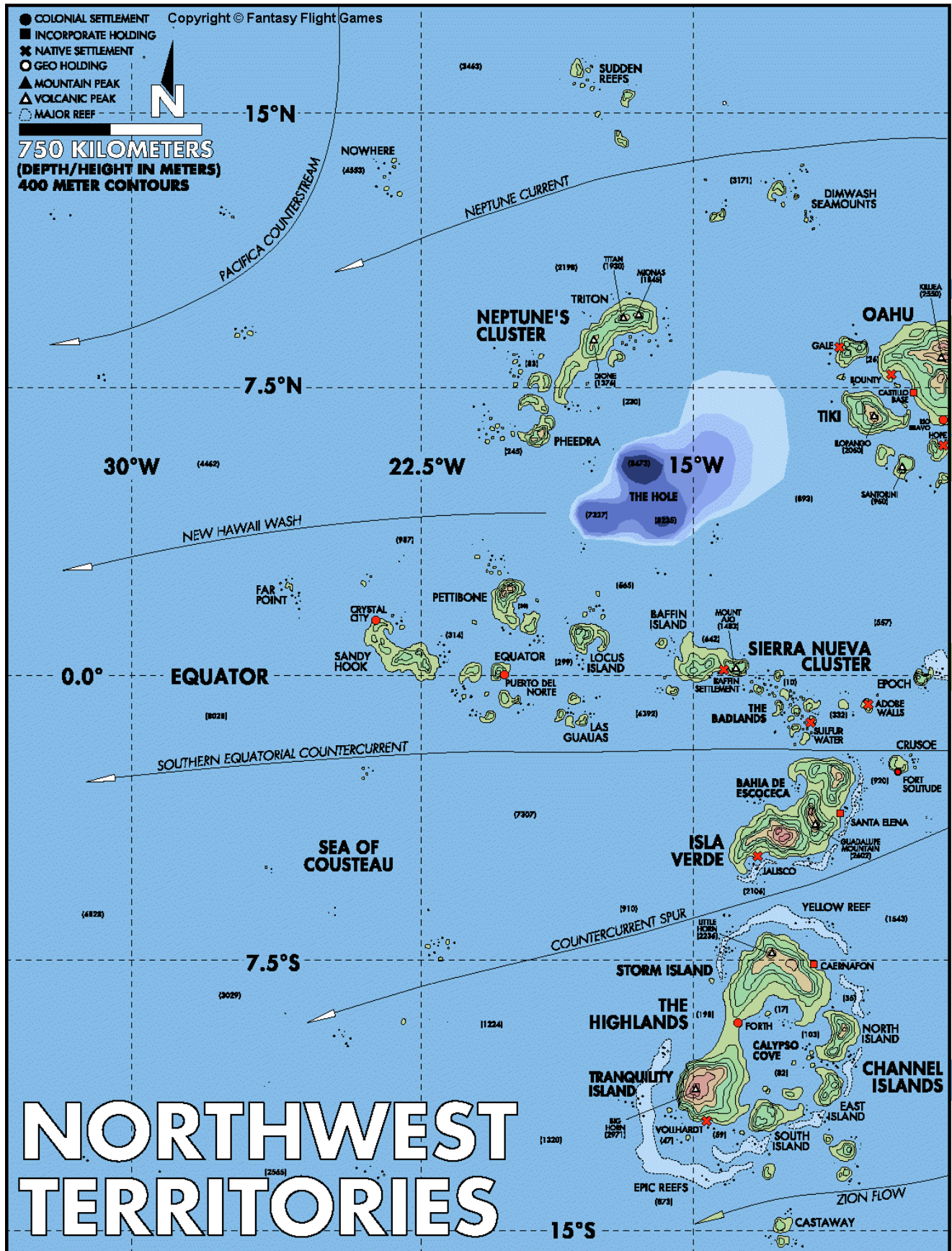
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THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The chain of islands running from Castaway to Pettibone was classified as the Northwest Territories in the OCA Colonial Survey of 2167. The region includes several landmasses, and all of the primary island types are represented.

At the southern boundary of the Northwest Territories, the Highlands are composed of two different volcanic formations - Storm Island and Tranquillity Island - linked by a low, narrow isthmus that is often completely submerged during storms. Due to the significant northeasterly tilt of the Highlands formation, Storm Island is less protected from the prevailing winds than its twin, and its weather can be considerably more inhospitable. Both islands are dramatically jagged in outline and present a relief of sharp peaks and deep valleys.

Along the east and windward side of the islands, erosion has produced gentle, densely rain-forested slopes, while the west and leeward side of the islands boasts the highest sea cliffs ever encountered by human beings. A broad coastal plain featuring magnificent white sand beaches stretches along the windward side of the Highlands. Streams, small rivers, and countless waterfalls rush and tumble down the verdant slopes to drain into the surrounding lagoon.

The Channel Islands are surrounded by the same massive barrier reef that encircles the Highlands. The North, East, and South Islands are well eroded, remnant volcanoes and are responsible for Calypso Cove's characteristically tranquil waters. Several major channels running through the reef allow the safe passage of even large ships, as the channels can reach depths of up to fifty meters.

Isla Verde is considered by many to be the most beautiful island on Poseidon. Despite its lack of beaches, the island's magnificent lushness and dramatic terrain make it a favorite for travel posters on Earth and Luna. Isla Verde's towering central peak is wrapped in heavy rain forests and rises to 2,662 meters. The island's interior is laced with countless streams and small rivers that cut wide valleys down from looming ridges and sometimes hurtle down in waterfalls, forming pristine freshwater pools.

The forty major islands and more than 300 islets of the Sierra Nueva Cluster are links in the chain of volcanic activity that stretches from Sandy Hook to Isla Verde. The largest landmass, Baffin Island, is ruggedly volcanic, with sharp spires, deep valleys, and high plateaus, and accounts for almost half of the land area in the cluster. The largest of the remaining islands are also volcanic; many overlaid with limestone, while the smallest islets are coral atolls and limestone formations. Volcanic activity is pronounced in the region, and the overflow of new lava prevents the development of large-scale reef formations along the shores of many islands.

Stretching 500 kilometers from northeast to southwest, Triton Island is the major landmass of Neptune's Cluster. It is a large, mountainous island, much longer than it is wide, with an extensive peninsula jutting southwest toward a series of smaller outlying islands. Trident Island is dominated by the Tethys Mountains, a central chain cut by high, broad valleys. The Tethys chain is widest at the northeastern end of the island and tapers gradually as it nears the peninsula. Triton Island is flanked by coastal plains and beaches along its northern

section, while the southern peninsula is dominated by coastal marshland. The outlying islands of Neptune's Cluster are also predominately volcanic, though many low, coral atolls are also present.

Due to the proximity of the Northwest Territories to the equator, the region's tropical climate is hot and humid most of the year. Nevertheless, such factors as latitude, elevation, and position relative to prevailing winds can cause considerable weather variations among the islands. There is little seasonal change on the islands that straddle the equatorial belt, though Neptune's Cluster and the Highlands are characterized by mild, opposing seasons. Annual rainfall is usually very heavy, with some islands receiving as much as 600 centimeters per year.

Cyclonic storms are a constant danger for the islanders of the Northwest Territories. There is almost always a tropical storm of some magnitude active in the region, and at least one Force 5 or 6 is inevitable most every year. It is not uncommon for an island settlement to be ravaged by a newborn storm early in the season, only to have it pay a return visit after circumnavigating the planet. These storms are often referred to as "twotimers" by the locals.

The flora and fauna in the Northwest Territories vary considerably by island type. The high, volcanic islands tend to support a more numerous and diverse biota than the low, coral atolls. The atolls are delicate, often transient formations and are extremely vulnerable to constant change and destructive forces. Herbaceous plants, scrub, and grasses grow along the island coastlines, while several species of trees and bushes grow further inland. On the high islands, the windward sides are often carpeted with rain forest, dense with trees, bushes, ferns, vines, and flowering plants. The leeward sides of these islands are sometimes blanketed with monsoon forest or bush cover, while some are characterized by barren grassland or even coastal desert. The ephemeral borders between windward and leeward are often thick with reeds, bamboo, and low brush.

Poseidon analogs of birds, insects, corals, marine mollusks, and fish are found in abundance throughout the region. Higher animals are also in evidence, and some of the largest caneopose migrations ever documented have been observed in the equatorial waters of the Sierra Nueva Cluster. Ironically, the most common animals in the Northwest Territories may be those that are not native to Poseidon - the rabbits, pigs, and iguanas brought to the waterworld by the original colonists.

The Northwest Territories were among the last regions of the Pacifica Archipelago to be colonized by human beings. Prior to the Abandonment, the meteorological research station at Vollhardt on the southern coast of Tranquillity Island was the only human outpost in the area. In 2097, the research station's surviving technology was converted into a solar, wind, and wave power facility, and a permanent settlement grew around it. At the same time, immigrants from the Haven Cluster spread northward, establishing communities along the sheltered beaches of Calypso Cove and in the deep valleys of Isla Verde. In 2098, the improbable partnership of a dolphin mystic called

Sage and an orca soldier named Bataku led a group of more than a hundred colonists to begin the settlement of the countless islands of the Sierra Nueva Cluster.

The Northwest Territories remained only sparsely inhabited until well after Recontact. It was not until the discovery of Long John and the growing Incorporate presence on Poseidon that humans would be attracted in any great numbers to this often inhospitable region. Since then, the company towns of Santa Elena and Caernafon have grown dramatically with the expanding interests of GenDiver and Lavender Organics on the colony world. Beyond this Incorporate presence, though, newcomers remain fairly rare in the Northwest Territories.

THE BAFFIN ISLAND SETTLEMENT

I challenge anyone to find a more rugged and beautiful place anywhere on Poseidon. Baffin Island is a land hewn violently from the planet by the irresistible hand of Vulcan, its countenance chiseled and lashed by the power of wind and wave. It is wracked by the shudders of the earth and pounded by hurricane winds, and still it perseveres. This is an angry, defiant place.

And yet, there is life here; life that has been shaped and molded by the same savage elements that raise mountains from the sea, only to hammer them into sand. This is Nature, red in tooth and claw, and the creatures who live here wring survival from their harsh world with a ruthlessness that is alien and terrifying to the civilized creatures of an artificial world. Civilization has no place here. To the natives of this land, those who invade it and seek mastery over it are just predators, stalking beasts to be hunted and destroyed. There is no mercy in the jungle. - Tomas McLain, The New Yorker

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

The first native settlement established in the Sierra Nueva Cluster is located along the southern coast of Baffin Island, at 0°8'36" north latitude, 14°3'S5" west longitude. As the natives of the village apparently have no single proper name for the place, newcomers have taken to calling it the Baffin Island Settlement.

Baffin Island is the largest landmass in the cluster, a high volcanic formation with rugged peaks and deep valleys. It is a relatively young island, and is still in the process of being raised from the ocean through active volcanism. Its central peak, Mount Ajo, is perpetually wreathed in smoke and volcanic gasses, and the streams that tumble down its rain-forested slopes to the sea are often so sulfur-tainted as to be yellow in color. Open vents form countless geysers and hot springs across the island, and its beaches are often little more than broken obsidian fields and rugged basaltic rock.

HISTORY

The Baffin Island Settlement was founded in 2098 by Bataku, an orca soldier, and Sage, the dolphin mystic whose teachings he followed. Bataku was a master sergeant in the UN Peace-keeping Force, and had seen action in the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean before being assigned to the Athena Project's small security force. Like many cetaceans with combat experience, he viewed the mission as a chance

to leave Earth - and all of the insanity he had begun to associate with it - far behind.

When the resupply ships failed to arrive in 2096, Bataku was not terribly disappointed. He had been tempted many times to simply leave the colony and journey alone into Poseidon's wilderness, to survive or die as his ancestors had in Earth's oceans. While he had never really managed to identify with the Athena Project, however, he was still loyal to it and always resolved to remain with the colony to fulfill his duty. When the colony's leaders decided to spread out across the planet in an effort to maximize the colonists' chances for survival, Bataku sensed an opportunity to find a place for himself in this new world.

Bataku was a transient orca, and the founding of a new settlement was not really in his nature. He had spoken with several other orcas in the security detachment, hoping to form a new pod that would wander the oceans, hunting for food and living their lives much like pre-genlift transient killer whales. His plans changed when he encountered the dolphin named Sage, who explained to him that his duty to the people of the Athena Project had not ended with the Abandonment.

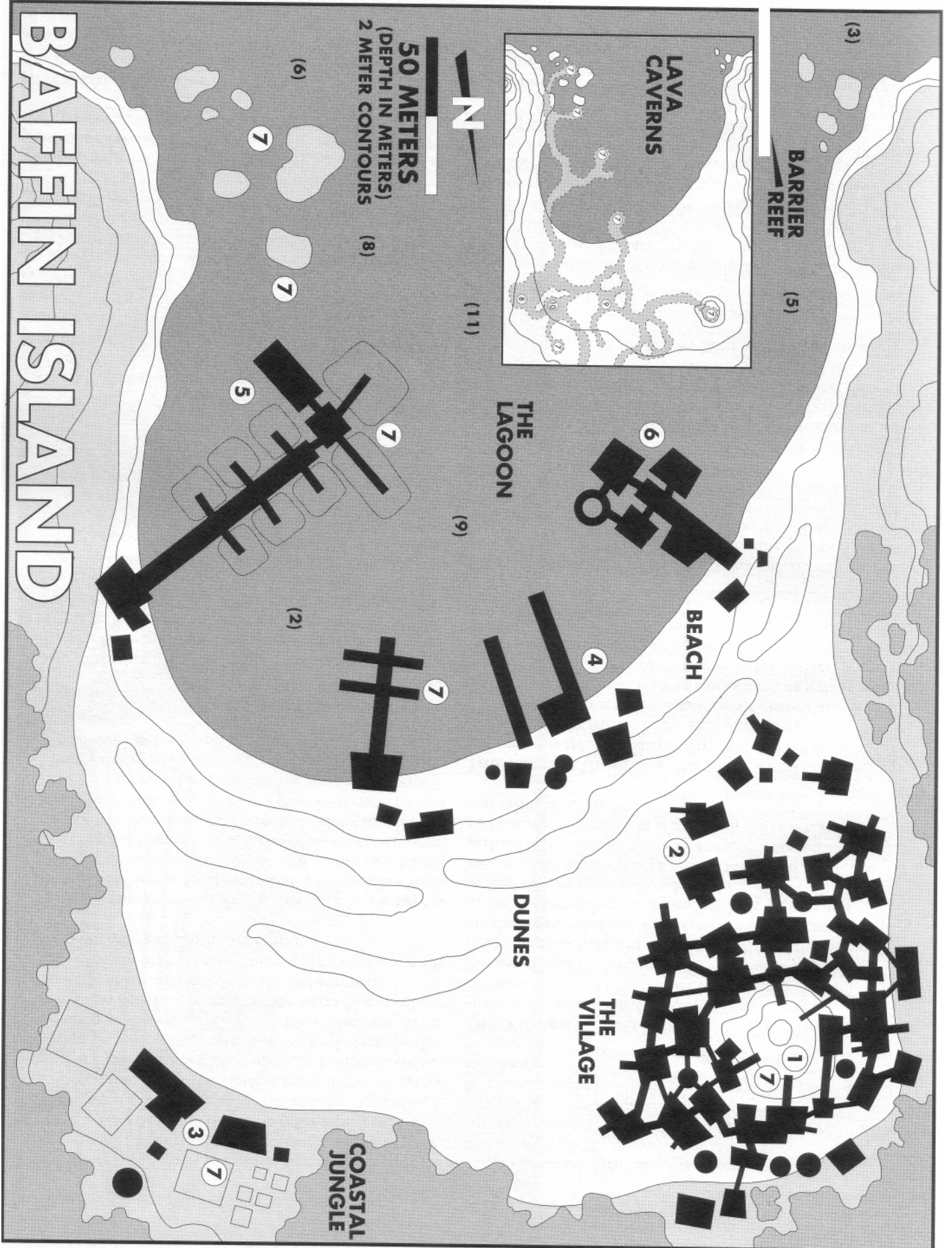
Sage, a thirty-two-year-old evolutionary biologist, was one of the most distinguished and respected researchers in the Athena Project's scientific contingent. While his scientific work was often groundbreaking, the dolphin was also heavily involved in the Whalesong Theogony movement on Earth, and frequently incorporated his scientific work into theological essays published in cetacean religious and philosophical journals. While his obligations to the Athena Project were always his priority during the early years of the colony, he became more and more involved in the spiritual needs of the Athena Project's cetacean population as time passed.

For Sage, the Abandonment presented an opportunity to build a new community entirely unlike any that had ever existed on Earth or the Colonies. He believed that a simpler lifestyle free of the dominating influence of advanced technology would allow cetaceans and humans to live together in a more harmonious manner, a way far more compatible with the naturalistic worldview and spiritual beliefs of cetaceans.

Few of the original human colonists found Sage's vision especially compelling. Most were, after all, still scientists and engineers, and while they had accepted the necessity to adapt to a sustainable, low-tech way of life, they still hoped to salvage as much of the technological civilization that had brought them to Poseidon as they could. Many of their children - who had seen Earth only in computer holovids - were open to the dolphin's ideas, however. More than half of the 100 colonists who followed Bataku and Sage to the Sierra Nueva Cluster were humans.

The first years of the small settlement were very difficult, especially for the humans. The needs of the cetacean population were few, and they could easily be provided for with no technological assistance whatsoever. The humans, however, were faced with radical transformations of every aspect of their lives. Bataku provided solid leadership and necessary discipline, and Sage was instrumental in instilling the cultural values and institutions that eased the transition. Nevertheless, as many

BAFFIN ISLAND



twenty of the humans living on Baffin Island immigrated to other settlements within the first three years, and another eight were lost to sickness, accidents, or predatory attacks.

Indeed, limited population was the single greatest obstacle the Baffin Island Settlement had to overcome. In the early years, there was a great deal of contact with other settlements in the region - primarily those on Isla Verde and the Highlands. It became a custom for several isolated communities to gather together at a predetermined location for the Planetfall celebration, if for no other reason than to develop relationships that would foster genetic diversity in individual settlements. As the years wore on and the population of the Sierra Nueva continued to grow, these meetings dwindled and eventually ceased. By Recontact, the natives of the cluster had no regular outside contact with other settlements on Poseidon.

For years, Recontact passed almost unnoticed by the natives of Baffin Island. News of GenDiver research teams on Isla Verde in 2176 was of some concern to the settlement's new leader, Bataku's son and namesake, but there had as yet been no contact with them. Nevertheless, Prophet, the dolphin who had inherited the obligation of caring for the settlement's spiritual life, had been warning for more than ten years that "Despoilers" from Earth would return to Poseidon and that their coming would threaten his people's very survival.

Tensions, and an almost xenophobic fear of the newcomers, were running high on Baffin Island, and they rose to a fevered pitch in 2178 when news reached the settlement that GenDiver had established a company town, Santa Elena, on the shores of Isla Verde. Bataku immediately sent an emissary to the town to speak with the GenDiver leadership and communicate his people's claim to the Sierra Nueva Cluster and their wish to minimize contact with the newcomers. Harold Freed, then GenDiver's director of operations on Poseidon, informed the emissary that his people had no legal title to the islands of the Sierra Nueva, and that GenDiver was already involved in negotiations with the GEO High Commissioner for Trade and Industry over mineral rights in the region. At that time, before the discovery of Long John, those mineral rights were not expected to amount to much.

After 2185, however, the Sierra Nueva became a proverbial gold mine for GenDiver and other Incorporate interests when extensive xenosilicate deposits were discovered throughout the region. From the outset, GenDiver survey teams were joined by heavily armed security personnel, and it quickly became apparent to Prophet and Bataku that they would have to fight for their homes. Bataku began the gradual process of transforming the Baffin Island Settlement from a peaceful community of hunter-gatherers into an armed war camp, and Prophet dispatched representatives to meet with the leadership of several insurgent groups and ecoterrorist cells that had begun to quietly emerge on the colony world. These actions, and the GenDiver response to them, led to a pattern of escalating violence resulting in what is now known as the Sierra Nueva War.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The Baffin Island Settlement is a decentralized, multilevel, and largely amphibious environment. Most of the dwellings and primary structures in the settlement are clustered on the

beach of a small cove along the island's southern coast. Many of these structures even extend out into the deep lagoon and serve as workspaces for the community's cetaceans.

These surface dwellings are only inhabited when the community is safe from the threat of storms and violence. Quite often, the natives of Baffin Island are forced to retreat into a series of underground caverns accessible through tunnels and lava tubes opening into the lagoon and at various points around the island.

The Village A cluster of timber, cane, and thatch structures built in roughly concentric rings around a common area marks the topside village proper. The village lies just outside the treeline on the white sand beach that fronts the calm waters of the lagoon. Many of the dwellings are the multileveled structures common to native settlements across the archipelago, and most are built on stilts as a natural defense against the tides and surges that occasionally surmount the barrier reef protecting the lagoon. There are perhaps fifty buildings scattered across this stretch of beach, and during fair weather, it is busy with the sights, sounds, and smells of native life.

The Lagoon The shallow, blue-green waters of the lagoon that stretches from the island's barrier reef to the beach are as important to the natives of the settlement as the village itself. The lagoon is home to the settlement's extensive docks, kelp fields, algae pens, and cetacean workspaces, as well as many shallow-water fish species that serve as the natives' primary food source. The lagoon also conceals several of the lava tubes and tunnels that lead to the hidden underground level of the Baffin Island Settlement.

The Caverns Baffin Island is riddled with caverns created by the formation of lava gas pockets during Mount Ajo's innumerable eruptions. The lava flow from the volcano also left tunnels, or lava tubes, through the island's basaltic rock, some of which provide access to the caverns. Because most of these lava tubes are relatively old and the island has inevitably subsided over the millennia, the vast majority of the tunnels leading to sizable caverns are below sea level. This feature has led to the popular misconception among newcomers on Poseidon of natives living in "underwater settlements." While most of the access tunnels are submerged, all but a few of the habitable caverns - those not entirely filled with water - are above sea level.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Since its founding in 2098, the population of Baffin Island has swelled to more than 400. Perhaps 250 of the residents are aquaformed humans, with divers and osmoforms represented equally. Cetaceans make up the remainder of the population, and all but about forty of those are dolphins. While orcas are a distinct minority in the settlement, they are of course a prominent and respected one, as Bataku's position of leadership suggests. The orcas' numbers are also growing relative to the dolphins', largely due to the orcas' longer lifespan. Of the 150 cetaceans living in the Baffin Island Settlement, perhaps twenty of them are newcomers who have either immigrated to the community or defected from the GEO and Incorporate military forces.

GOVERNMENT

That there is a significant distinction between leadership and governance is clearly demonstrated in the administration of the Baffin Island Settlement. Bataku is the undisputed leader, and serves as a charismatic figure of unity for the entire community. However, the orca's public duties are confined almost entirely to the guerrilla war the natives are fighting against GenDiver and the GEO. Most of the day-to-day management of the community is carried out by Prophet and a council of ten native elders. While Bataku is responsible for planning and execution, Prophet identifies and selects many of the military targets of the orca's warpod.

ECONOMIC BASE

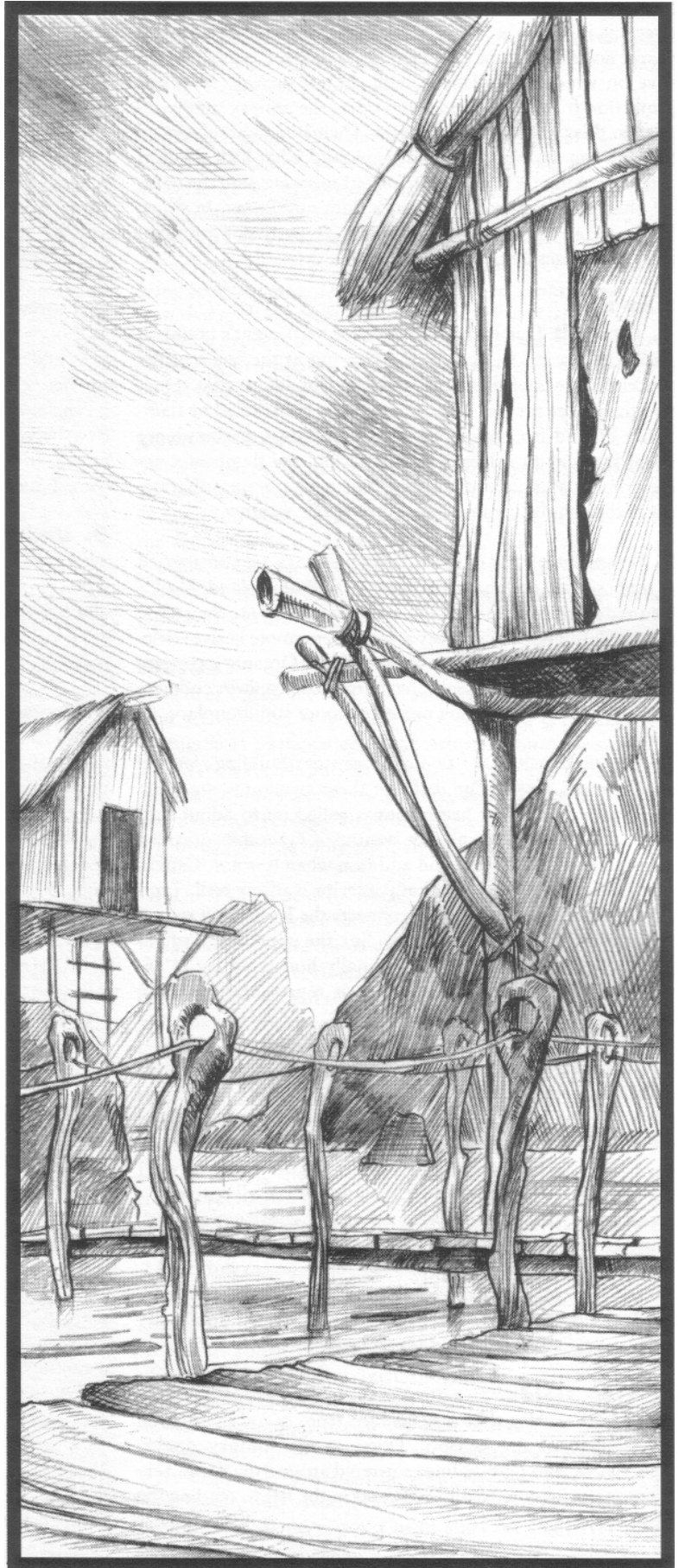
By newcomer standards, the Baffin Island Settlement is one of the most primitive native communities on Poseidon. The natives of Baffin Island have abandoned almost all productive technology and survive through subsistence agriculture, hunting, and gathering. Until recently, they had been involved in almost no trade with other settlements, producing only enough material goods to provide for their own needs.

The heart of the Baffin Island natives' economy is the sunburst. The seasonal hunting of caneopose provides the natives with meat, clothing, and materials for tools and other necessities. The hunting seasons occur throughout the region's mild winters, in preparation for the storm season that lasts through most of the spring and summer. Much of the population becomes almost nomadic during this time, traveling from hunting lodge to hunting lodge throughout the Sierra Nueva. In recent years, the warpods attacking GenDiver shipping and facilities have been organized around these hunting parties, and the lodges often serve a dual role as hunting camp and military outpost.

In addition to sunburst hunting, the Baffin Island natives also maintain small kelp fields and algae pens in the lagoon, raise the pigs, rabbits, and iguanas common to all native settlements, and even cultivate small fungus farms in the caverns below the island. This rudimentary agriculture is further supplemented by the gathering of wild fruits and vegetables from the island's interior.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond the common native structures like livestock pens, dwellings, boats, and hunting lodges, the Baffin Islanders have little in the way of infrastructure. Even these modest structures are of little use to the large cetacean population. All of the natives - both human and -cetacean - can metabolize saltwater, and while



the humans prefer freshwater from the island's streams and rivers, it is not a pressing concern. They have no electrical power nor any need of it. When the barrier reef and sheltered cove on which the village is built do not provide sufficient protection from winds and flood tides, the natives simply retreat to their underground habitat. Their bodies are designed to be strong and resistant to disease, and what little medical care they require is provided by healers working with the natural pharmaceuticals of the island's flora and fauna. In short, Baffin Island itself naturally provides the natives with what little infrastructure they require.

MAP KEY

1. Fire Pit This is the center of the settlement's common area. The fire pit is located in a clearing at the heart of the concentric rings of dwellings and other buildings that represent the village proper. The common area is encircled by flambeaux crafted from a cane analog that grows in abundance along the island's ridges. The fire pit and the flambeaux are the primary sources of light for the social gatherings that occur nightly in the common area during fair weather.

2. Dwelling Most of the village's buildings are constructed of timber, cane, and thatch indigenous to Baffin Island. Manufactured materials like steel and industrial plastic are even more rare on Baffin Island than they are in other remote native settlements, though there are a few exceptions. Organic technologies, and bioplastic especially, have received Prophet's endorsement, and so are becoming more and more commonplace.

The typical dwelling is a two or three story building elevated on one-meter risers. The walls of these structures are often little more than water hemp canvas rolled up to admit sunlight and cool breezes when the weather is favorable, or rolled down to protect against wind and rain when it is not. Canvas partitions often serve as the only interior walls as well. Typically, a simple wooden ladder connects the levels, and swinging bridges or simple planks often link the upper levels of adjacent dwellings. Each dwelling usually houses an entire extended family, and the architecture is representative of the openness of the culture.

3. Livestock Pens These simple structures are crafted from cane and timber and hold the natives' rabbits, iguanas, and pot-bellied pigs. The livestock are fed over-ripe kelp from the lagoon, wild seaweed, and tubers harvested from the jungle.

4. Docks Sharing the basic characteristics of all native architecture, the docks are of much newer construction than many of the buildings in the village, as they have been repaired and rebuilt many times following severe storms. A multitude of outriggers and catamarans is always moored at the docks, and the outbuildings are used to store unfinished hulls, sails, fishing nets, and marine equipment.

5. Kelp Fields The settlement's small kelp fields are enclosed with netting that is suspended from buoys floating on the surface of the lagoon. There are secondary docks, workspaces, and outbuildings clustered around the fields. Several aquaforms can usually be found in the fields, tending the crop.

6. Workspaces These floating structures serve as simple workspaces for the settlement's cetacean population. While the cetaceans of Baffin Island lack the cybernetics, computers, and robotics that make modern, high-tech workspaces so functional, these facilities are surprisingly sophisticated. In most cases, high-tech components are replaced by human assistants, and the workspaces allow cetaceans to be involved in projects ranging from boat construction to the repair of fishing nets. While a dolphin might not be much help with a hammer or a saw, for instance, he can perform measurements, carry materials, or help to rig a sail.

7. Lava Tubes These tunnels and passageways were formed as molten lava flowed from Mount Ajo to the sea. They provide underwater access to the underground caverns that are the natives' final refuge from storms and external threats. In recent years, almost constant patrols around the lava tubes have become commonplace, and when the settlement fears an attack, the entrances are often protected by underwater personnel mines and heavy weapon emplacements.

8. Underground Lagoon This is a natural, subterranean lagoon created where several lava tubes open up into a large, air-filled cavern. The lagoon is encircled by rocky shelves and ledges and serves as a convenient, underground common area for both cetaceans and humans. It is here that council meetings and other gatherings are held in times of trouble.

9. Cave Dwellings Most of the accessible caverns below Baffin Island are quite small, and living conditions are usually very cramped, with several natives - sometimes an entire extended family - taking up residence in a single cave for days or weeks at a time. As a result of these unpleasant conditions, the caverns are often used only to eat and sleep, as the natives spend most of their active hours in the waters of the lagoon and open ocean.

10. Fungus Farm Some of the smaller caverns are used to cultivate mushroom analogs and other crops that thrive in this dark, wet environment. As the war with GenDiver has escalated, many of these subterranean farms have had to make way for the storage of weapons, ammunition, and other materiel.

ACCESS DENIED WAR PATH

A concealed game trail leads from the village, up the rain-forested slopes of Baffin Island to a secret military encampment. The trail is protected by deadfalls, native booby-traps, anti-personnel mines, and numerous ambush blinds. The camp itself is located in a deep, rugged valley 900 meters above sea level. The base is heavily camouflaged, using everything from natural materials to high-tech, phototropic fabrics. Together with the almost perpetual cloud-cover and shroud of smoke and gasses produced by Mount Ajo, this camouflage makes the base nearly undetectable from the air. At any given time, there are fifty to a hundred natives training at the base, and its resources are formidable. Army-surplus tents and thatch huts serve as barracks and administration facilities, and

areas have been marked off for live-fire practice, physical training, and hand-to-hand combat instruction. Weapons and materiel on hand include a variety of small arms, grenades, rocket launchers, and infantry surface-to-air -missiles. These weapons are stored in concealed, underground bunkers scattered across the valley.

Along with the natives, the base hosts a strange mix of personnel. Stuart Parsons, the Internal Security liaison to the Crusoe island garrison, makes frequent appearances at the camp: He and the agents under his command have been responsible for acquiring a great deal of the camp's arms and equipment and also assist in military training and instruction. The camp is also often visited by three members of a Zero Nation cell based in Nomad, each of whom -as extensive backgrounds in guerrilla warfare. Finally, there are perhaps a dozen soldiers who have deserted from the GEO Peace-keepers, and half that number who were formerly employed by GenDiver Security.

With this diverse support, the Sierra Nueva natives are becoming a dangerous fighting force. On the other hand, there is no shortage of tension between the camp's diverse factions and brawls are not at all uncommon. There have even been a few incidents of more serious violence. Most recently, a decorated Peacekeeper veteran on loan from Armed Forces to Stuart Parsons was badly injured by an enraged killer whale during amphibious training exercises. The soldier is currently being treated by native healers in the village, but if his wounds prove fatal, it will spell serious trouble for Parsons and Internal Security:

The base's location makes it impossible for Bataku to supervise the training regimen personally, and the orca refuses to use Cicadas and hover drones. However, he has consented to conventional audio-visual communications, and the caméras and holographic projectors dotting the valley afford him a ready electronic presence in the camp: More than one new recruit has been startled when a holographic apparition of the massive killer whale suddenly appears, screeching orders and instructions in Interspec. A series of hidden lava tubes leads from the valley to the island's network of underground caverns and lagoons; where Bataku can participate more directly in his soldiers' training.

DANGEROUS GAMES

Andres Halama; one of the GenDiver Security defectors at the Baffin Island training camp, is actually a doublé agent. Ha[ama has an uplink communications unit secreted about five kilometers from the camp, and he makes weekly reports on the natives' activities. The defector has acquired a great deal of information, including the camp's location, its diverse personnel, and the natives' general training regimen and activities. However, as a former GenDiver employee, he is not privy to the most classified plans of Bataku and Prophet. Nevertheless, GenDiver considers him a valuable asset and hopes he will be able to gain the natives' confidence through continuing service to their cause.

SANTA ELENA

The Incorporated city-states, and especially GenDiver, have become the favorite targets of political pundits and ideologues. Let's try to remember, though, that there would be no Poseidon colony without us. We gave the original colonists and their descendants the genetic modifications that allowed them to survive on this world during the Blight Years, and we were among the first to develop this planet's economic resources. In a very real sense, GenDiver is as much a "native" of this colony as any fourth-generation colonist.

Those who attack us in the General Assembly and the Haven Council scream about human rights violations, but produce no evidence to support their accusations. The truth is, living conditions in Santa Elena are among the best to be found anywhere on Poseidon. Unlike the regime in Geneva, we provide a good job, a good home, and a good future for everyone we bring to this world. There are no slums in Santa Elena. Contrast that with the despicable conditions of the Geneva regime's Brighton projects in Haven, and tell me who is really guilty of human rights atrocities. Where would you rather live? - Steven Crawford, Director of Operations, GenDiver

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Santa Elena, the GenDiver company town, is located at 3° 37' 25" south latitude, 12° 48' 11" west longitude on the eastern coast of Isla Verde. The island is very rugged, and except for the Bahia de Escoceca on the leeward side, has almost no beaches. Santa Elena sprawls across several hundred square kilometers of cleared and leveled rain forest between the island's two central peaks.

HISTORY

GenDiver's presence on Poseidon technically dates to the late 21st Century, as several of the company's geneticists and bioengineers participated in the Athena Project mission. The GenDiver leadership seizes every opportunity to remind Earth and the Colonies that its people were on Poseidon before there was a Global Ecology Organization, or "Geneva regime," as it is often referred to by company executives.

GenDiver's first post-Recontact presence on the colony world began in 2176, when several research teams arrived on the *UNSS Nerid*. These teams were primarily involved in biological research and ecological surveys intended to evaluate the development of local resources for the pharmaceutical and environmental engineering industries. A small outpost was established on Isla Verde and gradually evolved into a permanent company town by 2178. Nevertheless, the number of GenDiver personnel on Poseidon did not exceed 100 until after the discovery of xenosilicates in 2185.

Ira Goldblatt, the president of GenDiver, was one of the first to recognize the monumental significance of that discovery. Mere days after the first news reached Earth - before the evidence had even received independent verification - Goldblatt arranged to purchase two fusion torchships outright from Dundalk and negotiated a contract with the shipbuilding giant for the construction of several more. Goldblatt followed these moves with a leveraged buyout of Marine Exploration Technologies, an independent Brazilian corporation specializing in deep-sea mining. Personnel and equipment began flooding into Santa Elena later that same year, and the first xenosilicate survey operations were underway around Isla Verde by the spring of 2187. As a result, only Atlas Materials, who was responsible for the initial discovery, got a head start on GenDiver in the new colonial gold rush.

By 2190, GenDiver had staked several claims to xenosilicate deposits around Isla Verde and had constructed its first Long John refining station outside Santa Elena. The company town itself had grown to more than 10,000 permanent residents, with the majority of them directly involved in the xenosilicate industry. Initial surveys of the Sierra Nueva Cluster identified some of the richest Long John fields in the Northwest Territories, and GenDiver was in an ideal position to secure a monopoly on their exploitation. When a company transport was assaulted and destroyed by local natives, the GenDiver leadership realized that its claim to the Sierra Nueva would not go uncontested. In the years that followed, Santa Elena began mobilizing for war.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

In appearance, Santa Elena possesses all of the characteristics of a combination resort town and military encampment. Throughout the 2180s, the surrounding terrain was cleared and leveled, then remade according to the designs of landscapers and architects. Rolling lawns, wooded parks, and lush gardens sprawl in a horseshoe pattern along the rugged coastline. Research Road, the settlement's main artery, is dotted with clusters of rustic Spanish-colonial ranch houses and tasteful, understated public buildings.

Most of Santa Elena's industrial and commercial facilities and infrastructure are located on the Bahía La Jolla. Santa Elena's extensive docks, GenDiver Security Coastal Patrol facilities, kelp fields and other aquacultural resources, and desalination and fusion plants are built out over the bay. The Santa Elena Resource Complex, a massive xenosilicate refinery, is located about five kilometers offshore.

Surface access to Santa Elena is controlled by GenDiver Security checkpoints and the Coastal Patrol. The mountaintop air traffic control tower is equipped with military-grade radar and communications equipment, and it is virtually impossible to approach the settlement by air undetected. GenDiver Security patrol officers, all heavily augmented and armed with submachine guns, are a common sight throughout the company town. All visitors to Santa Elena are required to apply for visas through GenDiver Security, and random checks by patrol officers are routine. A Colonial Times/Net reporter recently characterized Santa Elena as a "maximum-security country club."

DEMOGRAPHICS

More than ninety percent of the residents of Santa Elena are GenDiver employees, but only about one-third of those are full citizens. The majority of the residents are indentured labor imported from Earth to work in aquaculture, the Resource Complex, or the Long John fields. These laborers are generally housed in prefabricated barracks or offshore workcamps. While living conditions in these workcamps are spartan compared to the luxury of Santa Elena proper, they are worlds better than the conditions in the slums of Simushir or Haven. Ninety-eight percent of the residents of Santa Elena are newcomers, while the cetacean population is less than half a percent. Most cetaceans in Santa Elena work in the Coastal Patrol or search and rescue.

GOVERNMENT

Santa Elena is governed by Steven Crawford, GenDiver's director of operations on Poseidon. Many of Crawford's responsibilities are delegated to an Executive Board,

headed by a city administrator who handles many of the routine tasks of managing a growing municipality. The GEO's High Commissioner for State and Internal Affairs also maintains a consulate in Santa Elena, but it is widely rumored that its staff is dominated by Internal Security personnel. GenDiver considers the consulate a foreign embassy, and in any event there is little productive contact between the Incorporated state and the GEO.

ECONOMIC BASE

Santa Elena would still be little more than a small research outpost if not for the xenosilicate industry. While GenDiver's mining and refining operations are not as extensive as those of Atlas, Biogene, or the NIS, they are among the most efficient and profitable. GenDiver has also relocated the majority of its genetic research and development personnel and resources to Poseidon to reduce the costs of experimentation with Long John. GenDiver is currently expanding its colonial operations into such diverse industries as health care and banking, but these efforts still represent a tiny fraction of the revenues produced by xenosilicates.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Santa Elena's infrastructure is among the best on Poseidon. Most of the roadways and buildings are ten years old or less, and all are well maintained. The offshore plants provide abundant freshwater and electricity, and the modern docks, storage, and transportation facilities on the Bahía La Jolla have made Santa Elena one of Poseidon's most active ports. Violent crime is almost nonexistent, as the police protection provided by GenDiver Security is, if anything, considered by some to be excessive. Even the work camps are modern, clean, and well maintained, and too far from the rest of the town to mar its physical beauty.

ACCESS DENIED

THE MENAGERIE GenDiver has established an undersea habitat - Marine Research Complex #5 in the waters south of the Badlands. There have been numerous aborigine sightings in this area, and planners in Santa Elena have identified it as a promising location for a permanent base from which to investigate the enigmatic beings. The small facility is staffed by eighteen scientific and technical personnel whose mission is to accumulate as much data as possible on aborigine physiology, psychology, and sociology.

Outside observers are surprised that both the Sierra Nueva natives and the aborigines themselves have allowed the scientists to conduct their research unmolested. Similar efforts throughout Poseidon have been plagued by mysterious accidents, attacks by predators, or outright assaults by native extremists. After three months of operation, though, GenDiver's project is still running smoothly.

The reason for GenDiver's good fortune would come as a rather rude surprise to the planners back in Santa Elena. Marine Research Complex #5 affords the aborigines an excellent opportunity to study

the GenDiver scientists and engineers stationed there. Almost half of the habitat's personnel have been compromised by the aborigines' chemo-empathic abilities. The aborigines have already learned a great deal about the behavior and motivations of the GenDiver employees - indeed, they have only truly grasped the differences between the Incorporate and the rest of the colonists on Poseidon through these encounters.

PATHOGEN

Researchers in Santa Elena have been using xenosilicate templates to design a smart virus that would only target victims whose genetic codes fall within rigidly defined parameters. These researchers have access to detailed specifications of the biomods that their predecessors engineered into the X chromosomes of the female Athena Project colonists. By tailoring the virus to attack only those who share this artificial genetic code, the scientists hope to design a -biological weapon that will infect and kill only the native descendants of the first human colonists on Poseidon.

In the wake of the Blight, the research and development of biological weapons is the most serious offense listed in the GEO Criminal Code. All signatories to the GEO Charter - even Independents like GenDiver - were required to sign a binding treaty that prohibited such dangerous and abusive applications of biotechnology. If this research project was ever revealed - or worse, if the weapon was ever deployed - the GEO would almost certainly launch a full-scale campaign to dismantle and completely destroy the Incorporate state. Consequently, the project is perhaps GenDiver's most highly classified ongoing operation. Less than five people are aware of the true nature of the project, code-named Pandora Strain. These include Ira Goldblatt, the president of GenDiver; Steven Crawford, the director of operations on Poseidon; and Jackson Figueroa, the scientist heading the project. There are many other scientists, technicians, and administrators involved in some aspect of the Pandora Strain, but none of them are aware of the project's ultimate goal.

CRUSOE ISLAND MILITARY BASE

We call it Fort Solitude. After a few weeks out here, you'll really start to feel what we mean. The garrison's morale is the lowest I've ever seen in sixteen years of service. Insubordination, desertion, drug abuse, and many other violations of Armed Forces regulations are commonplace, and the brass have started turning over personnel every six months just to stop the bleeding.

Why all the trouble? Combat personnel posted to Fort Solitude have less than a fifty percent chance of finishing their tours without being wounded or killed. The so-called Sierra Nueva War has quietly become a meat grinder. What makes it worse is that the GEO can't decide which side we're on. Everyone knows about the Stone Bridge Massacre, about the GenDiver Security "death squads," and no one at Fort Solitude really blames the Sierra Nueva natives for what they're doing. But nine times out of ten it's the natives we end up fighting, usually after some official protest from GenDiver - a bunch of criminals who don't even recognize the GEO as a legitimate government.

And, hell, if political BS like that says anything about the GEO's leadership, who can argue? - excerpted from an anonymous letter to Colonial Times/Net

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

The GEO Armed Forces Crusoe Island Military Base, or Fort Solitude, is located at 3°46'7" south latitude, 9°32'18" west longitude. The outpost is approximately 300 kilometers northeast of Santa Elena, and rapid deployment troops can be

dispatched to either the company town or the Sierra Nueva in less than three hours. The island itself is a low, sandy atoll dotted with clumps of scrub grass and a few hardy, tropical trees. Flooding during storm surges is a serious threat to the small, coastal town that has grown up around the base.

HISTORY

Fort Solitude was established in 2195 when the justice Commission's efforts to keep peace in the region through an increased Native Patrol presence failed. The garrison is officially charged with the "pacification of hostile elements in the Sierra Nueva region of the Northwest Territories." When these orders were made public in 2196, there was a loud outcry from native groups regarding the GEO's failure to acknowledge the role of GenDiver in the conflict. Nonetheless, the wording is indicative of the GEO's official position on the Sierra Nueva War.

After almost ten years of violence, the only well-documented criminal activity in the region involves native attacks on GenDiver and GEO personnel. All known GenDiver reprisals have been within its rights under the GEO Charter as an Independent state. While the GEO leadership is convinced that GenDiver has, in fact, launched unprovoked attacks on the natives, no evidence to confirm this suspicion has been forthcoming. As a result, implicating GenDiver in the conflict has become the quiet responsibility of Internal Security, while the Peacekeeper garrison at Crusoe Island has found itself embroiled in a very public and controversial war with the natives.

In only four years of military operations, the conflict between Fort Solitude and the Sierra Nueva has resulted in fifty-two native and 367 Peacekeeper casualties. The Crusoe Island garrison has been further decimated by desertions, especially among the cetacean ranks. Because the cetaceans are typically the GEO's most effective troops in this marine guerrilla conflict, these desertions have seriously undermined the garrison's combat effectiveness.

The conflict has become a political and public relations nightmare for the garrison. Several activist groups, both native and newcomer, have relocated to Fort Solitude's small army town, and protests and demonstrations outside the base are common. Three Peacekeepers were court-martialed in 2198 for assaulting activists while out on the town for R&R. Armed Forces Military Intelligence is more concerned that these largely peaceful groups may have been accompanied by terrorist cells who pose a more significant threat to the base and its personnel. For the most part, the soldiers stationed at Fort Solitude just want to keep their heads down, finish their tours, and make it back to "the world" in one piece.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The Crusoe Island Military Base is a closed post, and access is available only to authorized personnel through a single checkpoint on the southeast side of the base. Gunnery Road is the

base's main thoroughfare, leading from the front gate to a circular drive around the post's central quadrangle. Clustered around the quad are the Command Headquarters, Administration Building, and Communications Building. Secondary streets lead to the Post Exchange (PX), Officer's and NCO clubs, barracks, and a small infirmary. An extensive motorpool, which includes aircraft hangars and docking facilities for watercraft, is located in a restricted area on the west side of the base. A small physical training course and a firing range are located about two kilometers northwest of the base proper.

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are currently 124 permanent GEO personnel stationed at Fort Solitude. This force is designated Echo Company, 33rd Infantry Battalion. The company is organized into two platoons, each numbering thirty-five combat personnel. Most of these soldiers are Peacekeepers, though the company boasts a small cadre of elite Super Troopers as well. The majority of Crusoe Island's combat personnel are human, though many have been aquaformed. There are twelve cetacean soldiers attached to the garrison.

GOVERNMENT

Fort Solitude is under the command of Captain Jacob Stone, a young officer with seven years of service to the GEO Armed Forces. Two Lieutenants, Steve Paxon and Carmen Ramirez, are in charge of the platoons, and eight NCOs are attached to Echo Company. Colonel Stone receives his orders from the brass at Fort Pacifica near Kingston, and ultimately from Lieutenant General Luther Gideon, the commander of all GEO military forces on Poseidon. Stuart Parsons is the onsite Internal Security officer, and is responsible for coordinating joint operations between his Commission and the garrison's military forces.

ECONOMIC BASE

The Crusoe Island base depends on the GEO Armed Forces for its economic support. Routine supply shipments typically arrive by cargo jumpcraft or transport VTOL from Fort Pacifica, in the Zion Islands (see page 76). In a crisis, materiel can also be brought in on dropships from Prosperity Station.

Throughout the Sierra Nueva conflict, logistics have been one of the command staff's most pressing concerns. Fort Pacifica is more than 2,000 kilometers to the south, and the GEO lacks the resources to provide armed escort for all of the garrison's supply shipments. Crusoe Island has lost several shipments to attacks by insurgent natives, pirates based in the Wall, and terrorist cells. The supply line to the Zion Islands is a long one, and there does not seem to be any certain way to secure it without a full-scale commitment by the Armed Forces leadership.

Crusoe, the town of sixteen permanent residents neighboring Fort Solitude, is no more self-sufficient than the garrison. The town boasts a general store, a small hotel, two saloons, and a brothel. The owner of the latter, Monique La Pace, doubles as her establishment's madam and the town's mayor. The hotel is usually booked to capacity with journalists and political dissidents, and La Pace has been generating some extra revenue by renting rooms to visitors. Simon Ferrel, proprietor of the Crusoe General Store, owns an old-but-functional solar still and offers hydrogen refills to travelers for exorbitant prices.

The town obtains almost all of its goods from traveling traders, Santa Elena, or larger newcomer settlements in the region. Almost everyone in the town - from Ferrel to the prostitutes

working for Monique - has prospered immensely from the base personnel, and more recently, the influx of newcomers drawn by the Sierra Nueva War.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Though small, the Crusoe Island garrison is well constructed and maintained. Most of the base's facilities and equipment are less than five years old, and are kept in top condition. Fort Solitude receives its power from a pair of small fusion reactors located in a hardened, watertight bunker some thirty meters below the base. Water is pumped in from the ocean to a desalination-and-hydrogen-cracking facility near the motorpool, then piped to a nearby cluster of storage tanks. The base's armory and supply depot are reinforced bunkers, and are accessible through underground tunnels from the Command HQ and the motor pool. Most of the buildings in Fort Solitude, including the barracks, are prefabricated bioplastic structures that are utilitarian in appearance and very durable.

Like any military outpost, Fort Solitude has state-of-the-art communications resources. Computers in the Communications Building and Command HQ are tightbeamed directly into the GEO Armed Forces communications network. Among other things, this allows the command staff to track all GEO troop movements on the planet, monitor Armed Forces satellite surveillance, and access radar- and sonar-tracking of all traffic on, above, or below the surface of the region. A 100-meter tower antenna provides mid-range radio communications in the event that satellite access is lost.

ACCESS DENIED

HIDDEN ENEMIES

The population of the small army town adjacent to the Crusoe Island garrison has expanded rapidly, as journalists, protesters, and opportunists have been drawn by the increasing controversy surrounding the GEO's involvement in the Sierra Nueva War. Unnoticed among the growing crowds, a small cell of three Zero Nation agents has set up shop in the town's hotel. From this base of operations, the terrorists are gathering what intelligence they can on the base's activities and reporting to their superiors in Haven.

They are also awaiting orders to launch a campaign of sabotage and assassination against the base and its personnel. This operation is planned to coincide with a native attack on the Resource Complex in Santa Elena. Zero Nation's leadership hopes that the cell's activities will serve as a distraction and make it more difficult for the garrison to respond to the crisis.

THE SIERRA NUEVA WAR

Throughout the last decade, the conflict between GenDiver and the natives of the Sierra Nueva Cluster has figured prominently in the colony world's tumultuous political climate. The violence in this rugged region strikes many as a fitting coun-

terpart to its wild and savage nature, and the war has attained an almost legendary status on Poseidon. While the colonial media is certainly responsible for much of this dramatization, the conflict really is a microcosm of the colony, thrown into stark and violent relief. There are basic issues and competing visions of the colony's future at stake.

GenDiver and its economic exploitation of the region represents humanity's interest in Poseidon's resources, especially Long John. The natives are fighting for their homes and a way of life that is incompatible with GenDiver's presence in the cluster. The GEO, as is often the case on Poseidon, is caught somewhere in the middle. Its philosophical foundation is very similar to the natives', but it also has an obligation to keep the peace and defend its member states from aggression. The Sierra Nueva War is an issue about which nearly everyone on Poseidon has a strong opinion, and many believe that this remote island cluster will be the battleground on which the colony world's future is decided.

The first violent confrontation between GenDiver personnel and the natives of the Sierra Nueva did not occur until 2190, five years after the discovery of xenosilicates and twelve years after the founding of Santa Elena. In the summer of that year, a group of young males from Baffin Island boarded a small GenDiver transport vessel that had been driven onto a nearby reef during a tropical storm. The boys evidently assaulted the crew, looted the ship, then set it aflame. All aboard were killed.

The following day, a GenDiver Security officer arrived at Baffin Island with a Marshal and a squad of Peacekeepers to take the youths into custody. They were to be held awaiting deportation back to Earth, where they would stand trial for murder and piracy. When Bataku failed to produce the accused, he was placed under arrest. However, the officers were not prepared for the transport of an adult orca, and by the time the Marshal returned with an appropriately equipped surface ship, Bataku had gone into hiding. As a result, the Baffin Island natives were declared hostile by both the GEO Colonial Administrator and GenDiver.

This incident was followed closely by a series of GenDiver reprisals throughout the Sierra Nueva, and low-level brushwar violence has characterized the area ever since. The GenDiver leadership has been very careful to insure that its overt activities in the region fall within the letter of the law under the GEO Charter. In general, this means that deadly force is only used to defend GenDiver assets against native attacks. There are persistent rumors, however, that GenDiver has launched preemptive assaults against the natives. One such incident occurred in 2192, when a squadron of GenDiver VTOL strike-fighters leveled Sulfur Water, a hunting camp in the Badlands. In its official report to the HCSIA, however, GenDiver provided satellite surveillance data that proved the camp was being used as a supply depot for illegally acquired military-grade weapons.

In 2194, the Justice Commission dispatched two Deputy Marshals and three Patrol Officers to the cluster to investigate the natives' acquisition of illegal weapons on the colonial black market. All five of these officers, along with a Native Patrol contact, were found murdered in Adobe Walls, an isolated

settlement in the Badlands. The locals proclaimed their innocence, insisting the bodies would never have been found if they had been responsible. Rumors began to circulate that GenDiver Security was guilty of the crime, hoping to frame the natives of Adobe Walls for the murders.

With this case still unsolved, the GEO Armed Forces established the Crusoe Island Military Base in 2195. Frustrated with the continuing violence, the Colonial Administrator handed Fort Solitude the impossible task of keeping the peace in the region. The garrison has been embroiled in a guerrilla war with the natives for almost five years. Native warpods attack GEO supply ships and patrols at every opportunity, then disappear. They retreat to small camps in the rain forests of the countless, unnamed islands of the cluster; they return to the hunting lodges hidden in the dense mangrove forests that dot the shallow seas of the region; they vanish below the waves, finding refuge in the underground caverns that riddle the volcanic islands.

The Sierra Nueva itself conspires against the GEO, rendering many of its technological resources ineffective. The natives time their attacks carefully to coincide with heavy cloud cover or storms that prevent satellite surveillance and make high-tech communications unreliable. They use the geography of their homeland, especially the ocean, to their advantage, making it impossible for the GEO to bring its reconnaissance and strike aircraft to bear against them. The garrison at Crusoe Island has been forced to fight this war on the natives' terms, and on their turf. Combat teams are deployed to root the natives out of their hidden strongholds, and are decimated by ambushes, hit-and-run tactics, and sabotage.

With the GEO's efforts only serving to escalate the level of violence in the region, GenDiver Security has continued its own private campaign against the Sierra Nueva natives. The GEO Charter gives the Independent member states the authority to arrest, incarcerate, and sentence criminal suspects. GenDiver has apparently found this to be its most effective tactic in the ongoing conflict. Security patrols no longer chase the native warpods when they retreat from the scene of an attack. They simply wait and descend in force on settlements suspected of harboring terrorists in the following days. The patrols search the villages, seize any evidence discovered, and apprehend as many suspects as they can. Quite often, the native insurgents will attack the patrols in the open rather than have their homes ransacked and their families taken prisoner, and this suits the heavily armed GenDiver Security patrols just fine.

The media has dubbed the most famous of these incidents the Stone Bridge Massacre. In 2198, twenty GenDiver Security personnel supported by assault jumpcraft arrived in Stone Bridge, a small native settlement in the southern part of the cluster. The course of events from that point on remains the subject of heated controversy. GenDiver claims the security patrol was attacked by native terrorists. Native witnesses and activists claim the GenDiver officers emerged from the jumpcraft in combat formation and immediately opened fire on the settlement.



Because a tropical storm was moving into the region, GEO surveillance satellites were unable to confirm or deny either account of the incident. Sensory recorder footage from the patrol's commanding officer verified GenDiver's version of the story, but the GEO's official statement on the incident implied that there was evidence the recordings had been manipulated or even fabricated.

Despite the mystery that surrounds the incident, two facts remain. First, seven natives lost their lives at Stone Bridge, including two women and one eight-year-old child, while the GenDiver patrol suffered no casualties. Second, the incident touched off a media feeding frenzy and a storm of protests from native and anti-Incorporate activists throughout the colony world. Rumors quickly spread across the archipelago of the GenDiver "death squads" that patrolled the region, executing men, women, and children with little or no provocation.

Three days after the incident, Colonial Times/ Net dispatched a news team to Stone Bridge to interview the surviving residents. GenDiver Security delivered the team's corpses to the news agency's offices in Haven the following day, along with transcripts of intercepted radio transmissions indicating the team had fallen victim to a native attack.

Several weeks later, Christian Ramis, president of the Earth Defense Initiative, established the Stone Bridge Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit organization intended to improve communication and education about native rights on the colony world. EDI is widely suspected of being a front for Zero Nation, one of Earth's oldest and most powerful ecoterrorist organizations. While he has never been officially linked to any terrorist act, Ramis is thought to be the chairman of Zero Nation's Central Committee. Shortly after the Foundation was established, GenDiver sent an official protest to the HCSIA, claiming it was being used to finance weapons and military training for the Sierra Nueva natives.

In 2199, the conflict continues and violence in the region is escalating. Whether from Zero Nation or some other source, the natives do seem to be receiving military weapons and training, and their attacks have become even more effective. Both GenDiver Security and the Peacekeeper garrison at Crusoe Island have been plagued by low morale and increasing desertions. While most natives have faithfully supported their cousins in the Sierra Nueva, public opinion among the newcomer population is increasingly swinging in their favor as well. Several factions in the GEO General Assembly on

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Earth are calling for the Crusoe Island base to be shut down, and some are pointing to the war as evidence of the GEO's "military occupation of an independent world."

The native insurgents, under the guidance and leadership of Bataku and Prophet, are committed to the defense of their homeland and their way of life. GenDiver is equally committed to crushing the opposition in the region, but its leadership is prevented from overtly acting on that commitment. The Incorporate state knows that it will not likely stop the resistance without exterminating most of the native population in the Sierra Nueva. But that kind of violation of the GEO Charter would almost certainly invite a full-scale retaliation for which GenDiver is ill prepared. The Charter limits the GEO's options as well. Unless it has solid evidence that GenDiver's actions, in the region are criminal, it cannot act against its member state.

Of course, it is widely suspected that the GEO is doing covertly what it cannot do under the light of public scrutiny. There is a great deal of speculation on CommCore political and conspiracy newsgroups, in Incorporate boardrooms, and in colonial watering holes, that GEO Internal Security provides the natives with military weapons, training, and intelligence on GenDiver activities. Atsumu Nakano, the High Commissioner of Internal Security, is notorious for his Black Crusade against the Incorporate states on Earth, and many believe that covert aid for the Sierra Nueva natives is the cornerstone of his anti-Incorporate campaign on Poseidon. If these rumors are true, Internal Security's activities may be partly responsible for the severe casualties suffered by the Crusoe Island garrison.

Recently, direct evidence of Internal Security's involvement in the Sierra Nueva War has filtered back to Haven and the major news agencies. Colonial Times/Net has reported that, in the late summer of 2198, Irabu, an orca master sergeant with the Peacekeeper garrison on Crusoe Island, was reassigned for temporary duty with the HCIS. Less than a month later, a CT/Net investigative reporter turned up with official documentation of the orca's court-martial. The charge listed in this documentation was "absent without leave," or AWOL. The report speculated that the orca had been loaned to Internal Security for the purpose of training Sierra Nueva insurgents, and had subsequently deserted. Though these allegations have been vociferously denied by both Armed Forces and Internal Security, they have served to fan the flames of controversy in the ongoing conflict.

Outnumbered and outgunned, the natives of the Sierra Nueva continue to persevere in their struggle. Indeed, what was once a monumental gap between their resources and those of their enemies appears to be narrowing. Assistance from Zero Nation, the NRM, Blue Water Circle, and other terrorist and criminal organizations, as well as the possible involvement of Internal Security, may account for the natives' ability to continue and even escalate the conflict against overwhelming odds. Some observers have begun to speculate that the political damage suffered by both the GEO and GenDiver will ultimately prove more decisive than the casualties suffered in combat.

ACCESS DENIED

GOING FOR THE GOLD

Bataku and Prophet both realize that their attacks on GenDiver have thus far been little more than an irritation to the Incorporate giant. They are also aware that GenDiver's presence in the Northwest Territories is driven by one thing - the exploitative rush for xenosilicates: The native leaders have decided that

their only real hope of striking a serious blow to GenDiver is to hit them where it really hurts.

For several months, Bataku and Prophet have been coordinating and planning an assault on the Santa Elena Resource Complex, the massive xenosilicate processing facility located a few kilometers offshore from the GenDiver company town. Lacking air support, the only way to destroy the huge installation is to compromise the integrity of the structural supports that anchor the platform to the bedrock of the ocean floor. Unfortunately, the natives have almost no chance of getting the necessary quantity of high explosives anywhere near the facility without being detected.

To circumvent this problem, the natives have acquired a small shipment of experimental devices from an NRM smuggler in Kingston. These devices are called "pheromone charges," and they were designed by GEO scientists to protect field researchers and naval personnel from attacks by dangerous marine predators, especially greater whites. When armed; the devices release a chemical compound into the water that attracts the marine leviathans. In theory, the greater whites are supposed to swallow the devices, at which point the high-explosive charges detonate, killing or severely injuring the animal.

While the pheromone charges have proven unreliable in their intended role; Bataku and Prophet believe they have discovered a more promising application. Under the cover provided by a series of diversionary attacks around Santa Elena, a small team led by Bataku himself will approach the Resource Complex undetected and place the charges along the support struts. When armed; the charges will release their chemicals into the surrounding water, eventually attracting one or more greater whites and hopefully stimulating them into an enraged state of sexual frustration. When the greater whites try to get at the devices, they will do serious damage to the facility's support struts in the process. If they inflict enough damage, the platform may even collapse into the ocean, but in any event, it should be sufficient to halt production at the facility for weeks or months.

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Since the outbreak of hostilities between GenDiver and the Sierra Nueva natives, the Northwest Territories have become one of the most dangerous regions of Poseidon. There are very few independent newcomer settlements in the area, and most of them - Like Crystal City on Sandy Hook (BP 80) - have enough trouble just surviving in the isolated and lawless region without worrying too much about the war.

The small fishing village of Puerto del Norte on the southern coast of Equator Island is an unfortunate exception. Founded in 2188, the town was one of the first newcomer settlements established in

the Sierra Nueva. Surprisingly; the newcomer pioneers earned the respect of their native neighbors, and the village even developed a small native population of its own.

In 2190, though, the conflict between GenDiver and the natives erupted into open violence, and the town has never been the same. Puerto del Norte is torn by conflicts of interest: There are several native families still living and working in the village, and most of them are openly supportive of Bataku and the native "freedom fighters" opposing the Incorporate state. On the other hand, many of the newcomer residents are deeply afraid of the apparent xenophobia and intolerance expressed by the orca and his people. Many of them secretly fear that if Bataku ever finishes with GenDiver, he will come looking for them - and these fears are not without merit.

The spark that finally ignited the powder keg was struck when a native fishing boat was recently sunk in the village's small harbor by an unknown saboteur. The incident resulted in accusations of racial hatred from the native community, with several leaders in the newcomer community retaliating, citing the natives' support for the "racist murderers on Baffin Island." Angry words have led to an exchange of blows on more than one occasion, and if tensions are not eased, the once-quiet fishing village could suffer a more serious outbreak of violence. A few of the more level-headed town leaders have suggested finding someone with the training and experience needed to investigate the incident.

In fact, the newcomer residents of Puerto del Norte were not responsible for the vandalism. Somewhat paranoid even by GenDiver standards, the security officer responsible for patrolling the Equator Island sector had long suspected that the fishing village may be harboring native fugitives involved in the war: He and his men destroyed the boat, hoping that the vandalism would lead to conflict between the native and newcomer communities, and ultimately, to the natives being expelled from the village. So far, his tactics have proven extremely effective.

THE ABORIGINES

UNNATURAL INSTINCT.

When the original Athena Project colonists made planetfall on Poseidon, the aborigines were understandably curious, but were extremely cautious about making contact with the aliens. It is in the aborigines' nature to observe - and sometimes manipulate - from a distance, rather than enter into anything resembling communication. However, the aborigines realized that it would be much more difficult and potentially dangerous to interfere with sentient beings, as the human colonists undoubtedly were. They needed to create a controlled environment in which the aliens could be observed.

During the early years of the colonization effort, Bataku's security patrol was throughout the Haven Cluster. While accompanying a research team in the Styx (see page 56), Bataku encountered a pod of three aborigine "emissaries." Using their chemoempathic abilities, the aborigines "rewired" Bataku's brain with a migratory instinct similar to that of the salmon on which Bataku's ancestors had once feasted on Earth. Bataku would have no memory of the encounter, but he would feel a relentless compulsion to leave the human colony for a more isolated region to the northwest - the Sierra Nueva Cluster:

The aborigines also realized that they needed a much larger sample of the alien population. To this end, they contacted Sage; the dolphin biochemist, and this encounter was a much more direct and intelligent one. Over a period of several days, they learned to communicate effectively with the cetacean, and expressed their desire to learn more about the visitors who had arrived on their world. Sage agreed to help Bataku organize a small group of colonists to follow the orca on his migration to the Sierra Nueva. He would also endeavor to begin creating a unique culture among this group that would be receptive to an ongoing relationship with the aborigines.

By the time Bataku's people founded the Baffin Island settlement in 2098, they were in almost constant contact with the aborigines. The aborigines also continued to covertly observe and even intervene in the development of the small colony, primarily through their representatives - Sage and his successors. Much of this interference was beneficial. For example, the aborigines surreptitiously provided the colonists with food during the early, difficult years, and even engineered "natural" medicines that native healers could find and use with almost no technological resources: Indeed, it is likely that the Baffin Island natives would have perished within a decade without the aborigines' assistance.

In 2199, this unique relationship with the aborigines is manifested in many ways among the natives of the Sierra Nueva. They are among the healthiest and long-lived of the colonists on Poseidon, whether native or newcomer. They have learned so much from their aboriginal hosts, their knowledge of and familiarity with their homeland is almost unparalleled. Most of this understanding is thoroughly practical - they can predict weather patterns with uncanny accuracy, they know more about productive uses of local flora and fauna than the biotech companies are likely to learn with years of intensive research, and they understand the behavior and role of the countless species, both predator and prey, that share their oceans.

The aborigines have also become valuable allies in the natives' fight against GenDiver. They regularly participate --directly and indirectly - in the natives' attacks, and have even recently begun using their nanotechnology to provide the natives with supplies of weapons, ammunition, and other equipment vital to the war effort. Though to date the aborigines have used their tiny machines to provide only basic military supplies, it is simply a matter of time before the natives convince them to put the nanites to more drastic uses.

This support has begun to alter the balance of power between the natives and GenDiver, effectively neutralizing the incorporate giant's tremendous economic and technological advantage. It is making the natives less dependent on their other, sometimes unreliable, allies, including GEO Internal Security and Earth-based terrorist organizations such as Zero Nation.

ALIEN PROPHET

The real Prophet died in 2163, the victim of a marine predator on one of his many excursions into the Sierra Nueva wilderness. He was replaced by an aborigine; an identical physical copy, engineered by Creator biotechnology. None of the natives - not even Bataku - are aware of this, and Prophet has continued his role as spiritual advisor to his people. He is also, of course, a very effective liaison between the natives and the aborigines - far more effective than the real Prophet could ever have been.

While the aboriginal Prophet was designed to be indistinguishable from a real cetacean, there are some physiological clues to his true nature. The most dramatic is the fact that he does not age. Prophet's cellular structure has suffered no deterioration since he emerged from the Creator birth-crèche thirty-six years ago. In addition, the thick tissues around the artificial cetacean's rostrum are lined with the glands that allow aborigines to secrete the specialized chemicals used for communication and the cognitive manipulation of other species.

The dolphin's psychology is somewhat anomalous as well, as engineering a mind is much more difficult for the aborigines than building a body. Prophet, as an aborigine, and like all real cetaceans; is deeply attuned to his world. This keen relationship is only expressed, however, through the characteristic cetacean mysticism when it is important to maintain appearances. The aborigines' own worldview, while difficult to define in human terms, tends far more toward pragmatism than mysticism. Prophet also lacks the playfulness, impulsiveness, and sexual traits common to most dolphins, and among the natives of the Sierra Nueva, he is considered uncommonly serious for his kind.

As a result of Prophet's origins, he also has a great deal of knowledge that is not adequately represented by his skills: He possesses all of the knowledge of Poseidon accumulated by the aborigines down through the millennia. Prophet's Education can be considered scale 5 in the physical and life sciences generally, and scale 8 for the natural history and sciences of Poseidon specifically. In other words, Prophet knows more about the waterworld than human scientists can ever be expected to learn.

MOST WANTED

PROPHET

Prophet is the fifth in a line of dolphin religious leaders who have cared for the spiritual needs of the Baffin Island natives since the settlement was founded in 2098. Now fifty-two-yearsold, Prophet is perhaps the most charismatic and influential leader of that line.

Prophet assumed his current role in 2162, at the age of sixteen. He had spent his life to that point under the constant tutelage of Dreamer, his predecessor. For the most part, this instruction consisted of learning the sometimes-peculiar ways of humans and incorporating them into the spiritual framework of Whalesong Theogony. It also included a great deal of exploration of the natural world, including the geology, meteorology, flora, and fauna of the Sierra Nueva.

In 2164, Prophet returned to Baffin Island from an extended, solitary journey through the Sierra Nueva. He announced that

the return of the "Despoilers" was imminent, that the people of the Sierra Nueva would have to begin preparing to protect their world. Prophet claimed that some unforeseen disaster -

probably a war - had befallen Earth, but it had only delayed their inevitable return to plunder this new world.

In fact, Dreamer had predicted recontact with Earth as much as twenty years earlier. Both Prophet and his predecessor claimed to have regular contact with the "minds in the sea," a rough translation of the dolphin image-name for the Poseidon aborigines. If these claims are true, they represent the first - and perhaps only - peaceful, intelligent encounters between Earth colonists and aborigines. Of course, if the aborigines really were the source of this information, it raises the question of how they obtained it.

When GenDiver researchers arrived in the Northwest Territories in 2176, Prophet left the war preparations to Bataku and immediately launched a political campaign against the Incorporate state. The dolphin corresponded with other native leaders, newcomer activists, the media, and even the GEO, publicizing the natives' claims to the Sierra Nueva and their opposition to GenDiver interference in the region. While many of the public statements were attributed to Bataku, it was widely known that the dolphin was responsible for them. Prophet was perfectly willing to use the charismatic and somewhat romantic image the orca developed on the colony world, and his campaign met with a great deal of success as public opinion has increasingly swung in favor of the natives.

Physically, Prophet is a remarkable specimen. His age is considered venerable by the standards of native dolphins, yet by all accounts, he is as fit and spry as he was in his prime. While Sierra Nueva healers are reputed to be among the most skilled on Poseidon, their abilities do not seem sufficient to explain Prophet's remarkable longevity and good health. Nor has the dolphin's intellect been dulled by age. He remains a charismatic leader with an immense amount of influence among his people. While Bataku is responsible for developing the small scale tactics of his warpods' operations, Prophet is the architect of many of the natives' strategic doctrines and military objectives. And while his contact with newcomer society has been limited, he appears to be one of the colony's foremost authorities on Poseidon's environment and ecology.

Species: Dolphin Profile:

Origin - Poseidon Native

Background - Religious

Education - Secondary

Goal - Freedom

Motivation - Faith

Attitude - Disciplined

Profession: Native Elder

Mental Attributes: Awareness 61, Charisma 67, Education 20, Experience 52, Initiative 60, Intellect 50, Will 64

Physical Attributes: Agility 38, Appearance 56, Constitution 63, Dexterity 45/1, Endurance 70/7, Speed 40, Strength 50/6

Primary Skills: Aquatics 100, Botany 80, GEO Culture 40, History 60, Incorporate Culture 40, Leadership 60, Native Culture 80, Political Science 40, Psychology 40, Theology 60, Zoology 80

STUART PARSONS

Born in Alberta, Canada, in 2155, Stuart Parsons is a career officer in the Internal Security commission. After a relatively uneventful childhood in one of the GEO's most stable federal districts, Parsons attended Harvard University in the US and obtained a Master's in Government in 2176. Following graduation, Parsons was accepted into the HCIS's Service Officer's Training Program in Geneva. After completing the program, he was assigned to war-torn Belgrade, ostensibly to coordinate relief efforts for Balkan refugees. During this time, Internal Security was also running a number of covert operations intended to stabilize the anarchic region, and it is unlikely that his duties were exclusively humanitarian.

Species: Human, **Modified Profile:**

Origin - Earth, Urban Background - Cosmopolitan Education - Graduate University, Military Training Goal - Accomplishment

Motivation - Professionalism Attitude - Confident **Profession:** Covert Operative

Mental Attributes: Awareness 67, Charisma 54, Education 75, Experience 54, Initiative 69, Intellect 62, Will 76

Physical Attributes: Agility 70, Appearance 50, Constitution 48, Dexterity 50, Endurance 43, Speed 76, Strength 42

Modifications: Accelerated Neurons, Implanted Microcomputer, Implanted Sensory Recorder, Multi-Glands

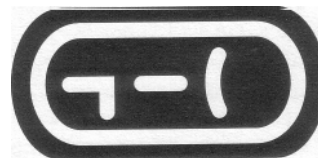
In 2188, Parsons was transferred to the Haven Office on Poseidon. The applications of Long John in biotechnology had been discovered a year earlier, and the gold rush was in full swing. The HCIS was increasing its presence on the colony world accordingly, primarily for the purposes of gathering intelligence on the activities of the Incorporate states. In 2189, Parsons was assigned to the State and Internal Affairs consulate in Santa Elena, where he worked in an official capacity as a diplomatic attaché. Unofficially, he was suspected of developing intelligence assets in the GenDiver company town. Parsons also assisted Justice Commission investigations of Incorporate atrocities in the Sierra Nueva, including the bombing of Sulfur Water and the murders at Adobe Walls.

Primary Skills: Bureaucracy 40, GEO Culture 80, Hacking 60, Handguns 60, Incorporate Culture 60, Military Culture 50, Native Culture 40, Persuasion 80, Physical Training 50, Psychology 50

In 2195, Parsons was reassigned as a consulting officer to the newly established military garrison on Crusoe Island. With no direct authority in the Armed Forces chain of command, he was supposed to serve as a liaison between the garrison and the intelligence-gathering arm of Internal Security. The rumors have followed him to his new post as well, however, and it is widely suspected that Parsons is one of the HCIS's most active

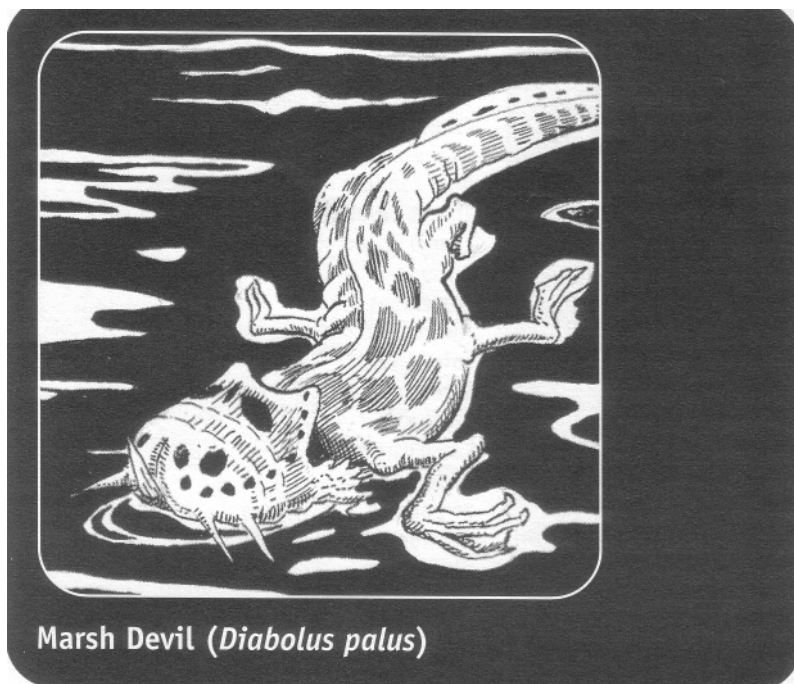
covert operatives in the Sierra Nueva War. These rumors are not confined to the conspiracy newsgroups. The Colonial Times/Net has reported that the relationship between Parsons and the garrison's military command has become increasingly strained as a result of the intelligence officer's repeated "fact-finding visits" to the native settlements of the Sierra Nueva.

Parsons is tall and athletic, with light brown hair, fair skin, and blue eyes. He is a tasteful dresser, preferring tailored suits from the best designers in Europe and Ibrum City. He is softspoken, articulate, and can be very charming when it suits his interests. He is generally considered tactful and diplomatic, even by his enemies, but can also be devious and even ruthless when he deems it necessary. One's first impression on meeting Parsons is that he is somewhat reserved and detached, and this reaction is unlikely to change significantly with further experience. In his own rather exclusive circles, he is considered an ambitious and devoted intelligence officer, but one with no discernible political ideology or agenda. His only real interest in the Sierra Nueva War is a professional one - he wants to perform his duties to the best of his ability, just as he approaches any task to which he is assigned.



Global Ecology Organization SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Poseidon Biological Survey #POS-103
Resource and Hazardous Species of Poseidon



Not discovered by GEO biologists until 2198, this carnivorous amphibian has been known to the natives of the Sierra Nueva since the first settlement in the region was established. The marsh devil has a long, tapered body and six strong limbs ending in broad, flat feet with pronounced webbing and sharp claws. It is mottled gray to brown in coloration, and like many of Poseidon's animals, has two rows of multiple eyespots running the length of its body. It has no terrestrial analog.

Behavior Marsh devils are functional hermaphrodites as each specimen possesses both male and female reproductive organs. This characteristic stands in stark contrast to the often extreme sexual dimorphism of most of Poseidon's higher animals. The marsh devil spends most of its time in the rivers and coastal marshes of its island habitat, though it sometimes leaves the water to hunt in the rain forests for short periods of time. Several prey animals contribute to the marsh devil's diet, including hexaboars and a variety of freshwater fish. These fierce predators have also been known to attack humans.

Its habitat use, fierce aggression, and genetic markers have lead some researchers to believe that the marsh devil may be the adult form of the larval animal commonly called a hatchling (BP 103). This assertion currently remains unverified.

Armor 2/5

Range The islands of the Sierra Nueva Cluster Habitat
Freshwater rivers and coastal marshes Length 1.5 - 2.1 meters

Weight 250 -350 kilograms **Frequency** Rare

Resource Value None

Threat Level High. There have been native reports of marsh devils attacking and killing humans.

Movement 12/20 Normally fast and deadly, marsh devils are able to manage truly terrifying bursts of speed for short durations. These creatures cannot sustain a top movement rate of 20 m per action for more than 8 rounds.

Awareness 70

Initiative 80

Intellect 40/4

Agility 75

Constitution 60

Endurance 50/6

Strength 65/6

Rounds 3 (1)

Attack Claw - 75, Bite - 50

Damage Ranks

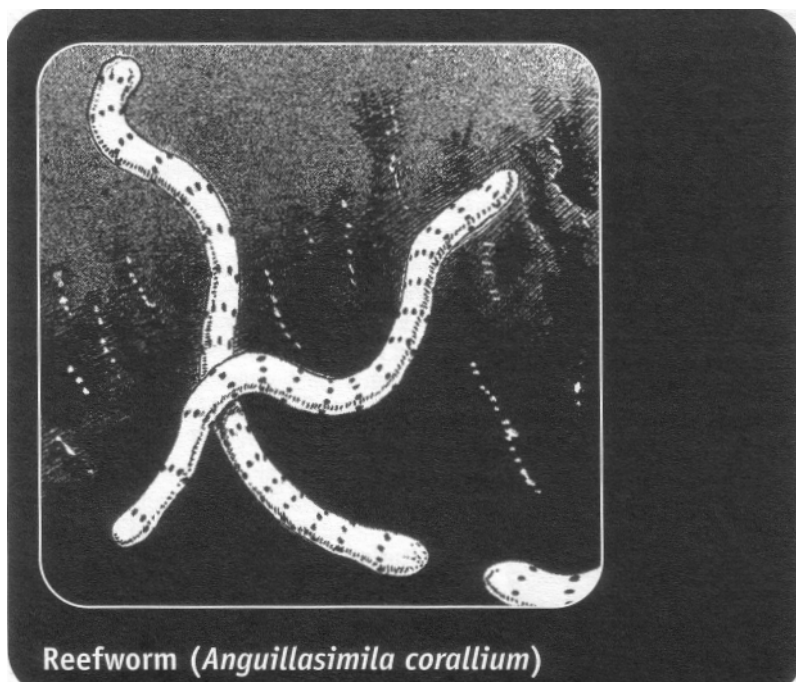
Claw - 1/10 2/25 3/40 4/60 5/80 6/90 7/100 **Bite** - 1/20 2/45 3/70 4/90 5/100

Damage Scale 2

#pos-103 [status]

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Range The Northwest Territories Habitat Coral reefs and atolls Length 4 to 10 centimeters Weight 3 to 6 grams Frequency Rare Resource Value Medium. The natives of the region consider reefworms a delicacy.

Threat Level None. The reefworm's electrical discharge is too slight to notice, let alone harm a human.

Movement 0.5

Awareness 0

Initiative 0

Intellect 0

Agility 0

Constitution 0

Endurance 0

Strength 0

Rounds N/A

Attack N/A

Damage Ranks N/A

Damage Scale -5

Armor None

Though not related to terrestrial worms, this invertebrate is similar in physical structure and appearance. It has a long, rounded body and may grow as long as ten centimeters. As its name suggests, the reefworm lives inside coral reef formations and has been found throughout the Northwest Territories.

Behavior Reefworms are predominantly found in the well lit portions of local reef systems. Their chief source of food is the various species of algae that grow on the reefs' surfaces. Twice each year, reefworms emerge from within their hiding places to propagate the species. The reefworm is considered a delicacy by the natives of the Sierra Nueva who come out in force during this brief mating season for celebratory harvests. The natives are not the only ones who find the reefworms to be tasty morsels - the breeding creatures are also a common prey species for the blimps (BP 125) that are common in the skies of the Sierra Nueva.

Unfortunately for the blimps, reefworms are similar to Poseidon's ghosters in that they can generate and discharge small electrical potentials by pumping dissolved ions in and out of their bodies. By themselves, these discharges are far too tiny to be a danger to the blimps. However, if an unfortunate blimp entangles too many reefworms at once, the combined discharge can be sufficient to ignite the blimp's metabolic hydrogen, causing it to explode. The result is that the natives' Reefworm Festival is often accompanied by a sporadic fireworks display.

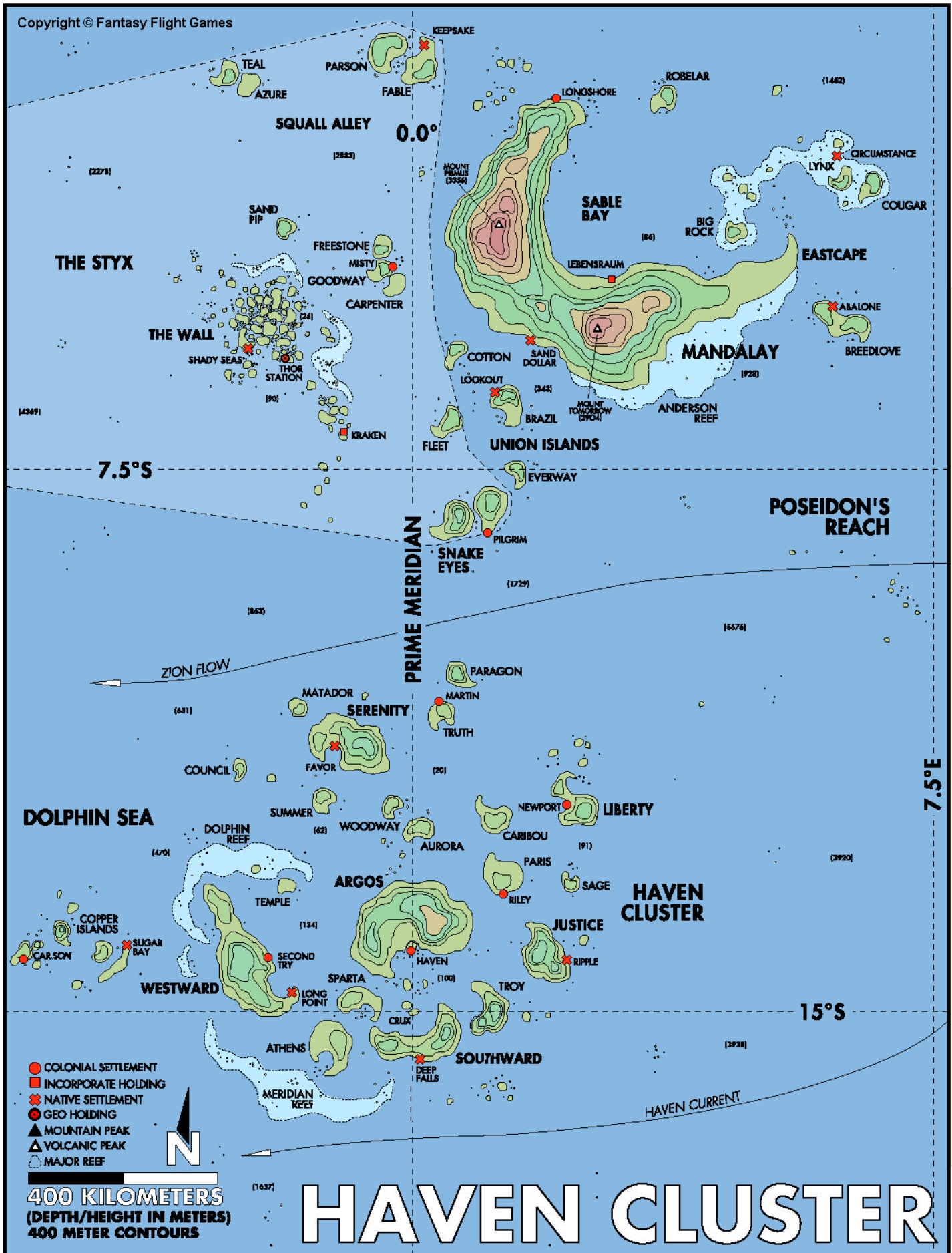




THE HAVEN CLUSTER

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THE HAVER CLUSTER

The Haven Cluster covers almost 4 million square kilometers of the northeastern Dolphin Sea, though only about 600,000 square kilometers - 'around fifteen percent - is exposed land surface. While the land area is small, the southern section of the Haven Cluster is still the most densely packed group of large islands on Poseidon. The cluster straddles the Prime Meridian between one and sixteen degrees south latitude, extending roughly five degrees both east and west.

The climate in the Haven Cluster is primarily tropical. Warm, wet weather prevails throughout the region, supporting densely vegetated forests on most large landmasses. The nearly constant winds from the northeast moderate the extremes of heat and humidity, so despite the Cluster's location near the equator, the islands are habitable throughout the year.

Most islands in the Haven Cluster formed through volcanism, and some still support active volcanoes, though these are largely unsettled. Other local islands consist of limestone, basalt, and granite. Tectonic activity was at one time extreme in this region, producing uncommon geological formations such as the Wall, a 1,000 square-kilometer canyonland (BP 118), and Snake Eyes, two small islands that evidently were once a single landmass.

The waters throughout the Haven Cluster are warm and shallow relative to the surrounding oceans. This is the heart of the Storm Belt, and the lack of large landmasses and high water temperatures offer a choice path for cyclonic activity.

Mandalay Island's majestic twin peaks, Primus and Tomorrow, are the only mountains of note in the Haven Cluster. On most islands, topographical variance is extreme near the shores, but the degree of sloping lessens approaching their centers. In fact, many islands are actually rounded plateaus, their bases under hundreds of meters of water. The easy grades atop the islands have proven to be excellent farmland, and the slow runoff of heavy precipitation allows rain forests to thrive.

The waters from Snake Eyes and Fable Island, west to Nomad, have become known to pilots and captains all over Poseidon as the Styx, and have garnered the enigmatic status previously reserved for Earth's Bermuda Triangle. There have been an unusually high number of crashes, shipwrecks, disappearances, and instrument malfunctions in the area.

Skeptics have offered some explanations for the strange occurrences in the Styx: the waters are in a heavy traffic zone near the most densely populated region of Poseidon, therefore, a high number of incidents is to be expected; the Styx lies in the heart of the Storm Belt and electromagnetic disturbances are not uncommon; many newcomer pilots are unfamiliar with travel on Poseidon and blame their mistakes on the existing legend. All of the explanations have some degree of truth to them, but nobody denies that more accidents and strange disappearances have occurred in the Styx than anywhere else on Poseidon.

The Haven Cluster was the first region settled on Poseidon, beginning with Haven in 2087. The original colonists targeted

the region for human settlement while the *UNSS Cousteau* was still in orbit. Athena Project colonists surveyed Poseidon and the Haven Cluster was selected for its natural harbors, consistent weather patterns, quality farmland, and relatively limited tectonic activity.

In 2089, and with Haven finally established, colonists moved on to settle new areas, and villages were founded in a few preselected areas. Among these early settlements was Homestead, which was initially a failure but is now the thriving town of Second Try.

Even after the Abandonment, the Haven Cluster continued to grow as the center of human life on Poseidon. More and more settlements were founded as colonists spread out, both to ensure the colony's survival and to explore the planet. The region's population grew steadily and techniques for filling its basic needs improved. Farming, fishing, weaving, and other labor intensive skills were the most important for the pioneers, and the Haven Cluster witnessed a renaissance of simple technologies as these activities became the focus of colony life.

With Recontact and the subsequent discovery of Long John, the Haven Cluster experienced a tremendous population increase. The newcomers represented a different breed of humanity, however, and mere differences in history or genetics were not all that separated them from the natives. The natives had come to Poseidon as volunteers, hoping to build a better world than the one left behind. They gave up their standards of living and discovered a new way to measure quality of life. However, many newcomers came to Poseidon for material gain. While natives banded into tight communities to create the infrastructure necessary for survival, newcomers often came from places with infrastructures so overwhelming, the individual did not exist. Separated by vast cultural differences, the waves of newcomers often faced both geographical and ideological segregation from the original native colonists.

The tremendous influx of people since the discovery of Long John has greatly increased the populations of existing settlements in the Haven Cluster. In its first hundred years, the entire region's population grew steadily from 5,000 to almost 50,000, while in just the last ten years, the region's population has exploded to almost 1 million. This small region now supports roughly half of Poseidon's population.

The city of Haven remains the oldest and largest settlement on Poseidon, and is the center of GEO activity on the planet. While other towns within the Haven Cluster have grown to well over 30,000 residents, there is no rival for Haven with its population of over half a million. Over eighty percent of the colonists arriving on Poseidon make planetfall at the Haven shuttle port, so most everyone has at least a passing familiarity with the city.

In addition to the exploding populations of the Haven Cluster's existing settlements, the 2190s have seen the development of several new communities in the region. One of these is Newport, a GEO-sponsored colonial settlement on Liberty Island. Founded in 2194, Newport already boasts 30,000 residents. Similar growth has been achieved in Lebensraum, Hanover Industries' company town. Largely devoted to establishing a

heavy manufacturing base for the Incorporate state, this Mandalay Island settlement has grown to over 26,000 permanent residents in the six years since it was established.

Though the majority of the colonists in the Haven Cluster reside in its large modern towns, tiny native settlements are more common. During the Abandonment, native colonists dispersed, establishing small settlements in order to ensure the colony's survival. Many of these villages are located in places impractical for the support of large, modern towns and most have changed little since Recontact as a result. Among the barren rock cliffs of the Wall are isolated settlements that survive on fishing and aquaculture. Tiny villages float on interconnected barges, leading semi-nomadic existences. Some villages even rest within the huge Poseidon mangroves, suspended tree houses hanging among the massive trunks.

SECOND TRY

We knew when we came here things wouldn't be easy. Our expectations were fulfilled - it's been damn hard. All o f us lost people we loved in that awful storm, people who might still be alive if we'd never left Haven. I ask all o f you, though, would they ever have stayed in Haven? Never. They came here to build a new world, to lay the foundation for humanity's future.

We could easily return to Haven now. No one would laugh or ridicule us; we gave it a good try. But I say we stay, we build, we persevere. All o f us have reasons for being a part o f this project, and I for one, did not have my reasons washed away by that storm. I am staying here, as I hope all o f you will. Our dreams are worth a second try. - Hiram Barker, 2092

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Second Try is located in the Pacifica Archipelago, at 14°16'31" south latitude, 5°14'22" west longitude. The colony started on the eastern coast of Westward Island, a large landmass in the Haven Cluster. Most of Second Try lies nestled in Barker's Gorge, a small canyon that runs northwest to southeast, reaching an almost two-kilometer width at its terminus near the shore.

HISTORY

Prior to Planetfall, an extensive survey conducted from the *UNSS Cousteau* recommended several locations for colonization after the original Haven colony was safely established. Among these was the site of Homestead, one-kilometer seaward of present-day Second Try. Homestead was Haven's first satellite colony, established by ninety-seven volunteers as a fishing community in 2091. In keeping with the pioneer spirit, the use of modular habitats from the *Cousteau* was declined in favor of building the community from the ground up. This proved to be a grave error when, in 2092, a cyclonic storm destroyed the modest settlement, killing thirty-three colonists. Led by Hiram Barker, the remaining sixty-seven colonists - the intervening year had brought three births - retreated to the relative shelter of the nearby canyon, now called Barker's Gorge. They elected to begin their settlement anew rather than return to Haven, and called their effort Second Try. The following years saw slow, steady growth for the settlement, as

new construction sprang up around the natural shelter provided by the Gorge's caverns.

In the latter half of the 2090s, excavation began on the beach between Second Try and the deep-water harbor, creating troughs and pools for the farming of kelp, fish; and other marine products vital to the colony. Open-air pens for pot-bellied pigs littered the narrow canyon floor. The dark and humid natural caverns within Barker's Gorge provided the perfect conditions for fungus farming, and several species of indigenous mushroom-analogs became a dietary staple for the fledgling settlement.

While the next fifty years were not easy for the colony, they were nothing compared to the early days. Second Try continued to grow steadily and even flourished. The colony had long been agriculturally self-sufficient, though it was far behind Haven and Kingston in terms of both infrastructure and surviving industry. As a result, the early effects of Recontact on the settlement were limited to an influx of scientific teams studying the aborigines, and anthropologists interested in observing the native-born descendants of the original colonists.

Second Try was initially less affected by the discovery of Long John than were other settlements in the archipelago. The long years of the Abandonment had cultivated a lifestyle based on cooperation and simple survival, and the town's natives had little interest in participating in the new gold rush. This cultural isolation, inevitably, did not last.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Second Try evolved from a tiny settlement of under a hundred to a small farming town of more than 3,000 over the course of ninety-five years. In the last ten years the colony has seen its population spike upwards to almost 30,000. Most of the town that existed before the discovery of Long John has been razed and rebuilt with modern structures utilizing the natural terraces formed by the walls of Barker's Gorge. This is where most residential dwellings are located.

Following a style established by Lunar colonists, many of the wealthier citizens of Second Try have built their homes into natural and artificial caves along the canyon walls. Many homes also perch on the level ground at the canyon's rim. To combat the constant winds, these are usually long, low buildings, protected along earthen windbreaks.

Because of space limitations, a network of platforms and bridges has slowly evolved, interconnecting the terraces and the canyon walls. Some levels of the network reach as high as 300 meters above the canyon floor. Most of Second Try's local industry, as well as the majority of the common areas such as shopping malls and entertainment strips, sprawls along these platforms. A series of industrial elevators carry pedestrians, cargo, and vehicles such as scooters and electric carts, to and from the canyon floor.

There is little in the way of housing or industry in the narrow canyon bottom, as it is predominately used for farming. Many of the natives of Second Try, now unable to afford living space on the terraces they once claimed freely, reside on the canyon floor, either in small, ramshackle dwellings, or smaller apart-

ments in one of the large tenement buildings. When the population of Haven exploded, many of its natives relocated to Second Try, which is regarded as one of the most pro-native colonial settlements on Poseidon. These recent immigrants now live side-by-side with the descendants of the original inhabitants.

THE DISTRICTS OF SECOND TRY

Barkerton Along the lowest two terraces on the southwest wall of Barker's Gorge, and on the canyon floor nearby, is a large and well-organized native community of over 1,500 living in modest thatched dwellings and natural caves. The populace calls this area Barkerton for its residents' apparent devotion to Hiram Barker, one of the settlement's early leaders. The lack of modern building materials is obvious even to an untrained observer, but the natives are content with their simple lifestyle. Most of the residents fish or farm, walking each morning to their assigned pools or plots on the canyon floor. Due to the natives' volunteerism and community spirit, the area, though financially limited, is remarkably clean and safe.

Water's Edge The wetlands running from the lip of Barker's Gorge to the shoreline is called Water's Edge. Only the brave or foolhardy reside here, as even the smallest storms wreak havoc on the exposed and unprotected shore. Homestead once stood here, though the shoreline has receded greatly in the intervening years. Today it is a maze of kelp fields and algae pens tended by the native population. A channel knives through the area, offering harbor access to the many watercraft that make daily trips to the ocean on fishing, pleasure, scientific, or prospecting expeditions. During the fiercest storms, tidal surges immerse Water's Edge completely, inflicting extensive damage on the local aquaculture.

Southwall The southwestern wall of Barker's Gorge is home to many of the older residents of Second Try, and it was the first area utilized to house the influx of people following the discovery of Long John. Many of Southwall's residents are middle-class professionals who provide services to the Incorporate or wealthy. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, restaurant owners, and the like, have built their homes on these terraces using the most modern techniques and materials. There are also a few low-rise apartment buildings, complete with doormen.

Northwall The northeastern wall of Barker's Gorge houses only the elite, and the height of the terrace on which one lives is a direct indication of one's wealth. The base of the canyon walls is so sheer that the lowest terrace on Northwall is almost eighty meters from the ground. The GEO Patrol has a strong presence on these terraces, which have gates at key locations for access control. Many of the homes on Northwall are built deep into the rock itself, utilizing the natural caves that dot the canyon walls. In newer neighborhoods, tunnels bored to form avenues deep in the cliffs allow access only by homeowners and their guests.

Topside Securing a residence on Northwall often means either buying someone out at an exorbitant price or being the high bidder at an estate auction. Many mid- to upper-class immigrants to Second Try have found it much easier to build above Barker's Gorge than in it. The new district of Topside is

the first such development. The homes built on Topside must be weatherproofed, especially from the wind. Typically, the rocky earth is dozed about three meters deep in a northeasterly direction to form a windward ramp, then surfaced with biocrete. The home is then constructed in the excavated portion of the plot, with the subsurface section forming a basement.

The Shelf This area is the city's financial district and supports numerous Incorporate extension offices, recruitment centers, distribution services, and commercial houses. Almost every major company is represented here, and each maintains staff and management personnel in secure, embassy-like facilities. Here they both work and live under the protective watch of their own security forces. The Shelf is dotted with carefully maintained parks and supports a small number of shops, restaurants, clubs, and entertainment centers that cater almost exclusively to Incorporate employees and citizens.

The Bridges The Bridges are an incredible architectural achievement - a web of suspended platforms and decks interconnecting the colony's districts. The heart of Second Try's business and industry occupies these "city blocks" suspended in the sky. Each bridge and platform is really a district in itself, often designed with a single purpose in mind. Many of the bridges have small residential areas, though most serve a particular function for the community.

One of the longer bridges, Electric Avenue, is a tourist attraction devoted to restaurants, theaters, and nightclubs. On Settler's Plate, a low-slung platform, there are over fifty different shops. Seedy nightclubs and pharium dens thrive along Cabo's Way. The Homestead Platform is the recently completed seat of government, housing administrative services, GEO offices, and the Town Manager's office. From Carson Bridge, almost 300 meters over the canyon floor, tourists and thrill seekers rent hang-gliders and descend in spirals to Water's Edge. There are also a few platforms devoted to light industry, warehouses, medical clinics, and other commercial facilities. Travel along the bridges and platforms is almost exclusively pedestrian, though private vehicles and scooters can gradually push their way through.

The Shadow The canyon floor at the far northwestern end of Barker's Gorge is known as the Shadow because it rests in almost perpetual darkness. The bridges and platforms above block even midday sunlight, and the walls of the canyon prevent the morning and evening rays from penetrating its depths. The only notable legal industries in this area are the public works, such as the fusion reactor and desalination plant. As the core of Second Try's extensive underground, illegal business flourishes here. There are many cantinas where shady deals are closed over scarred tables and cheap liquor. Drugs are pervasive, and their trade contributes to many of the violent acts committed in the colony. The GEO has found it most effective to contain illegal activities to this area, and will usually enter the district only if following up on a crime committed elsewhere in the town.

The Docks Between the Shadow and Water's Edge is Lake Ibrium, a manmade saltwater lagoon at the head of a channel that leads through the wetlands to the ocean. At the northwest

point of Ibrum is a series of floating docks and small marinas that house most of Second Try's watercraft. Perhaps 200 people claim permanent residence here, either living on their boats or working for one of the marinas. The Docks are home to the freshest seafood in town, and many small but excellent restaurants can be found in the neighborhood. Many natives live on the Docks, taking small sailboats out to sea each day. Cetaceans, many retired from military duty, also frequent this area and work alongside the human aquaforms.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Second Try is one of the few major colonies on Poseidon whose native population has continued to grow and prosper amid the influx of newcomers. Ironically, this phenomenon could be directly related to the scarcity of Long John in the region. The town is well-planned, and economic segregation seems to have eased the daily tensions between native and newcomer. While many natives of Second Try resent newcomers as a whole, individually they accept them into the community, showing real appreciation for the services they provide. Most of the descendants of the colony's founders are still in Second Try, living in a native community totaling over 3,000 - more than ten percent of the total population. Most of the natives work in the fishing and farming industries, and live on the floor of Barker's Gorge.

GOVERNMENT

Second Try is one of the most loosely governed of the major settlements on Poseidon, though the carefree years are coming to an end. The GEO has offices on Homestead Platform, but there is no permanently assigned Marshal. Representatives of the Office of Colonial Affairs make occasional appearances, but for the most part, Second Try is self-governed. There is a Town Manager, elected at large, who serves a two-year term, but the post is currently vacant due to Milo Franklin's early retirement. The City Council sits in session one week of each month, with one elected member per 2,000 persons in each voting district.

ECONOMIC BASE

Second Try has remained largely dependent on its fishing and farming industries. While successful, these markets cannot provide for the incredible population boom the town has seen in recent years. A pattern has developed of late in which settlers arrive, spend their available income to start a business, and prosper from the next settler down the pipe. Economists warn that at some point the continual influx of capital will abate, but for now the citizens of Second Try are quite well off, many natives excepted.

Several Incorporate states maintain offices in Second Try, with Hanover Industries and GenDiver representing the strongest Incorporate presence in the settlement. GenDiver has maintained a local pharmaceutical research lab for almost two years. Hanover recently opened a hypermart and other retail operations in Second Try, and is currently negotiating with the City Council to build a small jumpcraft manufacturing plant.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Second Try's planners engineered the city well, and by virtue of its system of bridges and platforms, the colony could conceivably grow to a population of over 100,000 before

becoming overcrowded. Feeding that many people, though, is another matter entirely, and surveys have begun for expanding the settlement's agricultural and aquacultural resources.

Through volunteer programs, the bridges, platforms, buildings, and canyon floor are well-maintained, even in the poorest areas. One such program allows citizens to offset their tax burdens through community service, and most lower- and middle-class residents participate. Most of Second Try's emergency services operate through this program, especially fire and flood protection, and less extensively, medical and police services. While there are some volunteers in the educational field, the Second Try Educational Authority, or STEA, provides most schooling. STEA is funded with tax dollars and educational buildings are paid for with municipal bonds. There is also a private school available, to those who can afford it.

Second Try receives electric power from a fusion reactor in the Shadow district, and because the access fees can be prohibitive, most denizens of the canyon floor do without. A desalination plant - also located in the Shadow - provides fresh water, though it is an older model and tends to fail on occasion.

MAP KEY

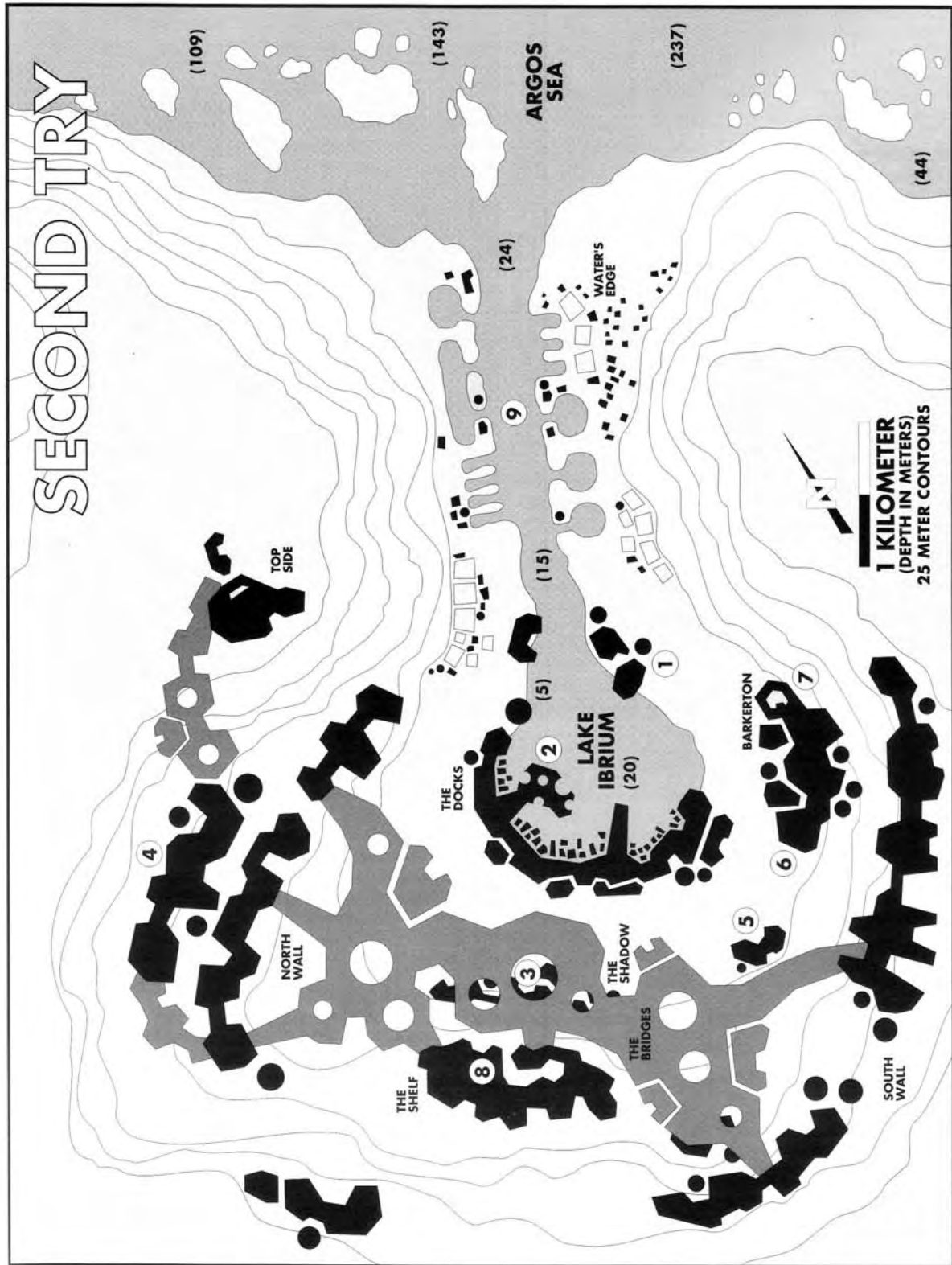
1. Native Fishing Collectives On the eastern shores of Lake Ibrum, native fishermen have formed collectives to support themselves. Together, they are able to buy modern equipment and keep up with new competition from large Earthbased companies. The collectives generally share docks and boathouses, and their homes are typically grouped together.

2. AquaTech This cetacean-owned company is currently the largest private business based in Second Try. AquaTech's focus is primarily on watercraft maintenance and repair, and the company has many slips along its pier to dock the craft in its charge. A large building on the pier houses much of AquaTech's staff and serves walk-up customers who prefer to buy parts and do their own repairs.

3. The Den Patrol officers have begun calling this particularly nefarious area of the Shadow district the Den. The neighborhood is dominated by vacant buildings where pharium and other contraband are distributed and used. Addicts often remain in these derelict buildings for days or even weeks at a time.

4. Fungal Gardens Deep in the recesses of Northwall, darkness and moisture combine to create ideal conditions for fungus farming. Thousands of kilograms of genetically engineered, high-nutrient fungal species are produced here annually and shipped all over Poseidon. The engineered fungal crops have proven an excellent mechanism for recycling many forms of residential and industrial organic wastes. It is in part because of this farm that Second Try remains as clean and sanitary as it does.

A small section of the farm containing several varieties of fungi has been set aside for public tours, and the exotic colors and shapes have made it quite an attraction.



5. GEO Patrol Headquarters This facility on the floor of Barker's Gorge is the central station for the local GEO Patrol presence. The building itself is a three-story structure occupied by up to seventy-five personnel, with an adjacent facility devoted to the Patrol's jumpcraft, hovercraft, and motorcycles.

6. Bazaar Located on the edge of Barkerton, this open-air market is known as much for its fresh grilled seafood as for the abundance of stalls selling native crafts. The vendors offer glassware, baskets, and beadwork, and often accept barter in lieu of money. Prices are very reasonable, and the atmosphere is friendly, though often hectic.

7. Hiram Barker Memorial This small memorial is best described as a shrine to Hiram Barker, one of the original founders of Second Try. Reminiscent of a miniature Greek temple, the memorial has no walls - only columns support the four-meter-high roof. Carved into the interior portions of the columns are a series of anecdotes, quotes, and accomplishments attributed to Hiram Barker, detailing his leadership in establishing Second Try after the destruction of Homestead.

8. The Plaza This is Second Try's largest shopping complex, rivaling those in the bigger cities of Kingston and Haven. Enclosed walkways with skylights above are lined with dozens of specialty stores and restaurants, surrounding a great central plaza. The Plaza offers many entertainment options, including virtual arcades, holovids, and even live theater.

9. The Wetlands This is where much of the food that feeds Second Try is grown and harvested. Aquaculture dominates, with high-output algae farms and fish pens producing healthy stocks year round. There are also a few terrestrial livestock operations and large saltwater rice paddies that supplement the district's agricultural productivity.

ACCESS DENIED

CONTRABAND

A narrow, unmarked tunnel behind Northwall lead to one of the largest pharium production facility on Poseidon. The maritime service fleet of AquaTech is being use to ship the pharium to Nomad, where the drug is sold to New Rastafarian Movement contact Isaac Mosely. Vendor, the dolphin vendor of AquaTech, is a member of Zero Nation, and the revenues from his drug-smuggling operation are being funneled to the local cell.

GEO Patrol officer Molina Valentino is in deep cover as AquaTech's accountant, and works in the company's waterfront office on Lake Ibrum. Valentino has almost enough information to arrest Vendor on trafficking charges, but she does not yet know to whom the drugs are being sold, or where the Profits are going.

The Zero Nation cell in Second Try has more than forty members, Making it one of the largest on Poseidon. The cell's core membership is native, but many of the recent recruits are newcomers. The organization has been active in Second Try since 2189 and operates primarily out of Rose's, a cantina in the Shadow district.

FAMILY TIES

The Gorchoff Family has had interests in several of the in Second Try far many years. Rurik Markhov is the local boss, and he established the family's control primarily through loan-sharking. Many of the small shops and boats on the docks of Lake Ibrum would not exist without Markhov, as he provided the capital to get them up and running. The same is true for several native bazaar stalls on the floor of Barker's Gorge. Unfortunately, some of these businesses proved unsuccessful, and the owners are having difficulty paying Markhov back

Markhov has begun implementing some tough means to recoup his investments, including intimidation, beatings, and son. While these tactics have definitely inspired fear and desperation among Markhov's debtors, many U' them feel he has gone too far. They have pooled their Limited resources in an attempt to hire someone s scare Markhov out of town. A few of the debtors are members of the local Zero Nation cell, and while they will seek the aid of the cell, it is unlikely that they will be willing to openly confront the Gorchoff Family.

THE STINGER

A serial killer is on the loose in Second Try. Labeled "the Stinger" by local media, the killer has used the highly toxic poison of the Poseidon scorpion to kill seven Incorporate executives of Hanover, GenDiver and BioGene. He inject the deadly poison into his victim's bloodstream and then pins a note to the body. The notes invariably consist of maniacal tirades against Incorporate activity on Poseidon.

The Stinger is actually a native living in the Barkerton district. Daniel Fabray is a member of Zero Nation, and uses the organization's information. select his victims. Other members of his cell are beginning to suspect that someone in Zero Nation is involved in the killings, and are trying to find out who it is.

GEO Patrol officers in Second Try want to catch the Stinger as quickly as possible, before it start to look as if the GEO is lees-than-properly concerned about crimes against Incorporate citizens. The Incorporate want to stop the Stinger to protect their employees, many of whom have request transfer from Second Try. Individual natives applaud the Stinger's activities, but as a whole, they would like the killing stopped, as it increases anti-native sentiment in the settlement. Even the criminal organizations would like to see the killer caught, fearing his action will lead to an increased GEO presence in Second Try.

LEBENSRAUM

When given an option between survival and death, there is not really any choice to make at all. That is essentially what we are facing. Many of you in this very room consider it erroneous for me to presume that without the Hanover city-state, this company will perish. Others believe that I speak on this matter only in regard to serving my own interests on Poseidon. To speak bluntly, as I must, you are wrong, and if you fail to heed me, you are dead wrong.

In only a few years, the Hanover city-state will revert to German control. The GEO will never again allow us the opportunity to maintain another o f its kind on Earth. As others have

before us, we must look to the stars. Hanover Industries can only continue to exist on Poseidon, where the GEO's influence is weakened through extension. With a new city-state on the waterworld, we will be the masters of our own destiny again. I would now ask you all to examine these preliminary plans for a holding on Poseidon...." - excerpt from annual state-of-the-company address, Werner Keinz, 2189

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Lebensraum is located near the equator on the Sable Bay coast of Mandalay Island at 4°59'08" south latitude, 2°13'S4" east longitude, about 1,500 kilometers from Haven. The Incorporate settlement spreads over steeply sloping, rocky beaches that form a series of natural seawalls. Lebensraum rests in the shadows of the two inactive volcanoes that form Mandalay Island. The abrupt slopes of Mount Tomorrow, south of Lebensraum, rise sharply to over 2,900 meters, while Primus, to the west, climbs more gradually to its peak at almost 3,400 meters above sea level.

HISTORY

In anticipation of the Hanover city-state's reversion to German control in 2201 (BP 178), Hanover Industries founded Lebensraum in 2193. Its location was chosen by Werner Keinz, president of Hanover Colonial and ranking executive on Poseidon, after months of boardroom debate. The site offers many natural advantages to the company town: Lebensraum's proximity to the harbor maximizes productivity in shipping and food production; the town rests on a cove that provides a buffer for tidal effects; the steep, rocky beaches serve as a natural series of seawalls that minimize storm surges; and Lebensraum is relatively close to Poseidon's older, more established settlements, such as Haven and Second Try.

Over the last six years, Lebensraum has developed into a leading center of industry, with almost all of Hanover's divisions operating within the town's borders. Local operations include banking, biotechnology, manufacturing, mining, consumer goods, health care, electronics, security, media, fishing, and agriculture. While some of these industries were initially developed only to support Lebensraum, others have been so successful that they exceeded the colony's needs and are now largely export operations. Other industries are not profit-bearing, and exist in Lebensraum only to ensure the colony's self sufficiency. Executives felt reliance on their Earth holdings could lead to disaster, considering their precarious grasp on the Hanover city-state and the GEO's control of the wormhole.

Lebensraum is an extremely well planned community and is carefully laid out. The township lies in a horseshoe shape around a cove, with few of its structures more than two kilometers from the waterfront. Hanover's heavy-manufacturing facilities dominate the cityscape, and while most major settlements on Poseidon have taken advantage of the vast unsettled area to spread out, Lebensraum is by design very compact. Buildings throughout the settlement are tightly clustered, and the town seems almost as tall as it is wide.

Today's Lebensraum is a hive of activity. Neighborhoods continue to expand both inland and out into the cove. Construction is completed daily on facilities that are occupied as quickly as they are built, with wave after wave of Hanover's citizenry

making the trip to Poseidon. The Hanover city-state on Earth is shrinking nearly as rapidly as Lebensraum grows, seemingly in a state of evacuation.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Approaching Lebensraum by sea brings a visitor between twin promontories that jut out across the mouth of the cove. A series of industrial floating docks anchored to the promontories cover nearly five square kilometers of open water. The location of the docks allows easy access by the huge ships utilized by Hanover, which therefore never have to enter the relatively shallow cove. These docks are equipped with the most advanced robotic cargo systems available, as well as extensive warehouses and processing facilities. A two-way maglev line runs a circuit between the docks and the city proper, and includes a two-kilometer-long bridge between the promontories. The maglev runs almost continually, hauling load after load of cargo, and carrying workers and visitors between docks.

On Lebensraum's shores to the west, across the cove from the industrial docks, a number of floating piers extend from the beach, providing slips for private watercraft. On the rocky beaches beyond the piers, stilted buildings are home to many of Lebensraum's citizens. The stilts protect the homes from the immense tides that occur during severe weather. The homes are often clustered in small neighborhoods around a few buildings related to a single industry. These buildings, including factories and offices, are often built onto a single large platform supported by huge pillars rising as much as twenty meters from the beaches below. Local taverns and small company stores complement the main industry to give each of these neighborhoods a distinctive personality and small-town feel. The neighborhoods continue inland beyond the waterfront, where the natural seawalls allow homes and factories to rest firmly on level ground.

The wealthier citizens of Lebensraum - primarily high-level executives of Hanover Industries - live on the steep grades of the island that climb away from the cove. Large, expensive houses stand along winding paths that snake up the slopes. These small neighborhoods are built in a terraced fashion, and most homes have open-air patios on top, with commanding views of Lebensraum below.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Lebensraum has reached a population of over 26,000 in only six years, and predictions indicate that by 2201, that number may reach 50,000. Most of Lebensraum's inhabitants are newcomers to Poseidon who have traveled from the Hanover citystate on Earth. The majority of the population works in manufacturing, including assembly, design, management, sales, shipping, and various support positions.

Lebensraum also requires numerous local service industries, and these account for approximately one-quarter of the workforce. Education, medical, emergency, public works, and security personnel are just a few of the necessary roles filled by Hanover employees.

The Hanover Security Service tightly controls access to Lebensraum, and temporary work visas or visitors passes are the only legal way for the non-citizens to gain entrance to the

town. The HSS has an extensive patrol presence within Lebensraum's borders, and while a criminal element certainly exists in Lebensraum, it is extremely limited.

GOVERNMENT

Executives of Hanover Colonial govern the township of Lebensraum as a colonial holding of Hanover Industries. Daily disputes and decisions fall ultimately on the desk of Werner Keinz, who operates almost as a feudal lord. Though he is rarely involved in routine, day-to-day management, he is the ultimate authority in the company town.

Keinz also represents Lebensraum's political interests, and he meets with representatives from other settlements and the GEO almost weekly. Other Incorporate states do a lot of business with Hanover, as many have begun to rely on products manufactured in Lebensraum. Other settlements also court Hanover in hopes that manufacturing facilities will be constructed in their towns. Hanover's primary interest in these deals is to build economic and political alliances that will protect Lebensraum in the coming years. On Poseidon, everyone wants something from someone else, and Werner Keinz is responsible for making the deals that will dictate Lebensraum's future.

ECONOMIC BASE

Lebensraum's economic status is obviously sound. The company town's modern, high-output factories produce many of the manufactured goods used planetwide, and as the colony world continues to increase in population, the demand for Lebensraum's products and services increases as well.

While Hanover is not directly involved in the Long John industry as deeply as some other Incorporate states, it is nevertheless vital to the company town's continued economic growth. A downturn in the flow of xenosilicates would result in a depressed economy and a slowed rate of colonization, both of which would adversely affect Hanover's economic position on the colony world. In addition, competition in manufacturing continues to increase on Poseidon, and some executives believe that more resources must be committed to R&D so that Hanover can stay at the front of the pack.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Lebensraum's physical infrastructure would serve as a sound model for any modern city. Existing infrastructure is well-maintained, and roadways and foundations are already in place for future expansion. Two fusion reactors provide enough energy for over half a million people. Low-speed maglev lines crisscross the town, and tracks have already been laid in undeveloped areas. Factories and refineries with high pollution levels are built on platforms in the cove, where east-to-west winds and consistent currents wash away discharge. An efficient, oversized desalination plant provides enough fresh water to support twice the population.

Lebensraum's social infrastructure is somewhat less solid. Assignments doled out by the Incorporate state are not always exactly the roles that its citizenry would prefer. Second-, third-, and fourth-generation citizens have become restless, though they were trained from childhood to fill certain company needs regardless of personal interest. Hanover also has a history of paying according to productivity rather than skill, and workers in service positions find themselves handcuffed by the quotas they must fill to gain contractual incentives.



ACCESS DENIED

STICKY BUSINESS

In Lebensraum three months ago; two natives were jailed for planting a bomb on a maglev car, killing three Hanover employees and injuring thirteen. Native activists all over Poseidon are demanding the prisoners be turned over to the GEO; claiming that Hanover Industries will not provide a fair trial. In a statement released by Werner Keinz, Hanover stated that they would not tolerate terrorism, and that the actions of the natives threatened the sovereignty of Lebensraum. After a token hearing by an HSS magistrate, Hanover intends to transport the natives to the Böse Strand prison colony (see page 116).

While Poseidon Liberte initially claimed responsibility for the bombing, the natives were actually hired and equipped by agents of MacLeod Enforcement. The agents hoped to sell their services as anti-terrorism specialists to Hanover, and believed the bombing might convince the Hanover leadership that these services were necessary. The MacLeod hierarchy never approved the operation, and the agents did not anticipate the political ramifications of their actions. They are also concerned that their native henchmen are just waiting to be handed over to the GEO, at which point they will trade their employers' identities for a reduced sentence. If the prisoners are transferred to Böse Strand, they plan to hire one of the local prison gangs to silence the natives.

KILROY'S THREE-FOR-ONE

With a reputation as the hottest nightclub in Lebensraum, Kilroy's attracts customers from all over town. The dress code is formal and customers enjoy a dinner theater with a variety of acts each night. The bar's unique furnishings include a missile whose nose juts out through the biocrete wall. In a back room, casino gaming is available, and the rich atmosphere makes the club popular with gamblers. Kilroy's is watched closely by the Hanover Security Service, but officers have found it lucrative to commit a few oversights. Rom Whitaker, Kilroy's owner-operator, is a tough-as-nails opportunist with a soft spot for beautiful women. Whitaker often dines with Captain Frank Hesse, a high-ranking Hanover security officer.

The HSS has good reason to watch Kilroy's closely. It is difficult to gain access to Lebensraum without a work visa. The application process is time-consuming, and applicants face heavy scrutiny and extensive background checks by Hanover officials. Captain Hesse has been giving work visas to Whitaker to cover his gambling markers.

Kilroy's is also home to the Boiko brothers, Anatoly and Maxim, who sing and play piano. The brothers are members of Free Poseidon! and are wanted by the GEO for ecoterrorist activities. While hiding in the Hanover company town, the brothers are attempting to recruit for their organization. Hanover Security has become aware of the brothers' background, and is waiting for Free Poseidon! to act against one of their Incorporate rivals, such as GenDiver. The HSS hopes that apprehending the brothers will win them points with another security agency, and perhaps gain them an ally against the GEO.

CIRCUMSTANCE

The first thing I thought of when I arrived in Circumstance was that old story, The Last of the Mohicans. The people there appeared to be unwashed savages, with wild body paints, no clothes, and some crude form of sign language. They lived in treehouses, several meters above the waters of the mangrove, in almost perpetual darkness.

After spending some time with the villagers, I found them much more civilized than I had anticipated, although I should have known that only eighty years of isolation would not be enough to drastically alter their culture. As it turns out, their sign language is not far removed from Earth's international sign language, and they utilize it mainly to communicate while hunting. Their dress, or lack thereof, is rooted more in a lack of resources than anything else, and the body painting has replaced it as a measure of style. - Gunther Kettman, in an excerpt from his memoirs.

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Circumstance is located at 3°41'36" south latitude, 5°31'S2" east longitude, within a Poseidon mangrove (BP 119) 200 kilometers east of Southward Island. The mangrove covers roughly 150 square kilometers. Because the wind is unable to penetrate the dense growth, the climate is hot and humid throughout the year. In fact, the trees are so dense and the canopy so thick, that except for a few small patches, the settlement exists in a constant twilight, even during midday.

The terrain of the mangrove is unique and its makeup complex. Above the water's surface, interwoven branches proliferate, in some places forming enough of a purchase for windborne soil and debris to cling, sprouting mossy meadows suspended in the air. In one part of the mangrove, a three-square-kilometer patch of loose stones and sediment is all that remains of what was once a very solid rocky islet. It endured repeated fracture by the growth of the trees that now litter its surface. Within the mangrove, seaborne plants and debris from the trees are trapped in the dense growth, forming extensive mats that cover the waters inside the mangrove.

HISTORY

Circumstance was founded in 2116 by a small group of settlers from Haven. The settlers didn't plan to build their new homes in a mangrove forest - their small fleet of sailboats and catamarans was driven into the mangrove during a tropical storm. They discovered that the mangrove was habitable, with abundant resources, and decided that staying was easier than repairing their boats and sailing somewhere else. The settlers began building Circumstance on a tract of solid ground near the mangrove's eastern edge, but they soon moved their encampment closer to the mangrove's center, where the intervening forest kept storms and large predators at bay.

Circumstance was a lost settlement from its beginnings. Throughout the years, various natives and travelers reported signs of life in the mangrove, from smoke rising from the canopy to fishing nets set near its periphery. These reports remained unverified, though, and they were often attributed to seasonal hunting camps.

In 2197, a wilderness outfitter and guide from Haven, Gunther Kettman, became the first person to report having contact with Circumstance in eighty-three years. He discovered what he termed a "treehouse community" of sixty-eight natives, completely integrated with the local ecology. Most of the natives were naked, and all had covered their bodies with paints in beautifully savage designs.

The natives' long isolation and unique environment have been a profound influence on their cultural development. Their spoken language is a strange patois of the original settlers' diverse linguistic traditions, and they also communicate through a unique form of sign language. Until recently, the people of Circumstance had only a vague idea of what life was like outside their settlement. In effect, history for them ended in 2116. The natives had some knowledge of events prior to the founding of their settlement, but anything after that was usually limited to stories and myth. Over the years, they occasionally spotted native hunting and fishing parties, or newcomer air- and watercraft, but they never attempted contact.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

It is not so much the village's location that makes Circumstance unique, as there are many seasonal lodges in other mangroves on Poseidon. The village is unique because of the way the settlers incorporated their dwelling place into the mangrove. The village is completely elevated, constructed among the branches of the mangrove's trees. At no point is Circumstance less than three meters above the murky waters, and in most places the settlement is elevated at least ten meters. The village resembles a multilevel ring with a diameter of roughly a hundred meters. Wooden walkways and swinging bridges span this circle, and timber-and-rope ladders connect its many levels. This simple infrastructure was built at many different stages of the village's past, so there is no particular arrangement to it.

The dwellings of Circumstance spread throughout the confines of the village, in no apparent order. They nestle among dense branch systems, and deep cuts in the thick limbs form a level base. In many cases, dwellings stand adjacent to one another, connected either by doorways or enclosed walkways. Many homes completely encircle a tree, or a small cluster of braches. Dwellings vary in size, and are usually proportional to the size of the family they house. Though rarer, some villagers even live on simple platforms without walls or even ceilings.

GOVERNMENT

Circumstance does not have a system of government of any kind. The eldest villagers are respected, but they have no real legal authority, and their primary role is educating the children. In the last two years, the GEO has become aware of the settlement's existence, but has shown little interest in intervening in its development or activities. Three colonial representatives have visited Circumstance, and all were received graciously, but none had lasting effect.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond its simple walkways and tree dwellings, Circumstance has very little physical infrastructure. Even docks, a pervasive feature of nearly every native village, are absent in the mangrove. The natives find it easier to moor their few boats to boulders or fallen trees along the edge of the mangrove. Deeper in its

interior, the mangrove is often so choked with organic debris that navigation is impossible, even for small craft.

Circumstance's social infrastructure is also rather limited. Because of its size and isolation, it is easier for the community to address problems as they are encountered, rather than attempt to anticipate and prepare for all possibilities. The natives do emphasize education, though, and the elders spend much of their time teaching the village's children.

ACCESS DENIED ;

COMPROMISING CIRCUMSTANCES

Deep beneath Circumstance, the mangrove rises from one of the richest shallow-water Long John fields in the archipelago. Recently, an eight-member GenDiver research team arrived in the mangrove to survey the area for future resource development. With hardsuits; magnetometers, and a sophisticated research submersible, the team discovered the xenosilicate ore in the tangled organic maze beneath the mangrove.

Recognizing that this discovery would lead to a rash of new mining operations throughout the region, several aborigines compromised' the research team and left them lying comatose in and around their base camp on the edge of the mangrove. The team was soon discovered by the natives of circumstance, and brought back to the village where they could be fed and cared for by Saphou, the settlement's healer. Now,' though, the natives aren't sure what to d® with the GenDiver team. They have shown no signs of recovery, and Saphou judges they could remain in their present condition indefinitely. The villagers have heard enough stories about GenDiver that they are terribly afraid of turning the team members over to the Incorporate state, who would almost certainly blame them for the "accident." The natives have cleared the base camp and Pushed the submersible deeper into the mangrove, hoping to buy some time while they decide what to do.

THE WALL

I still remember the last few moments o f my so-called life: the water approaching at fifty meters a second, Chan screaming over the whine o f the fans. Little blue electrical flashes like tiny lightning bolts crawling up my arms. Oh God, we're gonna hit hard. Maybe so hard death won't just creep over me. I'll have the last laugh. I'm gonna die so fast I'll be in Hell before Death figures out I'm gone. Looking back at Chan; poor kid. So young. Facing forward again, checking the instruments that have long since ceased being instrumental, and gripping the controls. Tight.

Then blackness, followed some indeterminate time later by brilliant light. Coming from all around, but not one light, thousands o f little lights, some close, some so far I shouldn't be able to see them. Those lights speak to me. And I begin to breathe again. Only not with my lungs - with my gills. I'm not in any normal kind o f water, but I know that's okay, everything is okay. From now on, everything will be just fine.

I was the first one to be claimed by the Styx. And in some ways it's never really let me go. - Thaddeus "Misho" Johnson, Pilot, Calypso, from Tidal Forces, interviews, by Ashri Khenera

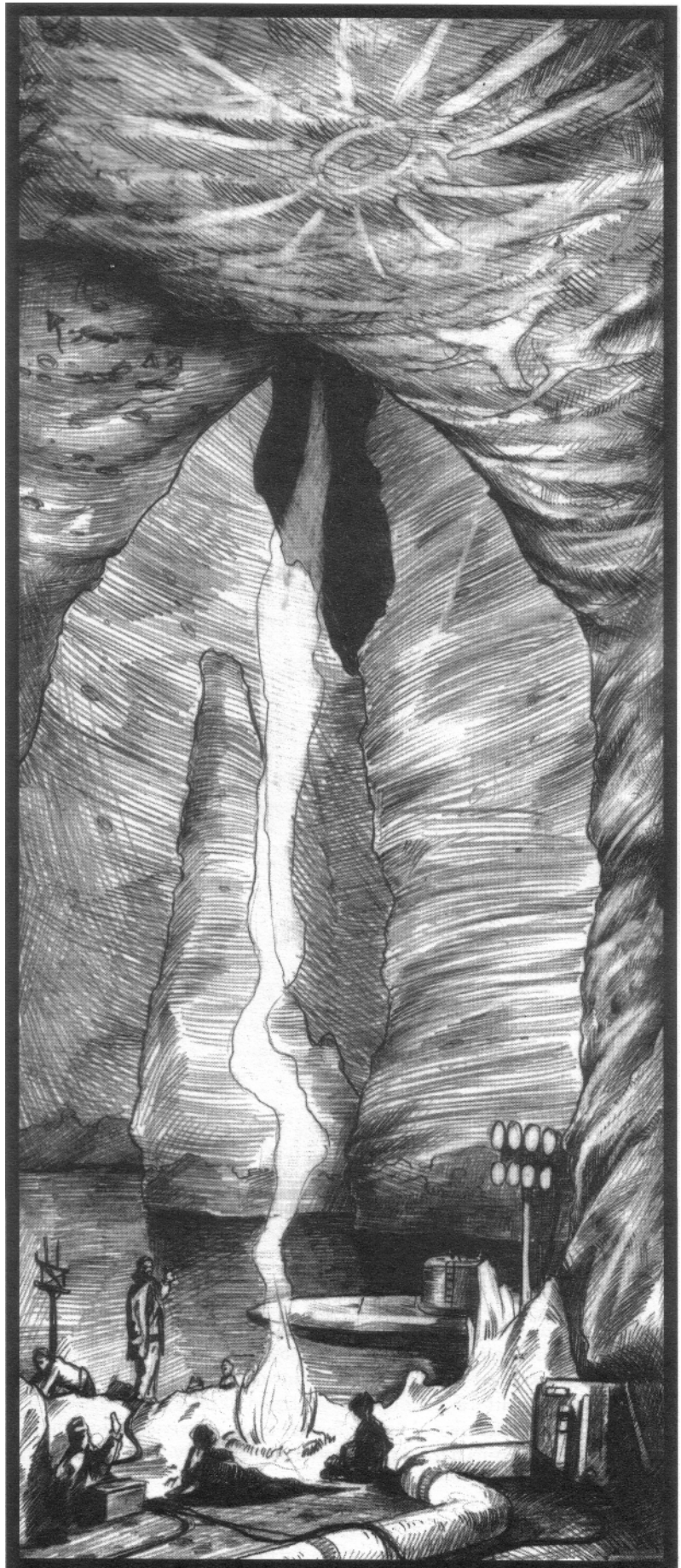
The Wall is a canyonland roughly 1,500 kilometers north of Haven, in the region of the Dolphin Sea known as the Styx. It consists of thousands of weathered rocks and cliffs too small to be considered islands, but that together form a considerable landmass. The rock formations are so densely packed that the interior of the Wall suffers little exposure to the powerful winds whipping through the Storm Belt. The narrow gaps between the rocks and cliffs form a maze of canals, and powerful tidal effects in the channels make them extremely hazardous to navigate. Hidden within the cliffs of the Wall are thousands of crevices and caves, some with openings along the sheer rock faces, some open at sea level, and still others only accessible from under the surface. With almost no plant or animal life atop the tumbledowns, water is freely absorbed into the porous rock. Tiny streams run through niches and crevices in the rocks and cliffs, and exiting rivulets of water trickle down the rock faces.

Because of the Wall's unique terrain, and the ominous tales from the Styx, various groups involved in dubious activities have purposefully established operations in the region. From the air, little but the top surface of the canyonlands is visible, and surface travel in the tumbledowns is extremely hazardous. Many of the narrow channels are inaccessible to all but the smallest watercraft, and criminals often use these passages to shake pursuers in larger vessels.

Since colonization began on Poseidon, speculation has been rampant concerning the Wall's origins. Scientists describe extreme tectonic activity that fractured vast seafloor rock beds, forcing the splinters above the ocean's surface. While this explanation is plausible, some geophysicists discount it. The sheer size of the Wall has led many to doubt that it could have been formed in the same manner as the other canyonlands on Poseidon, and its location in the Styx has lent an added air of mystery to its origins.

As research efforts in the region continue, the Wall seems to offer only more mysteries. How and when was it really formed? Why are aborigine sightings so common in the region? What dangerous or valuable endemic organisms remain undiscovered? What else is the Wall hiding? These questions and more continue to plague professional researchers and amateur sleuths alike.

Despite the known dangers and the unknown mysteries, there are many vested interests within the Wall. The Incorporated hope to discover new shallow-water Long John deposits among the largely unexplored tumbledowns. The



canyonlands of the Wall offer unique ecological microsystems, important to the numerous Incorporate bio-research teams as well as to native hunting parties. The GEO, aware of the Wall's status as a no-man's-land, plans to initiate patrols of the area as resources become available. Wardens and independent prospectors prowl the Wall, each hunting a different prey, while smugglers, pirates, ecoterrorists, and other nefarious sorts use the Wall as the ultimate hideout.

SHADY SEAS

There is a small, recently established native village within the Wall called Shady Seas. Its primary structure consists of a massive cage that was once part of the superstructure of a now-derelict undersea habitat. The cage, ninety meters long and fifty meters wide, is made of industrial bioplastic and hangs wedged between several rock outcroppings. The interior has been divided into no fewer than sixteen interconnected living spaces, and these dwellings are home to a tiny population of only forty-three people. The upper bars of the cage support a mat of woven reeds and waterhemp, providing a mostly rainproof ceiling for the entire structure.

The aquaformed villagers inhabiting Shady Seas have a very simple lifestyle, even by native standards. Daily routines revolve around the capture and preparation of fish and shellfish, and the natives do much of their fishing from a pair of bioplastic catamarans they have managed to acquire in recent years. In many places within the Wall, huge clumps of kelp, waterhemp, and other plant debris trapped among the rocks form solid mats over the water's surface. These floating bogs provide good hunting and foraging grounds and the villagers have come to depend on them.

Village member Karina Griffis serves the tiny community as an ad hoc leader, and has represented the small community at various Haven conferences concerning native affairs. Griffis is a Native Patrol officer, formerly of Second Try. She has a reputation among the nefarious interests in the Wall for fiercely protecting her village, and is currently seeking GEO approval to deputize and arm the villagers as Native Patrolmen. Griffis makes semiannual reports on the welfare of Shady Seas to GEO officials, who list the village as Native Settlement 01.71.

KRAKEN

After the discovery of longevity ore and its applications, GenDiver was the first among the Incorporate to create a facility within the Wall for surveying and mining Long John. In 2191, GenDiver braved the Styx and began building Kraken in the furthest southeastern reaches of the Wall. Kraken is a 5,600-square-meter platform facility anchored between two sea cliffs.

The construction of Kraken employed over 1,200 workers for almost two years, and the ensuing operations utilized nearly 800 personnel. Kraken became home to many of the workers stationed on the platform, and upon completion of their six month duty, they often signed up for further terms of service because of the generous hazard pay offered at the facility.

Unfortunately, by 2195, the local reserves of Long John had been depleted. After six months of declining profits, GenDiver drastically reduced its operations at the facility, essentially

abandoning Kraken, except for their surveying and research efforts. While the small nodules of xenosilicate that were occasionally recovered were not enough for GenDiver to continue mining in the region, they tempted many of the workers to stay on as independent prospectors, leasing the facilities and equipment from GenDiver. These prospectors have formed a collective, in which they share profits to pay GenDiver's high rents.

Without the thorough administrative resources of GenDiver, the Kraken collective has gradually become a haphazard ghost town settlement. Except for the machinery essential to mining operations, Kraken's maintenance has suffered badly. Living conditions are harsh and cramped, and the collective has instituted an informal system of vigilante justice to prevent Long John theft. The prospecting life is so hard that many of the would-be-prospectors have abandoned mining completely and now eke out a living providing various services to the collective. Many of them have become traders or fishermen, while others have even become bodyguards or hired guns. Although its population is now less than 300, Kraken remains a major trade and fuel stop between New Hawaii and the Haven Cluster.

Kraken sprawls across a broad expanse of ocean between the two cliffs that support it. On the surface of the platform are docking facilities, numerous VTOL pads, and a pair of central superstructures housing storage rooms, mechanical facilities, administrative offices, and living quarters. Makeshift camps for temporary visitors cover many open stretches of the platform, and one of the VTOL pads serves as the trading area. Kraken is equipped with a well-maintained fusion reactor, but the facility's desalination unit is broken, and residents prepare and ration their own drinking water. Many of the cooling units on Kraken work only intermittently, so the denizens are forced to move to whatever section of the living quarters is comfortable at the time, and sometimes to the open air of the platform itself. Kraken's superstructure actually extends to a submersible bay on the underside of the platform, from which an unused umbilical power and communications line hangs to the ocean floor.

THOR STATION

In 2198, the GEO established its only continuing presence in the Wall - the Thor Heyerdahl Marine Sciences Station. Thor Station was completed in 2196, and saw duty at several sites around the archipelago before being moored in the tumbledowns of the Wall. The station is a sophisticated research facility built on a 175,000-square-meter bioplastic barge, and houses several fully equipped biosciences laboratories, research vessels and submersibles, and remote-sensing arrays. Transportation is provided by a small fleet of hydrofoils, jumpcraft, and VTOLs. Power and fresh water are provided by an integral fusion reactor and desalination plant.

The Thor Station research projects are many and varied. Marine biologists study marine organisms and ecosystems, from bacteria to marine mammals, combining field research in the Wall and its environs with intensive laboratory work. Geophysicists and geologists investigate the origin, composition, and seismology of the seafloor using advanced digital imaging, spectrographic, and geoaoustic technologies. Oceanog-

raphers and meteorologists use a variety of remote sensing equipment, including satellites, to monitor and analyze ocean currents and weather patterns. Almost 200 people work at Thor Station, and most are affiliated with the Haven Institute of Science and Technology or with GEO Naval Command.

Since their arrival at the Wall, Thor Station's scientific personnel have been continually plagued by communications failures, power outages, and other electronics glitches. While periodic storms can account for many of these problems, they have also led geophysicists to more extensive investigations of the region's unique electromagnetic characteristics. Some scientists have suggested that the phenomena might indicate massive xenosilicate deposits in the seafloor throughout the region. Others have quietly repeated the stories they have heard about the Styx.

The station has also had sporadic problems with the Wall's other human residents. Three supply hydrofoils have been attacked and looted, and the GEO has stationed twelve Peacekeepers on Thor Station as a deterrent to further attacks. The garrison's two jumpcraft have begun patrolling the Wall, and the Justice Commission hopes that this presence will help curtail criminal activity in the region.

ACCESS DENIED

PLAYING BOTH ENDS

Karina Griffis is a Native Patrol officer in the tiny settlement of Shady **Seas**. Griffis is also an active member of Blue Water Circle (BP 097); This terrorist group struggles to protect Poseidon's global ecosystem and eliminate all natural resource exploitation. Griffis occasionally allows the use of her modest home as a temporary safehouse for Circle members **on** the run. Her sterling reputation with the GEO has thus far kept her above suspicion.

BACKED AGAINST THE WALL

The Gorchoff crime syndicate has a floating barge anchored about three kilometers inside the northwest edge of the Wall. The barge supports over twenty hired hands, and is outfitted with an assault jumpcraft and two hypersails that crews use to catch sunbursts. Recent aerial surveillance has revealed the operation to the GEO. Marshal Peter Church in Haven is offering a bounty for the breakup of the operation, but so far, there have been no takers. If the situation is not resolved soon, Church will be forced to put together an assault team himself - an eventuality he secretly hopes comes to pass,

DARK MOON

In 2191, GenDiver brought a team of specialists from various fields to the Walt with the intention of surveying and mapping the tumbledown's numerous undersea caves. The team of nine was allotted a Utility-class research submersible, the *Blue Moon*, outfitted with the best equipment available. In keeping with GenDiver's institutional paranoia, this equipment even included a military grade stealth suite and limited weapon systems to fend off both Incorporate competition and natural predators.

In 2193, the team located a small Long John nodule, and boldly sold information on its whereabouts to Atlas Materials. Anxious

that GenDiver would discover their betrayal, and possessing one of the most sophisticated subs on the planet, the team began pirating GenDiver vessels, always returning to a large undersea grotto they had discovered while surveying the Walt. Now known as the Dark Moon Company, they operate one of the most successful pirating outfits on Poseidon. The Company no longer targets only GenDiver, however; and any Incorporate or colonial craft in the Styx is a potential target. The cryptic status of these waters provides an excellent cover for their operation. Over the last few years; the Company's success has attracted new recruits and it has grown to thirteen members, including a dolphin.

The Dark Moon Company has a heroic reputation among the small native villages along the coasts 'of the islands in the Haven **Cluster** Natives greet them with cheers on their regular trips to these villages, where they disperse some of their pirated goods. The Company has also made an effort on occasion to aid villages in peril. The *Blue Moon* **was** once used to ferry villagers to safety during a tropical storm: On another occasion, the outfit lured a greater white away from **a** native catamaran. Most often, though, the Company has helped by making itself a thorn in the side of the Incorporate in the region.

No one **is** certain what caused the Dark Moon Company's falling out with GenDiver: GenDiver sources claim that almost three consecutive years undersea drove the research team mad, and they now limit the tours of their submerged crews to four months. Whatever the reason, it was certainly a dangerous move: GenDiver will stop at nothing to end the Dark Moon Company's activities.

SICK'EM, BOY

In the days before Long John, Dr. Hans Seidler was a talented genetic researcher for a private lab on Earth. He had been attempting to continue and expand the work done on hybrids, specifically, a project that would create canine hybrids. Seidler felt that the superior chemical senses, strength ratio; loyalty characteristics, and pack mentalities of canines lent themselves perfectly to use in the armed forces. Unfortunately, his work was in direct violation of several government statutes, and he was incarcerated by the GEO.

Seidler came to Poseidon upon his release in 2196, establishing a hidden lab in the Wall to continue his illegal research. Although by modern standards hybrids are effectively obsolete, Seidler is confident that his design will be exceptionally receptive to further modifications. MacLeod Enforcement secretly funds Seidler's work and the company keeps him supplied with the xenosilicate necessary for him to make real advances. MacLeod is hoping Seidler will eventually produce the next supersoldier, but more realistically, they simply plan to sell his research to the highest Incorporate bidder.

THE ABORIGINES

Krakens

When the Creators entrusted Poseidon to the care of the aborigines, they left nanites and support technology secreted in caches at several Locations around the planet. One such cache is located in the canyonlands known as the Wall, hidden deep within the tumbledowns. Here, Local aborigines have used the cache to create their own answer to humanity's super soldiers.

The aborigines designed their soldiers with the sole genetic purpose of meeting humans in hostile situations, in human environments; and on human terms. Accordingly, the aborigines used the human genome as a basic template, then added their own specific touches. The resulting organism is an amphibious biped whose size, strength, and speed complement its predatory instincts. The creature is well over two meters in height, with powerful limbs and a lizard-like head. Its hands are huge and taloned, but can readily make use of human technology. A powerful iguana-like tail makes it a strong swimmer, its skin is phototropic, and its body gives off little heat. It also has the sensory awareness and organ redundancy of its aborigine creators, making it very hard to surprise, and even harder to kill.

These creatures are not truly sentient; and are most accurately thought of as sophisticated, bioméchanical drones. They can execute complex instructions, and aboriginal tenders can control them chemo-empathically in realtime. Beyond this, however, the animals function on little more than raw, preprogrammed instinct.

Three prototype drones were recently unleashed to discourage Long John mining within the Wall. Kraken, the GenDiver mining facility located there, suffered a three-month reign of terror during which the organic killing machines accounted for the loss of over forty workers. After the attacks, GenDiver pulled out of Kraken and turned the facility over to an independent mining collective.

The prototypes have proven even more effective predators than the aborigines anticipated. Something has gone terribly awry with one of the original trio and it has failed to return to the Creator cache. This rogue drone remains secretive and hidden from its aborigine masters and continues to plague the independent miners who have taken over the Kraken facility.

To date the creatures have been deployed only in this single action. In the future, however, the aborigines may be forced to release their sea monsters on other, more strategic - and more populated - targets.

Soldier Drone Characteristics

Length 2.0 to 2.5 meters

Weight 200 to 250 kilograms

Movement Land - s, 16, Water 5 5

Awareness 75

Initiative 85

Intellect 20 / 4

Agility 75

Constitution 50/6

Endurance 60/6

Strength 50/6

Speed 95

Rounds 1

Attack Claw (x2) - 70, Grapple - 85

Damage Ranks 1/10 2/25 3/40 4/60 5/80 6/90 7/100

Damage Scale 2

Armor 1;10

KEEPSAKE

Within the Last year, a small fishing village appeared on the shores of a coral atoll known as Fable Island. The village, Keepsake, was not built by natives, independent colonists, an Incorporate state, or even the GEO. Aborigines founded Keepsake:

In order to study human behavior, the aborigines used Creator nanotechnology to design physiologically perfect synthetic copies of *Homo sapiens*. More than fifty "golems," programmed to live as humans, built and now maintain the village of Keepsake. Implanted neural pathways give the golems memories of pasts they never experienced and relationships with people they never knew. None of the golems has any suspicion that they are part of an experiment, and not truly human.

To all appearances, Keepsake is like any of the countless small native fishing villages on islands throughout the archipelago. Waves lap against a series of simple wooden docks. Wooden spits hang suspended over a central fire pit. Modest thatched dwellings are strewn in a semicircle around the fire. A small wooden pen is home to a few iguanas and pot-bellied pigs. Carts and barrows rest propped against storage sheds.

Closer inspection reveals that things are not quite as they seem. No boats moor at the slips along the docks. No beaten paths lead from the docks to the village. The central fire pit shows no sign of use, no trace of ash or coals. The homes are well-constructed and built in the Multilevel architectural style common to native villages, but no windows or open porches admit the ocean breezes; Adults tend to chores around the village, but no children play among the dwellings or on the beaches, and no elders rest in the shade sharing stories.

A new arrival's first impression of the people of Keepsake would likely be that they are much like any other native community in the archipelago. After further experience with the villagers, however, subtle clues may reveal that something is not quite right. While they appear to be robust, near-perfect physical specimens, the villagers lack the racial diversity common to many native settlements. They also seem uncertain about their social rays. Sexual relations often occur by impulse, without regard for traditional cultural values. There are no political Leaders, though some of the golems are learning to dominate others through strength and fear. Moreover, no property relations exist, as villagers take and use

whatever they want, whenever they want.

As one becomes better acquainted with individual villagers may notice disturbing gaps and inconsistencies in their memories. While the people of Keepsake know any number of facts about their pasts, their memories lack intimate details and meaningful experiences, and they are unable to draw emotional associations to them. In extreme cases, memories may even be incoherent,

seemingly thrown together from the experiences of several people. There may also be revealing physical signs of the villagers' unnatural origin - a lack of calluses, birthmarks, moles and freckles, or the near-uniformity of their navels, nipples, and ears.

If confronted with evidence that they are any different from normal humans, most of the villagers will deny the claim with compelling arguments that include memories and relationships they are certain they have had since birth. It is possible, given enough evidence, that a villager may be convinced; and that could lead anywhere. While one golem might grow despondent and suicidal, another might become enraged and homicidal. Learning they are not who, or even what, they believed themselves to be, and that their past and personality has effectively been engineered, would assuredly draw unpredictable and extreme reactions.

The aborigines working on the Keepsake project have several goals for the village. They intend to collect any knowledge they can by observing the viklagers' behavior in a controlled environment. The aborigines hope to learn a lot more about human actions and motivations, which differ so radically from their own collective consciousness. They also intend to use the golems as subjects to investigate human neural structure and chemistry, in hopes of improving their ability to both manipulate and communicate with the species. Finally, if the experiment is successful, the aborigines may be able to introduce the golems to other human settlements, using them as representatives where peaceful contact with humans is possible, and covert agents where it is not.

Unfortunately, the aborigines have discovered that it is much more difficult to engineer human minds than it is to design human bodies. The aborigines did their best to replicate memories and personalities by implanting copies of neural pathways recovered from humans who had been compromised over the years since the Athena Project. The resulting minds, however, are terribly incomplete and fragmented, and many of the golems are effectively insane. Their mental health is rapidly deteriorating; and the aborigines fear that they will prove nonviable in the long run. Aborigine technicians have begun considering ways to use nanites to record the physiological structure and biochemistry of human brains, and these efforts may lead to the development of more stable golems.

MOST WANTED MILO FRANKLIN

Nowhere on Poseidon do natives and newcomers coexist more in harmony than in Second Try, and most of the credit goes to Milo Franklin. Franklin was the town manager from 2189 to early 2199, at which point he resigned. His term included the difficult growth period after the discovery of Long John, a time when other settlements fell prey to open bigotry.

Milo Franklin is a fourth-generation native of Poseidon. His forebears were among the founders of Homestead, the original site of Second Try. Franklin was born in 2146, so his childhood passed before Recontact. He spent his youth fishing and working communal algae pens, and was primarily educated through the informal tutelage of his grandmother. While other natives were bitter about the Abandonment, Milo's grandmother was quietly insistent that something on Earth had gone terribly wrong, and the motherworld was in more trouble than

the colonists on Poseidon. Young Milo wanted to help, and often built model spacecraft that he would pretend to pilot to Earth, rescuing the world from the troubles he imagined had befallen it.

When Recontact occurred, Milo was impressed with the efforts made by Earth to provide the colony world with supplies. He was in his twenties, strong and tall, and volunteered to work with and guide a GEO research team that would travel all over Westward Island. After three years with the team, Franklin had not only learned a great deal about his home island, but also about the way life was on Earth.

In 2189, Franklin ran for Town Manager of Second Try. His motto was, "You can't un-ring the bell," in reference to the discovery of Long John. He won the election, and held the office for ten years. During his tenure, Franklin maintained peace and harmony in Second Try. His policies generally accomplished what the GEO would have done, but without the connotations of GEO influence or control. Franklin often worked with native leaders to ease tensions with the newcomers, and was moderate and effective enough to be reelected well after the newcomer population of Second Try had dwarfed that of the natives.

Improvements to Second Try while Franklin held office include the training of local volunteers as ad hoc patrol officers, before the GEO established a formal patrol presence in the town; the volunteer programs to help participants ease their tax burdens; the construction of Lake Ibrium; the provision of electrical power to most of Second Try's residents; and the formation of an educational authority for the administration and financing of the town's schools.

Though he resigned as town manager in early 2199, Franklin remains the most powerful individual in Second Try, and his endorsement will surely determine his successor. He is still politically active, and attends conferences and summit meetings between native leaders and colonial officials in Haven. There has even been some conjecture that Franklin resigned to join the GEO's Office of Colonial Affairs, and recruiting a prominent native would certainly be a major coup for the GEO. In a recent Colonial Times/Net interview Franklin was quoted as saying, "...[the teams] in this game for control of Poseidon do not realize there will be no winner, only losers. For cooler heads to prevail, both teams need some understanding of the other's position. Perhaps it's time for a trade. I'm sure a player will be named later."

Species: Human, Genetic Redesign (Genie), Aquaform-Systemic Osmoform

Profile:

Origin - Poseidon Native

Background - Rural

Education - Secondary, Vocational

Goal - Altruism

Motivation - Duty

Attitude - Confident

Profession: Administrator

Mental Attributes: Awareness 60, Charisma 63, Education 35, Experience 53, Initiative 43, Intellect 57, Will 54

Physical Attributes: Agility 47, Appearance 50, Constitution 60, Dexterity 40, Endurance 73, Speed 50, Strength 38

Primary Skills: Aquaculture 40, Aquatics 50, Bureaucracy 65, Colonial Culture 65, Economics 45, GEO Culture 40, History 60, Incorporate Culture 40, Law 40, Leadership 60, Management 60, Native Culture 70, Negotiation 55, Oration 65, Persuasion 60, Political Science 40, Psychology 40

VENDOR

Vendor is the dolphin owner of AquaTech, a watercraft maintenance company headquartered in Second Try. AquaTech is one of the largest cetacean-owned private companies on Poseidon, with outlets in Haven, Newport, and many other Haven Cluster settlements. The company has plans to expand into other regions as well, starting with Kingston in 2200. AquaTech's services include watercraft repair, maintenance, and retail machine parts. AquaTech has retail and distribution contracts with Hanover, but its strongest assets are the aquaform and cetacean employees who perform in-water maintenance. While other repair services often require travel to dry docks, AquaTech can do most jobs onsite.

Vendor is a fifth-generation native of Poseidon. His family was primarily involved in aquafarming, but Vendor sought an escape from that lifestyle in Second Try. In 2191, when he arrived in what was then a largely native town, he immediately began looking for work. Initially, he feared that he had not improved his lot at all because the only jobs he found were aquacultural. Within a year, however, Vendor had apprenticed to the owner of a small-time marine maintenance outfit. In 2194, when the owner was lost at sea, Vendor used his savings to buy out the company. Since then, AquaTech has grown quickly under Vendor's direction.

Vendor's interest is not limited to business, however. He attends the Church of Whalesong Theogony in Haven as often as possible, and has shown a keen interest in native affairs. Vendor believes that the best way to increase native power is to work within recognized societal boundaries, gaining strength through capital - because money is all that the newcomers respect. For this reason, native activists sometimes shun Vendor, and a few even openly despise him. They believe Vendor should attack the system rather than profit from it, and label him an "enemy of the people."

A few activists, though, do not speak too harshly of Vendor's ways. They understand that he must maintain his public persona and image as an entrepreneur within the colonial community. The information and money he is privy to - because of his apparently soft position on native rights - could be invaluable to the local native struggle against the increasing political power wielded by the Incorporate states and the GEO. Vendor commonly fraternizes with alleged members of Zero Nation, and some suspect that he is diverting profits from AquaTech to support the ecoterrorists' cause.

Species: Dolphin

Profile:

Origin - Poseidon Native Background - Minority Education - Minimal, Vocational, Technical Goal - Freedom

Motivation - Duty

Attitude - Optimistic

Profession: Trader

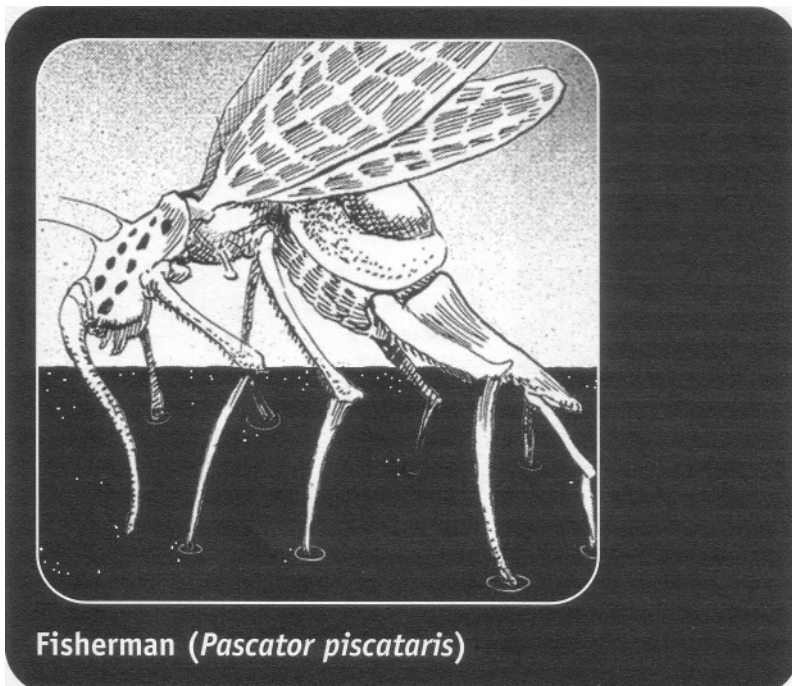
Mental Attributes: Awareness 70, Charisma 40, Education 20, Experience 37, Initiative 60, Intellect 58, Will 63

Physical Attributes: Agility 40, Appearance 50, Constitution 65, Dexterity 40/1, Endurance 54/7, Speed 50, Strength 41/6

Primary Skills: Aquatics 100, Colonial Culture 35, Economics 40, Electronics Operations 55, Electronics Repair 40, Logistics 60, Management 55, Mechanical Engineering 45, Mechanics Operation 50, Mechanics Repair 60, Native Culture 55, Negotiation 65, Physics 30



Global Ecology
Organization SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY



Range Haven Cluster

Habitat Shallow coastal waters
 Length .1 to .15 meters Weight
 8 to 15 grams Frequency
 Uncommon Resource Value
 Unknown Threat Level Minimal
 Poison Strength 65, causes temporary paralysis
 Movement 1/3
 Awareness 90/4
 Initiative 75/4
 Intellect 30/2
 Agility 40/3
 Constitution 50/2
 Endurance 30/2
 Strength 35/4
 Rounds 3
 Attack Toxin Cloud
 Damage Ranks N/A
 Damage Scale N/A
 Armor None

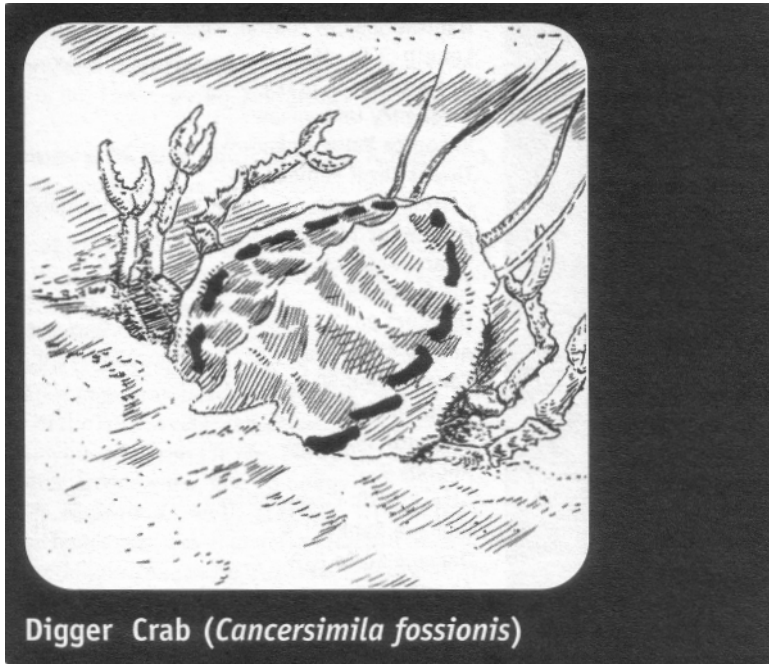
This huge arthropod analog has six long, thin, jointed limbs that extend from its various body sections, each leg ending in a "foot" beyond the Last joint. Each foot is covered with spiny, hair-like fibers that allow the creature to support itself on the water's surface tension. Similar fibers closer to the body are sensitive to airborne vibration, and the fisherman uses them as part of its auditory system. The fisherman's body is segmented into several narrow sections, with all but the head segment supporting a pair of legs. A long, hollow spine juts from the anterior of the fisherman's head section. On its back are a pair of membranous, ovoid sacs. These structures contain specialized glands which secrete and store a complex enzymatic toxin.

Behavior When feeding, the fisherman searches out concentrations of zooplankton and schools of small fish swimming near the surface. It then alights on the water and extends its mouth-spine below the surface, releasing a dose of its stored toxin. Enzyme from the expanding cloud is quickly absorbed by any organisms in the immediate area. The toxin inhibits the function of motor neurons in the affected animals and quickly paralyzes them. The incapacitated prey subsequently float to the surface where they are consumed.

Natives throughout the Haven Cluster, especially in isolated settlements like Circumstance, coat their hunting weapons with the fisherman's toxin. In large quantities, the substance is capable of slowing and disorienting even large prey animals. There have even been unconfirmed reports of native extremists using the toxin on their newcomer enemies. Researchers with Lavender Organics and Biogene have also taken an interest in the fisherman. Its enzymatic toxin is the most structurally complex protein yet discovered in nature, and scientists seek to discover how the diminutive fisherman produces it, and why it is so complex.



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Range Planetwide tropics, but most abundant in the Haven Cluster.
 Habitat Wet sands and inter tidal zone.
 Length Up to .4 meters
 Weight Up to 3 kilograms Frequency Common
 Resource Value High. The digger crab is valued as a source of food and raw material for handicrafts.
 Threat Level Minimal Movement
 Land 1/2, Water 1/1 Awareness
 25
 Initiative 50
 Intellect 50/2
 Agility 65/3
 Constitution 75/4
 Endurance 50
 Strength 80/4
 Rounds 3
 Attack Claw 35

Damage Ranks 1/30 2/55 3/80 4/100
 Damage Scale 1
 Armor 2/8

The digger crab exhibits the extreme sexual dimorphism characteristic of many animal species on Poseidon. The males are similar to large terrestrial crabs, with a heavy carapace covering top and bottom and six spindly appendages. These appendages are uniform, with three jointed spines along their length, and small claws at the ends. Two rows of eyespots flank the crab laterally, but its primary sensory organs consist of a series of antennae along its legs. The female is as much as three times again as large as the male, and lacks the carapace common to most terrestrial arthropods. Functionally little more than an egg factory, the bloated, soft-bodied female suffers from limited mobility and underdeveloped eyespots.

Behavior The female digger crab spends most of her time resting deep within the maze-like tunnels constructed by her male drones. The spines and claws along the males' legs are uniquely suited to burrowing in the damp sand where the creatures build their nests. The warrens can be quite extensive, and there have been reports of nests causing sinkholes that have trapped unwary beachcombers. The males spend most of their time gathering food for the "queen." Its most common prey includes insect-analogs, smaller crustaceans, and other invertebrates, but the female will devour most anything that becomes trapped in the shifting sands of the warren.

Diggers often give their nests added structural support by building them against solid objects, such as rocks or tree trunks. A continuing problem is their tendency to nest around the stilts supporting many native dwellings. The stilts begin to lean when they lose their support, and some houses have actually collapsed.

Diggers are favored by some natives as a source of delicious, tender meat. Crabbers locate the nests, and net the drones as they make forays to the sea. The females are generally considered disgusting, inedible creatures. The males' hard carapaces are strong and usually very brightly colored. They are often used in native handicrafts, most notably as bowls, pots and mugs.



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THE ZION ISLANDS

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ZION ISLANDS

THE ZION ISLANDS

The region of Poseidon known as the Zion Islands consists of over thirty major islands and hundreds of lesser clusters of islets and atolls. It stretches between fifteen and thirty degrees south latitude and twelve and twenty-seven degrees west longitude. Along with the individual islands of New Jamaica, Promised Land, Freedom, and Babylon, the Poseidon Antilles surround Irie Bay and form the majority of landmasses in the region. All of these islands formed through volcanism, though the islands of Boa Vista and Sotavento support the only active volcanoes. Other formation types are represented in the Zion Islands, especially to the southwest, where the Serendipity Atolls connect the region with Westcape.

Tropical climatic conditions prevail in the Zion Islands. Mean annual temperatures exceed twenty-seven degrees Celsius in most places, though northeastern trade winds frequently moderate the extremes of heat and humidity. Mean temperatures in plateau and mountain areas average around twenty-three degrees at elevations of 800 meters, and are considerably less at higher levels.

Annual precipitation in the Zion Islands is characterized by wide regional variation as well; more than 700 centimeters of rain are deposited annually in Kingston, while the area of New Fremantle sees only around 300. The Zion Islands are also subject to cyclonic storms throughout the year. These storms begin most often in the north and only about a third make it south across Irie Bay intact.

Vegetation throughout the Zion Islands is lush, with most major islands supporting rain forests, though much of New Jamaica's western half exists in a rain shadow. Even there, palm tree analogs are prevalent on the region's sandy beaches.

Among the islands surrounding Irie Bay, topography is fairly consistent. Long, gradual slopes are the rule along the beaches bordering Irie Bay, while the shores facing the surrounding oceans are generally more steep and jagged. Throughout the Serendipity Atolls, the landmasses are very low.

The oceans surrounding the Zion Islands are uniformly deep. To the north and west is the Sea of Cousteau, El Mar del Sur borders the Antilles to the south, and on the eastern end is the Dolphin Sea. By comparison, the waters of Irie Bay are warm and shallow. Sharp contrasts between ecosystems are evident between Irie Bay and the surrounding oceans.

COLONIAL HISTORY

In 2093, Quentin McDerrit led more than a hundred settlers to the Zion Islands and founded the town of Kingston on the coast of New Jamaica. More than 2,800 kilometers separated the settlement from Haven, so trading and sharing information were irregular at best.

Once the settlement of Kingston was safely established, McDerrit, a talented botanist, led a small group of researchers throughout the Zion Islands. They surveyed the landscape of the region and cataloged local flora and fauna. After the researchers returned to Kingston with the new information, settlers began to break off from the town and travel to the exotic places the explorers encountered. In this way, several small outposts were established, including Lucea on Boa Vista, Port Royal on Cuba Nueva, and St. Lago on New Haiti.

Throughout the early history of the Zion Islands, many settlers in the region became active in the development of the New Rastafarian Movement. The faithful of the NRM believed they had found the Promised Land, escaping the repression of Babylon - their characterization of Earth and its governments. As time wore on and the promised resupply effort from Earth failed to arrive, many NRM members even developed anti-Earth sentiments, which were inevitably instilled in their progeny.

As a consequence, when Recontact occurred in 2165, colonists in the Zion Islands were mistrustful. NRM influence led many natives to believe the Earth-based interests were there to steal Poseidon, their Zion, away from them. The badly needed supplies were welcome, but the governments, and their influence were not. A popular saying in the region was "beware a stranger bearing gifts," as the NRM continued to insist that the original colonists were better off without the Earth's assistance. Many feared reliance on Earth would give the corporate governments power over them.

The equipment and supplies continued to arrive, though, and the natives of the Zion Islands quickly incorporated the new materials into their daily lives. Before long, the anti-Earth sentiments lessened, and newcomers began settling throughout the region. Teachers, scientists, doctors, technicians, and many others were eventually welcomed into the communities where their services were needed.

In 2174, a group of NRM extremists broke off from Kingston and founded Marley on New Jamaica's southern coast, in reaction to the continued influx of newcomers. Marley was the first walled settlement on Poseidon, and entry to the town was strictly limited. It was a settlement for natives only, and would not condone any trade with Earth. The natives there hoped to continue an idyllic lifestyle of living off the land and sea without interference from Earth-based interests.

The 2187 discovery of the applications of Long John led to a massive exploitative rush to harvest the mineral. Thousands of newcomers poured into the Zion Islands, taking advantage of the region's central location between rich deposits in both the Sea of Cousteau and El Mar del Sur. Kingston became a true boomtown: its population grew from 18,000 in 2187 to over 90,000 by 2199. Smaller towns in the region also grew as more and more newcomers arrived to start businesses that would service the booming populations.

The NRM continued to maintain major control of many settlements in the Zion Islands, however, and their anti-Earth sentiments made it clear that newcomers were not welcome. Such settlements, such as Marley and St. Lago, continued to grow, as natives all over Poseidon retreated to these communities to escape Recontact.

The Long John rush also led to the founding of several new settlements in the region. New Fremantle, Hydrospace's company town, was established on Sotavento in the Poseidon Antilles in 2189. Fort Pacifica was established as the GEO's primary downside military base on the centrally located island of Cartagena in 2194, and a town of the same name sprang up around it. The latter half of the 2190s has witnessed the establishment of still more new settlements. These include Outpost, on Navajo in the Patchwork Reef, the GEO-sponsored towns of Freeport on Barlavento and Savoy on Freedom, the Nippon Industrial State retreat on Babylon, known as

Pearl, and many other small native villages and independent colonies.

Though the NRM is still the single most dominant political force in the Zion Islands, the continued influx of newcomers to the region has led to a reluctant acceptance of Earth-based interests. While Marley and several small villages try to hold on to their heritage, the settlements around them continue to grow and prosper, often leading even the most committed natives to wonder why they continue to resist change.

ACCESS DENIED

AGREEMENTS IN SPIRIT

settlement called Outpost on Navajo Island has served as a trading post and fuel stop between the Zion and Westcape since 1761. Over the last several years, however, changes in trade routes and population centers made Outpost nearly obsolete. Traders in the settlement therefore began looking for sources of income, and dealing in black market goods has now become commonplace. The word throughout the Zion Islands is that if anything can be bought or sold, it will be found at Outpost.

Most shady deal in Outpost are consummated at a saloon called Good Spirits. The Spirits simple, house-sized wooden building on stilts next to the Outpost's hydrogen cracking unit. Patrons run the gamut from NRM Lieutenants to Gorchoff syndicate dealers; anyone with contraband to move can be found there. The proprietor of Good Spirits is a tall, bearded man known only as Red. Red ran out on a colonial contract with the GEO in Newport, and has been on Navajo ever since.

GREEN THUMB

On the island of Babylon, the NIS has established a small resort town called Pearl. Pearl offers rest and relaxation to its Incorporate clientele, well as an array of leisure activities including deep-sea fishing, nature hikes, and hang-gliding among others. Pearl is perhaps best known, though, for its fantastic gardens. Over eighteen square kilometers have been devoted to collections representing the flowering vegetation of Earth and Poseidon, which are displayed with the greatest skill and creativity. Few places anywhere have a greater variety of species, and nowhere is there another conservatory of such wonder and sheer beauty. Despite the gardens' fame, relatively few have ever actually seen them, as they are off-limits to non-NIS personnel.

Many of the employees at the resort are Zion Islands natives drawn to the jobs by slick recruiting officers. Through intentionally misleading contracts and numerous "non-citizen resident fees" many natives they cannot afford to live under the auspices of the NIS, but discover they are locked into restrictive contract. The same recruiting officer then offer them a chance to make "real money at Simushir, its company town (see page 8). Many are forced to accept, and become indentured to the Incorporate city-state.

The Blue Water Circle has recently learned of this forced-recruitment. In protest the organization is planning to destroy the famed gardens of Pearl. At least one Circle member has hired on Pearl and smuggled out maps and security information.

Kingston

Despite its size, Kingston still feels like a frontier settlement. The Long John rush has lured thousands of newcomers to the town where they were least wanted, and tensions are high. Armed NRM members patrol the canals on airboats. Incorporate ships enter the bay with assault jumpcraft on their decks. There are even hired guns at the doors of the saloons, where prospectors gamble away the Long John they traveled so far to find. All this trouble over a plain and ugly mineral. It seems that fools bring their dreams and their money to Kingston every day. If they're lucky, they get to leave with their dreams. - Tomas McLain, The New Yorker

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Kingston is located in the Pacific Archipelago at 16°59' 22" south latitude, 17°18' 41" west longitude. The city was built on the northeast coast of New Jamaica, a large landmass in the Zion Islands. Most of Kingston rests in the natural harbor of Annotto Bay, suspended on a collection of reinforced quays and sandbars, interconnected by bridges and catwalks. Parts of the settlement sprawl over the surrounding shore - on Crystal Beach to the west, and the lushly forested Cape Fortune to the north.

HISTORY

One of the original Athena Project colonists was Quentin McDerrit, a talented botanist of Jamaican origin. When first exposed to the seas of Poseidon, his gills unfurled for the first time in the alien sea, and McDerrit experienced the hormone induced euphoria known as the Lesear Effect (BP 3). For many who experience it, HIE is restricted to feelings of general well being, but for McDerrit, and a small percentage of the population, the Lesear Effect produces full-fledged audiovisual hallucinations. McDerrit was overwhelmed by what he referred to as his "visions," and was actually placed under watch in Haven's infirmary for a day and a half until he recovered sufficiently to resume his duties.

Following this experience, McDerrit openly discussed what he considered the religious nature of his visions, based loosely on the Rastafarianism he had been exposed to in his youth. McDerrit felt the euphoria of the Lesear Effect was evidence that Poseidon was the Promised Land, or "Zion," and Earth and its governments were "Babylon."

Armed with these beliefs, the charismatic McDerrit gathered over a hundred colonists to his cause. Calling themselves the New Rastafarian Movement, and McDerrit the "Quinn," the group left Haven to establish its own settlement in 2093. The NRM traveled over 2,800 kilometers to a cluster they rechristened the Zion Islands, eventually settling on New Jamaica and establishing Kingston.

When the Athena Project's resupply from Earth failed to arrive in 2096, many colonists left Haven, either in disappointment or with the hope that spreading out would increase the colony's chances for survival. Some of the frustrated settlers came to Kingston, where their increasingly anti-Earth sentiments were welcomed by the NRM. During this period, McDerrit and small groups of his followers traveled throughout the Zion Islands, renaming the geographic features and cataloging the local flora and fauna.

Over the next seventy years, Kingston flourished as a fishing community. Timber was also cut and traded to many of the Poseidon colony's other settlements. Local farming was limited, but the nearby forests yielded a variety of fruits, vegetables, and berries. The forest also provided natural curatives - many of which native healers still use in 2199.

By Recontact, Kingston was a thriving town over 4,000 strong. Daily life was labor-intensive and technological infrastructure was almost nonexistent. Nonetheless, the settlers had adapted to the simpler lifestyle, and took a great deal of pride in their persistence in the face of adversity.

As Kingston received news of the Blight and its effects on Earth, NRM leaders convinced many in the community that Recontact was bad for Kingston, and for Poseidon as a whole. After seventy years of peace, Earth was going to bring its problems to the new world. Despite the belated arrival from Earth of badly needed supplies, more than 1,000 natives left Kingston and settled in isolated communities throughout the Zion Islands.

Though **there was more social unrest during this time than in any other period** in Kingston's history, the years between Recontact and 2187 were the calm before the storm. With the discovery of Long John and its applications, people began immigrating to Poseidon in droves. Many small Long John deposits were discovered in the depths of the Sea of Cousteau between New Jamaica and the Highlands. Mining began in earnest and as the largest settlement in the region, Kingston became a base of operations for both Incorporate and independent miners.

Throughout this time, the NRM accepted all comers. Ian Weiser had become the organization's leader and his policy was to increase membership, regardless of the commitment of new members to the religious foundation of the organization. Thus began the NRM's evolution from its religious roots into an underground organization devoted to limiting Earth's encroachment on Poseidon.

In 2194, backed by the support of the native populace, NRM leaders persuaded local officials to refuse to recognize the GEO's authority on Poseidon. The NRM controlled the city on a neighborhood level, where enforcers kept the peace on their turf, and violent crime was rare, except between rival NRM groups. Though the NRM's control was unofficial, everyone understood who really held power in the community. The GEO protested that the gangs simply wanted to keep Kingston lawless, but it was also clear that violence had come to town only with the arrival of newcomers.

In the face of political and economic sanctions by the GEO, Kingston continued to grow, becoming a center of tourism, shipping, and timber. Ironically, the town even drew support from several Incorporate states that were much in favor of a neutral colonial city, free from GEO influence and control. In fact, Hanover Industries owns a majority interest in the Kingston Spaceport, the second-largest spaceport on Poseidon. Strong native and NRM traditions have certainly not discouraged thousands from seeking livelihoods in the bustling city.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

In Kingston's early years, fishing was vital to the community, and as it grew, Kingston spread north and south along Crystal Beach. In the rebuilding effort after the Great Fire of 2104, the settlement began to spread farther into Annotto Bay, and Kingston gradually became a network of islet villages. In a few places, bridges were constructed or barges stationed to ferry people and goods between islets, but mostly natives swam or boated to other parts of the settlement.

With the discovery of Long John and the associated growth of Kingston came a need for better access between sections of the town. Platforms anchored deep in the bedrock of Annotto Bay were erected among the islets, and a complex system of bridges was constructed, interconnecting the islets, platforms, and the beach. The construction of the platforms left spaces that became a network of canals. These channels are used as often as any other means to travel within Kingston.

As Kingston expanded, the city was divided into parishes, and current government representation is organized by these parishes. The three greater parishes of Kingston are very different from one another, as each has its own property laws, and further divisions within Annotto Bay have resulted in notable inconsistencies in the infrastructure between bordering areas.

THE PARISHES OF KINGSTON

Cape Parish Cape Fortune extends east and south from New Jamaica, separating Kingston and Annotto Bay from the Sea of Cousteau to the north. The Cape is home to most of Kingston's night life, including its famed casinos. Restaurants and saloons line the boardwalk that rings the outer edges of the Cape's southern tip. Vendors hawk their wares from openair shops and booths, competing with street performers, beggars, con-artists, and petty thieves for tourist scrip. The bright lights of the boardwalk shine out over Annotto Bay at night, and can be seen as far as a hundred kilometers away in the Sea of Cousteau.

The extreme southern tip of Cape Fortune is home to Kingston's spaceport. Shuttles set down in the open ocean, and are towed in by tugs, where passengers and cargo are processed in newly constructed, state-of-the-art facilities. Exiting the spaceport, visitors cannot help noticing the boardwalk, and a number of native guide services, mining outfitters, and watercraft rentals have set up shop in the area.

Moving from the boardwalk toward central Cape Fortune, one enters an area known **primarily for the wealth of its** citizenry. Large waterfront homes dot the shore along Annotto Bay, built amongst the lush vegetation of the area. Two Incorporate enclaves call this part of Cape Parish home as well. Lavender Organics has a research facility that includes extensive hydroponic gardens and a housing complex for its 400 personnel. Hanover Industries' arcology, the Volkshaus, serves as its headquarters in Kingston. Volkshaus has forty floors with offices for shipping, research, administration, and industrial projects, as well as housing for over 600 of Hanover's local citizens.

Crystal Beach Parish Crystal Beach, the oldest part of Kingston, is the site of Quinn McDerrit's original settlement. Much of Crystal Beach burned and was abandoned in 2104, but some of the original structures still stand, now more than 100 years old. Tourists travel to Crystal Beach, where shops and restaurants have sprung up around the original colonial structures. Simple native dwellings dominate the region, most built on stilts lining the shores.

Southern Crystal Beach is home to Kingston's timber industry. Despite the availability of more advanced materials since Recontact, the need for timber has continued to increase along with the population of Poseidon, and Kingston supplies nearly a quarter of the colony world's lumber. The modest homes of timber workers are clustered here, with small markets, saloons, restaurants, and shops scattered throughout the area.

Annotto Parishes The Annotto Parishes are the heart of Kingston. They include all of the tiny islets, quays, sandbars, platforms, barges, and bridges that support life in Annotto Bay. The land surfaces generally support the older buildings of the region, while newer structures rest on the platforms and barges that have only been in place since Recontact.

Western Annotto Bay - called Backbay locally - is still home to many natives, and inexpensive housing has led many newcomers to the area as well. In some of Backbay's poorer neighborhoods, crime is rampant, and abandoned houses serve as pharium dens. In most of the neighborhoods, armed NRM strongmen travel the streets and canals protecting their turf. Small specialty shops are the extent of industry in Backbay, and most of its residents travel to other parts of Kingston to work.

Traveling east from Backbay, one enters Eastbay, Kingston's center of industry and shipping. Hundreds of docks and piers support warehouses that store the goods shipped in and out of town. VTOL pads dot the rooftops of the warehouses, often equipped with robotic cargo handling systems, and Incorporate and government offices oversee the constant stream of goods and personnel. Commercial fishing is based in Eastbay as well, housing the hundreds of watercraft that make the daily trip to the Sea of Cousteau. Residences in the area are generally overpriced and undersized, but many are willing to pay for the proximity to their workplaces.

Kingston Hall, the seat of local government, is in Northbay and is constructed on a two-and-a-half-square-kilometer platform anchored to the bay floor. Just south of Kingston Hall are several adjoining platforms and stationary barges that support Kingston's central business district. This is where the administration of most of the town's industry goes on. The finest restaurants and taverns are home to the deals that make Kingston's economy roll on, as banking and finance are the exclusive domain of this area. Glass and biocrete compose the high-rise towers that see thousands of workers bustle in and out daily. Space is at a premium here, and except for the expansive manors of the elite, private housing is absent.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Because of the nearby xenosilicate deposits, Kingston has witnessed dramatic population growth over the last thirty years. What was a tranquil native community of 4,000 before Recontact has become a sprawling waterfront commercial center of 93,000.

Unlike many of Poseidon's other major settlements, the native population of Kingston has continued to grow among the many newcomers. Current estimates put the number at around 6,300. The majority of natives work in and around Annotto Bay, in fishing, boat services, construction, and other labor-intensive marine jobs. A few natives own businesses, mostly craft shops and tour services.

Kingston's newcomer population has grown astronomically, and is currently almost 87,000 strong. Newcomer employment runs the gamut - small businesses, the Incorporate, lumber mills, shipyards, casinos, construction, and banking are just a few of the interests flourishing in town. Some of the newcomers in Kingston were lured to the city by its refusal to recognize GEO authority. This policy has attracted Incorporate business, newcomers hiding from contractual obligations with GEO-sponsored settlements, and those who philosophically oppose the GEO and its presence on Poseidon.

GOVERNMENT

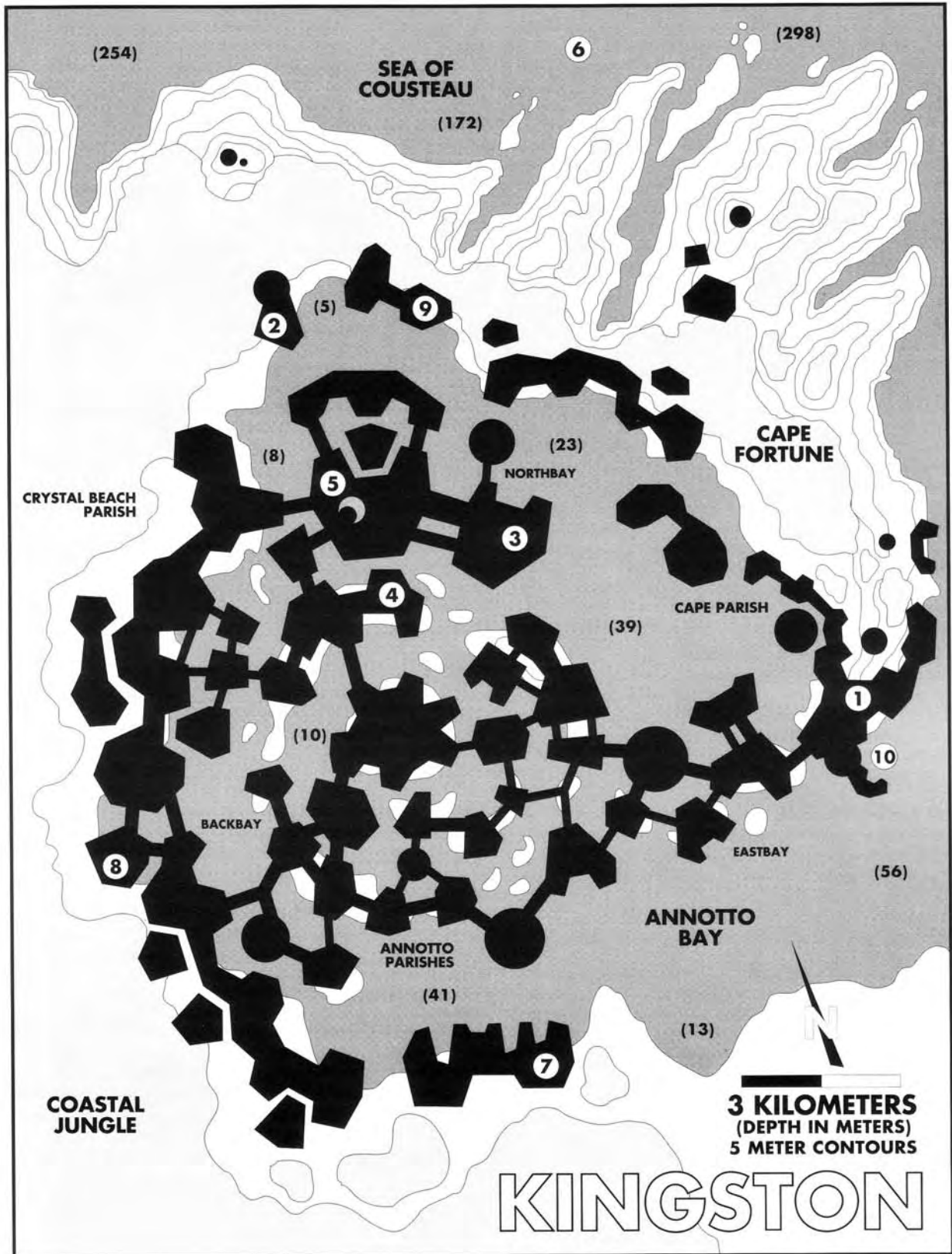
Kingston's system of government has been in place since 2120. Originally, a neighborhood councilor was elected for each hundred citizens, but now, with the population over 90,000, they are elected by districts within each parish. The council meets in Kingston Hall, constructed on a modern platform in 2194. Besides extensive offices, Kingston Hall boasts a rotunda that has perimeter seating for interested onlookers. Most real council business is done behind closed doors, though, as public meetings are often nothing more than an official vote count. It was the secretive nature of the councilors' activities that led to Kingston Hall's construction. The open forum of the rotunda lends an appearance of propriety to policy-making.

Of all the major colonial settlements on Poseidon, Kingston is unique in its refusal to recognize GEO authority. While many of Kingston's natives dispute the GEO's claims to the colony world because of the Abandonment, some local interests have reasons all their own to protest GEO intervention: the powerful gambling lobby fears the effect of GEO regulation; local NRM kingpins worry that their "protection" fees will become obsolete and their influence in government will be lost; and the Incorporate want to prevent any limitation to their pervasive local business interests.

The GEO does maintain a consulate with a staff of twenty in Kingston. The consulate, located on the government platform near Kingston Hall, is headed by Harmon G. Rush, who consults with Kingston's leaders in efforts to incorporate the city peacefully into the GEO's folds. Though the GEO does not officially recognize Kingston as an independent state, for now, it is considered a "colonial protectorate."

ECONOMIC BASE

Many of Kingston's economic concerns benefit from the lack of GEO authority in the settlement. In some respects, Kingston is treated by the GEO as a foreign nation, which has proven advantageous. For instance, under colonial authority, the casinos would be regulated by an outside administrator, and the city might be required to share tax revenues.



Though Kingston's economic interests are as diverse as any major settlement's, the town does rely primarily on just a few industries: timber processing, gambling, shipping, and fishing. As Kingston continues to grow, however, the finance and service industries are becoming increasingly vital. The settlement's current status with the GEO suggests that it could eventually serve as a central financial trading center that would be accepted by the Incorporate states.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Kingston has grown so quickly that the town's infrastructure is less developed and more inconsistent than it should be. Industry centers have all the latest amenities, but some of the residential areas have been left behind in the rush to expand. Piers and docks proliferate, allowing marine access to any section of town. A complex and well-maintained system of bridges is in place, which, in addition to the canals, interconnects the parishes. Maglevs connect Cape Fortune to Annotto Bay, but otherwise locals generally swim, boat, or simply walk.

A fusion reactor gives Kingston reliable power, though the cost can be prohibitive for individuals. Some residents rely on cheaper solar and wind power in their homes, while many natives just go without. Desalination is provided by three private concerns, and bottled water is sold at neighborhood kiosks.

With little support from the GEO, predominately private interests provide education, emergency, and medical services in Kingston. This system has had little time to evolve, and the services are sometimes exorbitantly priced.

MAP KEY

1. The Boardwalk Located on the tip of Cape Fortune, this is the main attraction luring visitors to Kingston from all over Poseidon. The major casinos and hotels anchor tourism here, but strolling the Boardwalk has become an experience all its own. Countless street performers share the pedestrian paths, working for tips in front of stalls and shops that sell an unending variety of unique goods and services.

2. LavOrg Enclave Here on central Cape Fortune, Lavender Organics has established an enclave where almost 400 of its employees live and work. Lavender built an immense agricultural compound on the western end, which is open to the public for guided tours. An incredible variety of Poseidon and Earth-based plant life is cultivated in the extensive gardens, and the compound has become a popular tour stop.

3. Government Center and Kingston Hall This platform in Annotto Bay supports Kingston Hall and the extensive offices that make up the government center. Within Kingston Hall, open sessions in the rotunda allow visitors to watch government in action. Outside the Hall, the government center includes offices for Kingston's public services and the GEO consulate.

4. Kingston Historical Society This small building on a platform near the government center offers visitors a startlingly honest portrayal of Kingston's past. From the original settlement by Quentin McDerrit to the refusal to recognize the GEO's authority on Poseidon, the Society offers a humble but proud view of Kingston's role on the colony world.

5. HydroDome The nearly constant rain and sometimes-oppressive heat of Kingston led to the construction of the HydroDome, a covered sports complex that seats up to 30,000 spectators. Both the roof and floor can iris open for the facility's major attraction, hydroshot matches. The HydroDome also serves as a convention center because of its size and its proximity to the hotels of Cape Fortune.

6. Deepsea Park This educational and recreational tourist stop was developed and donated to Kingston by Hydrospace. It allows visitors to travel 300 meters to a submerged habitat on the sea floor, just off the coast of Cape Fortune. From within Deepsea Park, visitors can observe mock xenosilicate mining, oceanic flora and fauna, and undersea construction, all overseen by knowledgeable guides.

7. Timber Processing Facilities This series of facilities southwest of Kingston, where Crystal Beach meets the lush rain forest, supplies much of the timber used on Poseidon. The factories in the area turn out many different products, but primarily the timber is cut to lumber before shipping for use in construction and furniture making.

8. The Blue Mountain Saloon This saloon has the distinction of being the longest continually operated business in Kingston. At the turn of the century, it was not only a tavern but also the meeting place of the NRM. Today, it operates as a restaurant and bar, and is a very popular tourist stop. Pictures of well-known patrons, both the famous and infamous, line the walls in the style of most-wanted posters.

9. Volkshaus The Volkshaus is the Hanover Industries arcology in Kingston. Forty floors of glass, steel, and biocrete rise from Cape Fortune to tower over the surrounding landscape. Inside, a shopping mall and administrative offices dominate the lower floors of the structure, while residential apartments occupy the upper stories. Cape Fortune's maglev passes through a station on the fourth and fifth floors, another stop on the circuit from the spaceport to Annotto Bay.

10. Kingston Spaceport Though the traffic is not as heavy as in Haven, the spaceport on the tip of Cape Fortune carries hundreds of passengers and tons of cargo to and from Poseidon orbit every day. The absence of GEO oversight makes it popular with smugglers and illegal immigrants, and security at the spaceport has increasingly become a source of political tension between the Kingston government and the Office of Colonial Affairs.

ACCES DENIED

THE NRM

The New Rastafarian Movement has been a force on Poseidon since the earliest days of colonization. The NRM's founder, Quentin McDerrit, led 100 settlers to establish Kingston in 2093. Since that time, the NRM's history has intertwined with, and sometimes dictated, the history of the Zion Islands. The NRM was originally established as a religious movement, a call to the colonists to forget the complex and repressive Babylon of

Earth and embrace the simple and pure Zion of Poseidon. This has always been the NRM's agreed goal, but different methods of achieving it have fractured the organization into numerous splinter groups.. The Sword of Zion, the Rastafarian Reformation Organization, the Selassians, and the Locksmen are just a few of the independent factions.

The turmoil created by the Long John rush has led to even more extreme divisiveness between the various factions. A few still hold out hope for peaceful change, and they generally try to lead by example, eschewing technology and money to live off the land and sea. However; most NRM members believe they must prepare for a war with Babylon to keep Zion free. The preparations for war include instructing, training, and arming all members, getting key members in positions of power in government, executing operations to slow the progress of Earth-based interests, and controlling Poseidon's major cities on the neighborhood level.

The NRM primarily uses two methods to acquire the money to fund its operations - black marketeering and extortion. Black marketeering includes smuggling and selling contraband such as narcotics, sunburst hides, and outlawed weaponry, as well as selling stolen goods. Organized NRM gangs called posses perform most extortion, sometimes physically taking over tiny communities, but most often roaming the streets of larger settlements and demanding "protection fees" from Local businesses.

In most communities on Poseidon, the NRM's activities would be cause for alarm. Within the Zion Islands, though, the NRM is often considered a necessary evil. In Kingston, for example, natives in most neighborhoods know and trust the local posses, and children view them with some degree of hero worship: Crime is rarely a problem; any offense against someone under the NRM's protection is met with swift reprisal. The NRM has kept the streets safe for its people, much like some twentieth-century criminal organizations on Earth. Local NRM leaders achieve a sort of celebrity in their neighborhoods, and locals frequently appeal to them for favors and even loans.

Many of the political leaders in Kingston have direct ties to, are being paid by, or are being extorted by the NRM. The organization has incredible influence in the settlement's government - so much, that in 2194 Kingston became the first settlement to refuse to recognize GEO authority on Poseidon. That influence continues, as city contracts continue to be awarded as the NRM sees fit and new laws favor NRM interests. The NRM's depth of control in Kingston is completely under-the-table, but is common knowledge among its citizenry.

PREPARING FOR BABYLON

The eastern slopes of the Blue Mountains on New Jamaica provide training grounds for the native activists. Under cover of the lush rain forests, instructors from MacLeod Enforcement train participating natives in the basics of military readiness. For two months, the volunteers undergo intense physical training, weapons familiarity, and tactics exercises. Jackson LeVant is a front man for the Sword of Zion' - a militant division of the NRM - but he has concealed his identity in contracting these services from MacLeod. The training MacLeod provides is illegal, and therefore highly secretive; the training encampments are routinely moved to various sites all over the Blue Mountain region.

PROTECTORS OF ZION

On the dry, grassy plains near Bright Savanna, 200 members of a faction of the NRM have begun a back-to-nature movement. The Selassians as other members dryly refer to them, are devoted to the tenets of the early NRM. They believe the wilderness is the only true Zion, and to achieve holiness, they live in the simple ways of nomadic tribes. They roam the plains, hunting Poseidon's wildlife by day and stopping each night to camp. The Selassians are even rumored to have adopted some of the self-mutilation rituals associated with primitive cultures on Earth, such as neck elongation and ritual scarring. They are also known to be hostile to all outsiders; some encounters with tourists on Incorporate safaris have resulted in violence.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT

The extensive agricultural gardens maintained by Lavender Organics on Cape Fortune serve as an elaborate cover for a drilling operation masked by one of the huge hydroponic greenhouses. The Incorporate giant hopes to quietly find evidence of Long John in a local subterranean water table with a direct connection to the Sea of Cousteau. So far, the operation has been unsuccessful and local management is under a great deal of pressure to show results from the expensive and risky operation. Bren Prasad, the highest-ranking executive at the site, has become desperate: He is Looking for someone to sabotage the drilling operation and give him more time to locate the proof that he is certain exists, but the saboteurs must not be caught, and Prasad will disavow any knowledge of them.

NEW FREMANTLE

Most towns on Poseidon remind me of Earth to some degree. They are carved from the landscape, and built up within the pocket created. There's a sure dividing line, a definite place where nature stops and the town begins. You can plant grass and trees, and call it a park, but the truth is that's not nature, and we all know it down deep. You must exit the fortresses o f Man to find nature today, and we like that; there's some comfort, some certainty in it. A nice clear line that you can cross at will.

Then you arrive in New Fremantle, and suddenly the line is blurred. There is a strange beauty to New Fremantle. Nowhere else have the land, the sea, and the steel and biocrete o f Man been so successfully incorporated. This town represents a new age, a place where men and cetaceans live and work side-by-side among the real elements o f nature. In New Fremantle, your front yard is the frontier, and you need only step outside to experience it. - excerpt from travel journals of Rebecca Monk

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

New Fremantle is located in the Zion Islands of the Pacifica Archipelago at 21°03'33" south latitude, 19°08'18" west longitude. The Incorporate enclave was built on the northeast coast of Sotavento Island, a landmass in the Poseidon Antilles chain roughly 1,000 kilometers from Kingston and 3,200 kilometers from Haven. Though anchored on Sotavento, most of New Fremantle sprawls out from the shore, both across and below the waters of Irie Bay.

HISTORY

Since Recontact, Hydrospace has been one of the most active Incorporate states on Poseidon. As early as the 2170s, Hydrospace was performing extensive environmental research, fulfilling construction contracts with the GEO, and reaching out to Poseidon's natives with technological assistance, such as free implant translators for native cetaceans. These early efforts were indicative of Hydrospace's intent to integrate natives with newcomers from Earth.

Hydrospace was more readily accepted on Poseidon than other Incorporate states, not only because of the company's philanthropic efforts, but also because of the natives' familiarity with Hydrospace products. Natives were keenly aware of Hydrospace's stamp on many of the vehicles and equipment they had maintained since the earliest days of the Athena Project, perhaps even more aware of the name on the modular habitats that had been the first homes on Poseidon. Whether conscious of it or not, natives had come to equate Hydrospace with safety and reliability. In fact, in 2196, Hydrospace launched an advertising campaign on both Earth and Poseidon that touted its products as "Survivors of the first 100-year field test - available in a variety of colors."

After the discovery of Long John, Hydrospace expanded its operations on Poseidon, focusing at the time on scientific research and the construction of marine habitats. A common facility for operations became a necessity, and for inspiration, designers looked to the Fremantle EcoDomes maintained by Hydrospace on Earth's Australian coast (BP 179). The resulting company town of New Fremantle was established in 2189, sprawling from the coastline of Sotavento both across and below the water's surface.

In the last ten years, New Fremantle's population has increased almost 1,000 percent. Growth has been so rapid that settlers sometimes find themselves employed in the construction of their own living facilities. Hydrospace has diversified its operations on Poseidon to include several classes of manufacturing, and the amphibious assembly lines of the innovative company are prevalent throughout the settlement. The community maintains an amazing sense of optimism, due in no small part to the skyrocketing value of its Hydrospace shares.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

New Fremantle is a technological wonder, an incredibly complex series of platforms that stretches five kilometers into Irie Bay from the northeast shore of Sotavento Island. Groups of platforms interlock, some supported by pilings driven into the bedrock and some completely buoyant. Each group of platforms is almost a town of its own, sometimes as much as 500 meters from the nearest neighboring group. Between the platforms, vast areas of the bay's surface remain exposed, usually enclosed by engineered coral reefs, which serve both as breakwaters and as submerged pens for fish farming. Viewed from above, New Fremantle looks like a series of interlocking, organic rings.

Beneath the surface of Irie Bay, New Fremantle is nearly as extensive. The incredible mass on the surface of the floating platforms is balanced by an equivalent mass below. The greater the structure on top, the deeper the bottom extends, serving as

a sort of habitable keel for the floating platforms. The platforms anchored in the bedrock generally have habitable structures underwater as well, built up and down the length of the pilings holding them in place.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Despite New Fremantle's physical size and technological achievements, its population of just under 19,000 qualifies it as a small town. More than eighty-seven percent of New Fremantle's working class is employed with Hydrospace; those who are otherwise employed include contract laborers, GEO scientists and researchers, and independent interests such as prospectors and private researchers leasing equipment, facilities, or living space.

For a community its size, New Fremantle has by far the largest concentration of cetacean residents on Poseidon. The 2,300 dolphins and ninety orcas represent over twelve percent of the settlement's population, and occupy nearly half of its available space.

GOVERNMENT

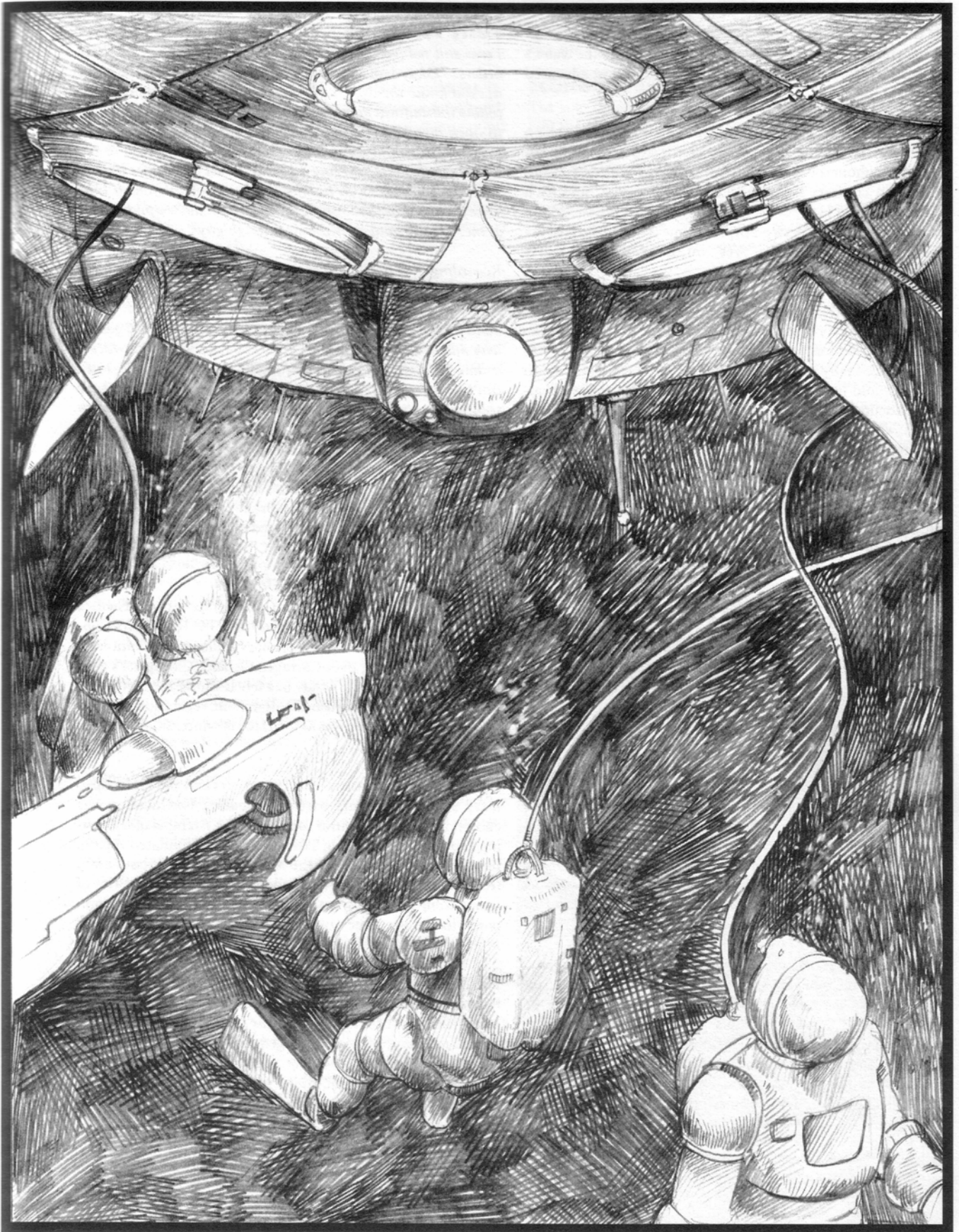
Hydrospace's innovative policies extend to the execution of government in New Fremantle. A dolphin called Steward heads Hydrospace on Poseidon, and governing New Fremantle is ultimately his responsibility. Steward has established a somewhat democratic system in the settlement, wherein Hydrospace shareholders suggest and vote on issues of concern through telepresence facilities. The votes are then weighted according to the number of shares the voter owns. Steward and his staff then decide exactly what means will be used to execute public opinion.

New Fremantle is unique among the Incorporate company towns in its level of cooperation with the GEO. The GEO leases facilities in New Fremantle for many endeavors. Cetacean Peacekeepers have translators implanted, acquire harnesses and drones, train in New Fremantle, and often request leave there. Numerous GEO research projects are underway in and around New Fremantle, and the city is home to the Office of Colonial Affairs' Cetacean Citizens' Council. The GEO is virtually unlimited in its access to New Fremantle, and has become an integrated part of life in the settlement.

ECONOMIC BASE

New Fremantle is the base of almost all of Hydrospace's activities on Poseidon, and the settlement's economic success is directly tied to the profitability of the Incorporate giant. Hydrospace's unique Incorporate structure - all employees hold shares of the company - means that the citizenry of New Fremantle is prosperous, and many of the enclave's amenities are communal. With readily available state-of-the-art technological resources, the standard of living in New Fremantle is uniquely high.

Hydrospace operations in New Fremantle are extensive. These activities include the production of marine habitats, watercraft, submersibles, underwater equipment, cetacean accessories, biomods, marine engineering and construction, as well as smaller, experimental ventures.



INFRASTRUCTURE

On the surface of New Fremantle's platforms, the physical infrastructure is sound, though not exemplary. Under the water's surface, though, the city's infrastructure is of the most advanced design.

New Fremantle's power is provided by a fusion reactor on Sotavento Island, and desalinated water is stored in public cisterns throughout the settlement. Security is provided by a contingent on contract from MacLeod Enforcement, and each MacLeod squad is supervised by a Hydrospan officer. Medical care is provided by two hospitals, one with subsurface access - popularly called the "Vet" on the platforms - and a number of smaller clinics.

In New Fremantle, technological amenities that are either exorbitantly priced or completely unavailable in most other settlements on Poseidon are a common sight. Many homes are telepresence-ready smart-houses; fiber optic cameras, audio hookups, and holographic projectors built into the walls allow residents to do almost anything without ever leaving their homes. Visiting neighbors is as simple as calling and having a holographic likeness projected into their living room.

Public access telepresence terminals also let cetaceans perform jobs that were previously inaccessible, lifting them from their traditional roles as soldiers and laborers. Additionally, most cetaceans in New Fremantle own CICADAs and drones, giving them full access to the city, its residents, and resources.

ACCESS DENIED

HACKED

The telepresence facilities of New Fremantle are unrivaled on Poseidon. are extensive enough to allow cetaceans to trade-in and travel almost anywhere in the settlement. The network that handles this public access software is an advanced system operated from a number of maincomps located throughout the settlement.

Recently, an "identity assassin" has been at work, destroying the identities in memory that cetaceans use to interact in the settlement, and forcing them to create new ones each time they link into the net. This has caused a variety of problems besides the mere inconvenience; security clearances have to be reset, network messages are delayed, and using electronic scrip has become next to impossible for those targeted.

Hydrospan employs fine technicians; and a remedy for the problem should be on the way very soon. More importantly, the company wants to know who is behind the assassinations and why they are doing it, and Hydrospan is willing to pay for the information. Interestingly, Anasi Systems is currently in negotiations with both Hydrospan and Atlas Materials, accepting clans and bids for their new luxury arcology; a proposal meeting with resistance from both the GEO and native activists. Perhaps there is a connection.

FORT PACIFICA

I was still redded-out when Sergeant Jackson started barking orders. "Okay ladies, please exit to your left. Move it, move it ...You know the drill!" I retained just enough composure to follow the uniform in front of me out the hatch, but not enough to open my chute. One of the men pulled my cord, and moments later we plunged into the open sea. They swam to the waiting hydrofoil, dragging me, and we set off for the base at over 100 kilometers an hour. I threw up for the fourth time since leaving orbit, and through mirrored shades the pilot glared at me. "How 'bout over the side, tough guy."

Recording Fort Pacifica is almost as much fun as the trip here. Lt. Colonel Garrett is a nice enough guy, but more often than not, my attempts at filming are met with a smile and "sorry buddy, access denied. If I had my way..." He must not get his way much. I've recorded all of the standard stuff - barracks, training ground, mess hall, uniforms getting their mail - but I can't help feeling it's all a dog-and-pony show. What I have seen, but can't record, is uniforms everywhere, going through maneuvers like a war starts tomorrow. And all night long, I hear jumpcraft and VTOLs setting down, unloading, and taking off. This much activity and their reluctance to let me record here can only mean one thing, and I have no idea what that is. I'm a little worried. - Richard Brandt, from GEO Military Installation 1 (Poseidon). Intercepted 28.34, 112.99, ComSpec Sgt. Cooper, Prosperity Station

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Fort Pacifica is located in the Zion Islands region of the Pacifica Archipelago at 17°09'33" south latitude, 14°37'13" west longitude. The base is the GEO's primary military installation on Poseidon, sprawling over Cartagena Island. Cartagena's constant exposure to high winds has left it thinly forested, with palm trees and scrub brush the dominant vegetation. Almost one-third of the rocky island's surface is white, sandy beach.

HISTORY

Fort Pacifica was created in 2194 to serve as the GEO's primary downside military base on Poseidon. The location was chosen because it is central to the Pacifica Archipelago, ensuring rapid response within Poseidon's most-populated region. Its relative seclusion allows the base to conduct exercises away from prying Incorporate eyes, and the logistical difficulties of maintaining a land base on a waterworld are minor when compared to the effect the same difficulties would have on an assault on the base.

Fort Pacifica is typical of military bases, and a small town of the same name has sprung up around the facility. Because troops stationed at the base have practically no living expenses, many speculators have come to Cartagena to live off the personnel's expendable income. Troops on leave can enjoy a virtual arcade, an open-air bazaar, many small shops, dozens of bars and nightclubs, restaurants, and even a brothel.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Fort Pacifica is a complex facility, encompassing almost twenty-two square kilometers of Cartagena Island. Biocrete walls form a rectangle roughly one kilometer wide and three kilometers long surrounding the base proper, with the windward end ac-

tually formed by a low rocky hill. Heavy weapons emplacements are spaced along the walls, and blanket the hill as it slopes away from the base to meet the sea.

Within its walls, Fort Pacifica is littered with outbuildings, including almost eighty barracks housing troops, a four-building training academy, an infirmary, three huge motor pools for vehicle maintenance, a military police station, a weather station, a PX, several ammunition depots, and pads for VTOLs and jumpcraft. The dominant building is the headquarters facility, a four-story biocrete structure with over 10,000 square meters of floor space. Over 800 personnel, both military and civilian, work at the HQ.

Below ground, an extensive system of tunnels runs between twenty-two subterranean bunkers. The bunkers are made of reinforced layers of biocrete and steel, encased in bioplastic. With stockpiled supplies of fuel cells, foodstuffs, and other gear, the bunkers can house 300 of the base's personnel for up to six months.

Two kilometers off the north shore of Cartagena, a seafloor installation serves as Fort Pacifica's base for submersible activity. The Military Installation Seafloor Habitat - known as MISHa - was designed and built through a contract with Hydrosplan. Two companies of Peacekeepers and two squads of cetaceans hold permanent stations there. MISHa's roaming submersibles maintain a sonar net that blankets the region, tracking oceanic activity as far away as Kingston.

The town outside Fort Pacifica covers the rocky landscape between the southern wall of the base and the beach. Houses and shops are in many cases incorporated into one structure, most built into a ring around the open-air bazaar. Homes are prevalent around the southern lagoon, where residents engage in fishing to complement their gardens. Viewed from above, the town has an hourglass shape, with semicircles at the lagoon and the wall of the base.

DEMOGRAPHICS

As a military outpost, the majority of people at Fort Pacifica are employed by the GEO. Besides the actual troops, almost a hundred civilians are employed at the base for various purposes. About 900 civilians live and work on Cartagena outside the base, most running businesses catering to military personnel.

The military personnel permanently stationed at Fort Pacifica include two companies of Peacekeeper Special Forces, one platoon of Marine Corps Heavy Cavalry, and two regiments of Peacekeepers. Along with support personnel from the GEO Aerospace and Naval Commands, the total enlisted presence often tops 5,000. Fort Pacifica usually houses only between 3,500 and 4,000 at any one time, as troops are rotated between the base and various garrisons around Poseidon.

GOVERNMENT

Cartagena Island is entirely GEO property, including both Fort Pacifica and the surrounding town. Military Police keep the peace, and despite occasional conflicts of interest, generally do a good job. Lieutenant General Luther Gideon of the GEO Marine Corps is in command of Fort Pacifica, and effectively

all of Cartagena island, though his role outside the base's walls is limited to ensuring the town's compliance with GEO policies and regulations.

ECONOMIC BASE

The sole economic concern of Fort Pacifica is in meeting the GEO's budgetary guidelines, and these are often exceeded. The personnel stationed at the base are financially comfortable; while their per capita pay is moderate, they have almost no cost of living. Therefore much of the money earned by the military personnel is pumped back into the surrounding town during their off time. Fort Pacifica relies heavily on these monies, and would quickly depopulate were the base to close down or move.

INFRASTRUCTURE

As a GEO military installation, Fort Pacifica's infrastructure and technological resources are sophisticated, redundant, and complex, relying only on budgetary considerations to limit their extent. Structures are built with the finest materials available. An efficient sewage system cleans waste and deposits outflow into the ocean. Supplies are provided by a continuous stream of cargo VTOLs and orbital landers. Power is provided by a fusion reactor underneath the base, and water is desalinized through a plant at the north wall.

The manpower needs of the base are also provided internally. Peacekeeper engineers man the facilities that service the base and direct the efforts of enlisted crews on new construction. Military doctors see to the sick or wounded and officer instructors provide academic training. The enlisted service the base's vehicle battery, which includes VTOL strike-fighters, patrol and assault jumpcraft, torpedo hydrofoils, fighter subs, and various cargo and personnel carriers.

In comparison to the base itself, the town surrounding Fort Pacifica has little infrastructure, despite its GEO sponsorship. Clean water and electrical power are tapped from the base, but residents must pay the initial cost of connection to the systems, typically more than a thousand scrip for each. A plan is in development for groups of homeowners to go in together for neighborhood connections. A GEO-sponsored school provides education for the community's children and a small clinic offers basic medical care.

ACCESS DENIED

BLUEPRINT FOR DISASTER

The Military installation Seafloor-Habitat is well defended a manned by a full The Military installation Seafloor-Habitat is well defended a of Peacekeepers that includes two squads of cetaceans. Crippling MISHa would be a necessary step in any attack on Fort Pacifica

MISHa was constructed by Hydrosplan, and the blueprints for the facility are on a highly secured maincomp file in New Fremantle. The blueprints detail the internal structures of MISHa, including the locations of power systems, sensor suites, weapons systems, and other vital components. Sugar McKay, an NM Lieutenant, has passed the word in the saloons of Kingston that he will pay up to 50,000cs for the blueprints to MISHa. There is also a rumor that

McKay is really working for the GEO, and is using the blueprints as bait in an elaborate sting operation.

WATERCRAFT DOWN

A Peacekeeper missile hydrofoil and its crew were recently Lost at sea near the town of Marley on New Jamaica's southern coast. Heavy weather interrupted communications prior to the craft's disappearance, and VIOL fly-overs to locate the craft have been fruitless. A reward is being offered for information revealing the fate of the vessel and its crew.

Members of the Sword of Zion, the highly militant faction of the NRM operating out of Marley, are responsible for the disappearance. A derelict catamaran on Marley's beach marks the camouflaged entrance to a small bunker. The bunker contains a cache of black market weapons, including the MHD sled and mounted torpedo cannon used to destroy the hydrofoil.

THE SWORD OF GIDEON

Fort Pacifica's commander, Lt. General Luther Gideon, believes that harsh conditioning makes strong soldiers. He sanctions questionable practices in the training of his troops, including both mental and physical abuse, leaving troops in the field during cyclonic storms, and locking troops up for minor offenses. Gideon believes these tactics are necessary because their training is what keeps his troops alive during wartime operations. Dissenters among the soldiers are routinely transferred to one of the various "hot zone" garrisons on Poseidon, or to one of the more remote research stations. Because he is aware of the view an informed public would take on some of the practices at Fort Pacifica, Gideon allows very little access to reporters at the base, and the troops transferred out of Fort Pacifica are often subtly threatened against speaking out.

LIVE FREE OR DIE

From the time of its original colonization, the Zion Islands region has meant freedom to its denizens. It was settled by the founders of the NRM, who left Haven to find a place that they could claim as their own and do with as they wished, independent of the early colonial administrators. With the Abandonment, Zion Islanders seemed even more assured of a life free of Earth-based control. They settled freely, claiming any land they wanted as their homesteads. In recent years, however, the GEO has claimed that all Poseidon is a colony under its authority.

Led by the government of Kingston, much of the region has refused to recognize the authority of the GEO and has worked to minimize Incorporate occupation. In accepting the hardships of life without the weighty support of these organizations, settlers in the Zion Islands feel they should live free of their influence and control. Whether to a tiny coastal village or the city of Kingston, people from both star systems continue to head for the Zion Islands to escape the influence of the Incorporate and the GEO.

Its unique status has served to make the Zion Islands a hotbed of insurgent activity. To this point, much of the resistance against the GEO and the Incorporate has been covert and

anonymous. However, with the continuing push by the GEO for control of the islands and attempts of the Incorporate to utilize the region's resources, many activists are preparing for open conflict.

The groups that are willing to defend the islands, including the NRM, recognize that they are vastly outnumbered and outgunned by the extensive resources of the Earth-based interests. Their best hope lies in making the Zion Islands more costly to take and hold than to leave alone. Plans involve fighting a guerrilla war, in which resistance forces take advantage of the local terrain to disrupt the logistics of any attempt to control the Zion Islands. The landscape of New Jamaica and the other smaller islands is largely untamed wilderness, providing excellent cover for insurgent activities. Rain forest covers many of the islands, providing a canopy to the terrain, and easy, rolling grades combine with minor rivers to form many lush and hidden valleys.

Planners hope that the predicted costs and personnel losses of a protracted guerrilla conflict will deter the more powerful Earth interests from forcing their agendas in the region. The various groups that would defend the Zion Islands from outside government are much better organized than most people believe, despite internal power struggles, and they have very strong grass roots support. Lines of communication are open between many of these underground groups and they share a common enemy, if not a common goal. Some of the organizations strive to protect Poseidon as a whole, while others only hope to keep the Zion Islands free. Leaders are united, though, in their belief that they can eventually succeed, even in open conflict, and they are ready to react at the first sign that the freedom of the Zion Islands could be compromised.

NOTHING VENTURED

Any newcomer to Poseidon is by nature a gambler. These people are willing to take a chance, risking what is familiar for the possibility of something better on an alien world. It was perhaps inevitable that games of chance would become a popular leisure activity on Poseidon. Kingston is at the hub of gambling on the colony world and is the only settlement that has parlayed it into a major industry. On Cape Fortune, several large waterfront casinos share the boardwalk, offering hundreds of games of chance, and there is rampant gambling in the saloons scattered throughout the rest of the town.

THE HAZARDS CASINO

Hanover Industries was the first to recognize the potential of a full-fledged casino on Poseidon. They opened the Hazards Casino in 2193 to a lukewarm reception, but within two years it had become one of the hottest spots on the planet. Since the Hazards opened, five other casino hotels have joined it on Cape Fortune, and apart from the actual buildings they are all very similar. The huge biocrete structure of the Hazards is a squarebased pyramid, with one corner jutting out 200 meters over Annotto Bay, supported by a column planted deep in the bedrock. The glass and steel faces of the building have intricate holographic displays dancing over their surfaces that at night can be seen from all over the city. Hazards has fifteen floors, and can easily accommodate over 1,000 guests.

The lower two floors of the Hazards are where all the action is. The primary attraction is gambling, whether on poker, blackjack, baccarat, roulette, keno, craps, or even old-fashioned slot machines. The Hazards also has two restaurants - the casual Danger Zone, and Ruby's for finer dining - as well as a night-club called Rumpelstiltskin's that offers dancing and mixed stimulants for those who want to keep moving. Yet another highlight is the renowned stage show, a complete music-and-dance routine featuring old-style showgirls, that is performed three times nightly.

DRAGON BOY PARLOR

Unique among the casino offerings in Kingston is Dragon Boy Parlor. Dragon Boy is owned by the Nippon Industrial State, and it is the only major casino without a hotel. The players at Dragon Boy are often described as addicts, though, and sleep is usually the last thing on their minds. The casino is dominated by virtual gaming. Players sit down at a machine and jack- or trode-in to play their favorite game. The virtual atmosphere is set by the player, and after choosing their game, they sit back and play for endless hours. Some players like the traditional gambling options, but others create scenarios for themselves that are completely unique. One popular game is called Duel, in which the player competes against a virtual opponent in a fight to the death, whether in an Old West shoot-out, a samurai showdown, a boxing match, or a modern-day brawl. Stepping into Dragon Boy Parlor is like being in a theater with no show. Its just a dark room with lots of people - that is, until you jack in.

KINGSTON SALOONS

After a few visits to the casinos on Cape Fortune, the hardcore gamblers usually find their way to one of Kingston's saloons. The atmosphere in these places is very different, but just as exhilarating. What most visitors first note are the armed guards at the door - saloon owners in Kingston take no chances. Most often a saloon offers some form of entertainment on its lowest floor, whether a restaurant, a live local band, strippers, a simple bar, or some combination. Saloons usually do not get a very big cut of the gambling action going on inside, so they often rely on alcohol sales to turn a profit. To get to the game a visitor generally has to enter a back room or move upstairs. Once inside, card and dice games can be played with abandon. Most popular by far is poker, but other games can also be found. The poker games often require a minimum buy-in, and rarely do players leave until they have either lost or won it all.

Though gambling and drinking are vices to which the saloons cater, there is another, more natural need they satisfy: human contact. The saloons of Kingston have long been gathering places where workers meet after a long day and relax in their time off, or individuals stop in for a drink, get to know the staff, and become regulars. The news is shared over cocktails with people who have nothing in common but where they are sitting. In a city like Kingston it is easy for individuals to get lost in the shuffle, so they take what human interaction they can get. The saloons have always been a part of Kingston, and their popularity only continues to grow.

BRIGHT SAVANNA

In the years following Recontact, the GEO sponsored numerous colonial efforts on the new world. One of the earliest involved the hybrids (BP 228), the unsung heroes of the blight years. Having served the GEO well, and facing widespread social prejudice back on Earth, the hybrids were offered a new home on Poseidon.

In 2191, in a colonial effort led by a Silva named Geronimo Pacheco, over 500 hybrids settled on the central savanna of New Jamaica, and established a colony they call Bright Savanna. Bright Savanna is located in the grassy foothills of New Jamaica's western mountains. Though marginal farmland, the settlers seem to prefer the semi-arid region as it reminds them of their days in Africa.

The resources provided to Bright Savanna are as extensive as those in the most well funded newcomer colonies on Poseidon. Through numerous GEO grants and subsidized development loans, the hybrid enclave enjoys well designed, durable construction materials, sophisticated computers and communications equipment, automated farm machinery, and a small but reliable fusion reactor. This support has served to make the hybrid colony the source of envy and bad blood for many newcomers.

Despite these assets, life in Bright Savanna can still be difficult. Fresh water is a valuable commodity and the colony's many wells barely meet the settlement's demands. Various predators hunt the region, forcing the hybrids to remain wary and constantly carry weapons to protect both themselves and their livestock. Seasonal wildfires and flashfloods are also constant concerns, though the enclave's sheltered position at the base of the mountains lessens the threat of oceanic storms and cyclonics.

The Bright Savanna compound is almost a hundred square kilometers of rolling, fertile terrain. The perimeter is guarded by five-meter-high, bioplastic fencing designed to keep all but the largest predators at bay. Most of the area within the fence is devoted to agriculture and pastures, and is kept green with an efficient irrigation system. The hybrids' dwellings and public buildings are centrally located and clustered together, consisting primarily of low, brightly colored, bioplastic structures. Large, prefabricated longhouses often serve as homes for multiple families.

The residents of Bright Savanna have found their pioneer lifestyle a paradise compared to that of hybrids in the larger colonial settlements. As a rule, hybrids have seldom found true acceptance anywhere, and are generally treated even less like humans than cetaceans. The challenges of life on the Savanna have made the hybrids a close-knit group, and necessity has taken the place of bureaucracy. Geronimo Pacheco is still the leader of Bright Savanna. A council of elders offers their insights on community issues, but Geronimo is the enclave's governor and usually makes the final decisions. Interestingly, Geronimo has never won an election - there are none. In Bright Savanna, no one is forced to do anything - they follow Geronimo because he leads.

The Office of Colonial Affairs has begun encouraging the hybrids to fulfill their original colonial contracts. The contracts require that they establish a formal system of government - with a written charter - to meet OCA guidelines. Bright Savanna is expected to begin holding elections, and the elected officials are expected to answer to GEO administrators. Geronimo supports this transition but has been more concerned with the enclave's struggle to establish self-sufficiency. Geronimo realizes that the long-term survival and prosperity of the enclave will require a more formal local government and the support of the GEO. He is looking forward to passing-on the mantle of leadership and spending more time with his many children and grandchildren.

THE ABORIGINES

In 2118, the orbit of the Athena Project's colony ship, the UNSS *Cousteau* decayed completely, resulting in its fiery plunge into the ocean east of the Serendipity Atolls. A small boy from Farnsworth, a native settlement on Apache Island, discovered the remains of the *Cousteau's* main communications dish buried in a muddy lagoon on a tiny, local islet (BP 80): If they were to discover the location of the dish and other bits of superstructure strewn about the region, GEO specialists might be able to extrapolate the location of the *Cousteau's* final resting place.

Shortly after it crashed, aborigines in the region discovered the wreckage resting on the sea floor at a depth of more than 3,000 meters. Until Recontact and the subsequent influx of newcomers to Poseidon, the aborigines showed little interest in the ship. In recent years, though, as the threat posed by human encroachment became more imminent, the aborigines returned to the site in search of clues to the nature of their visitors.

Deep within the ship's sediment-coated hull the aborigines discovered the *Cousteau's* main computer core. The computer, state-of-the-art for its time, used the DNA memory storage common in maincomps today: The frigid depths served to preserve the fragile organic structures, and with their natural ability to manipulate chemical compounds, the aborigines were able to access the stored code. While they recognized that the cores' DNA was structured into coded patterns, they were initially unable to decipher them or understand the significance of the data they represented.

The aborigines used their nanite assemblers to cover the wreckage in a shell of limestone to protect and hide the ship while they attempted to decipher its mysteries. Billions of nanites were released at the site, programmed to extract calcium, carbon, and oxygen from the surrounding waters, assembling these into an ever-larger calcareous structure. Within a few days, the nanites had constructed an organic "hangar" more than a kilometer long and 300 meters wide. When the project was completed, the *Cousteau* lay cocooned in a massive, artificial formation that looked the part of an extinct arid submerged natural reef

At hidden points around the reef's surface, small caves in the coral lead to a convoluted maze of smooth, twisting tunnels that pass into a single massive chamber. Phosphorescent organisms growing *on* the chamber's walls softly illuminate the quiet hulk of the *Cousteau*. Aborigines swarm in and around the wrecked vessel, and organic tendrils run from the ship into several organic nodes embedded within the surrounding walls. These nodes are intricate collections of organic threads that serve a function similar to the aborigines' own neural sacs; but on a far greater scale. The nodes in effect comprise an organic form of artificial cognition - an organic, artificial intelligence.

With the combined use of this living machine, linguistic and experimental templates derived from encounters with humans, and captured examples of modern human data-storage devices, the aborigines have recently learned to read the information stored in the *Cousteau's* aging core.

The aborigines' technicians are significantly smaller than the laborers and soldiers most often encountered by humans - smaller, slimmer, almost atrophied in appearance. Dozens of them cluster around the walls of the chamber like bats sleeping in a cavern: Organic filaments interconnect their neural sacs, allowing them to interface with the computer node. Electrochemical signals, much like neural impulses, flow between these aborigines and the nodes as they work.

The *Cousteau's* computer contained within its massive storage cores the sum total of human history and knowledge, and the technicians have worked to analyze all of it. Much of this data was technical. They have learned about human medicine, engineering, and basic sciences. They have augmented their knowledge of human anatomy, physiology, and genetics - adding to what they had already gained from their actual encounters. More importantly; however, the aborigines recognized that the stored cultural and historical records were much more revealing of human nature.

They learned of slavery, religious crusades, and war. They learned of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists, of Auschwitz and Dachau. They found news reports and UN studies recounting the Earth's environmental degradation, from greenhouse warming to the extinction of entire species. They studied Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the legacy of the Cold War; Mutually Assured Destruction, and the nuclear proliferation that followed.

The aborigines also watched as humanity first set foot on the Moon, as they dismantled their missiles, and as they struggled to restore and protect Earth's ecological balance. They learned of humanity's love of beauty from images of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, and of its yearning for the divine in Michaelangelo's *Creation of Adam*. They studied Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, and Einstein's *Theories of Relativity*. They accessed news archives and reviewed personal interviews with Dr. Marcos Gottfried, and learned of his determined efforts to gift cetaceans with true sentience. They recognized the thirst for knowledge and passion for exploration that motivated humanity's first voyage to Poseidon

The increased understanding of human nature and motivations has given the aborigines a new perspective on the newcomers to their world. The Athena Project colonists' cultural transformation during the Abandonment had indicated that humans could become viable components of Poseidon's ecology, and this was confirmed by the aborigines' exploration of the Cousteau's memory cores. However; what they learned also justified their fears that humans pose a terrible threat to the survival of the Creators' legacy.

Despite the wealth of knowledge preserved in the sunken ship, it all predates the Blight, its aftermath, or the extreme consequences it had for humans and their world: The aborigines still know very little about the GEO, the Incorporate states, or the subconscious fears driving the newcomers' lust for Long John and its promise of immortality. The aborigines must now expand and deepen their understanding of humans by integrating new encounters and experiences with what they have learned from studying the Cousteau.

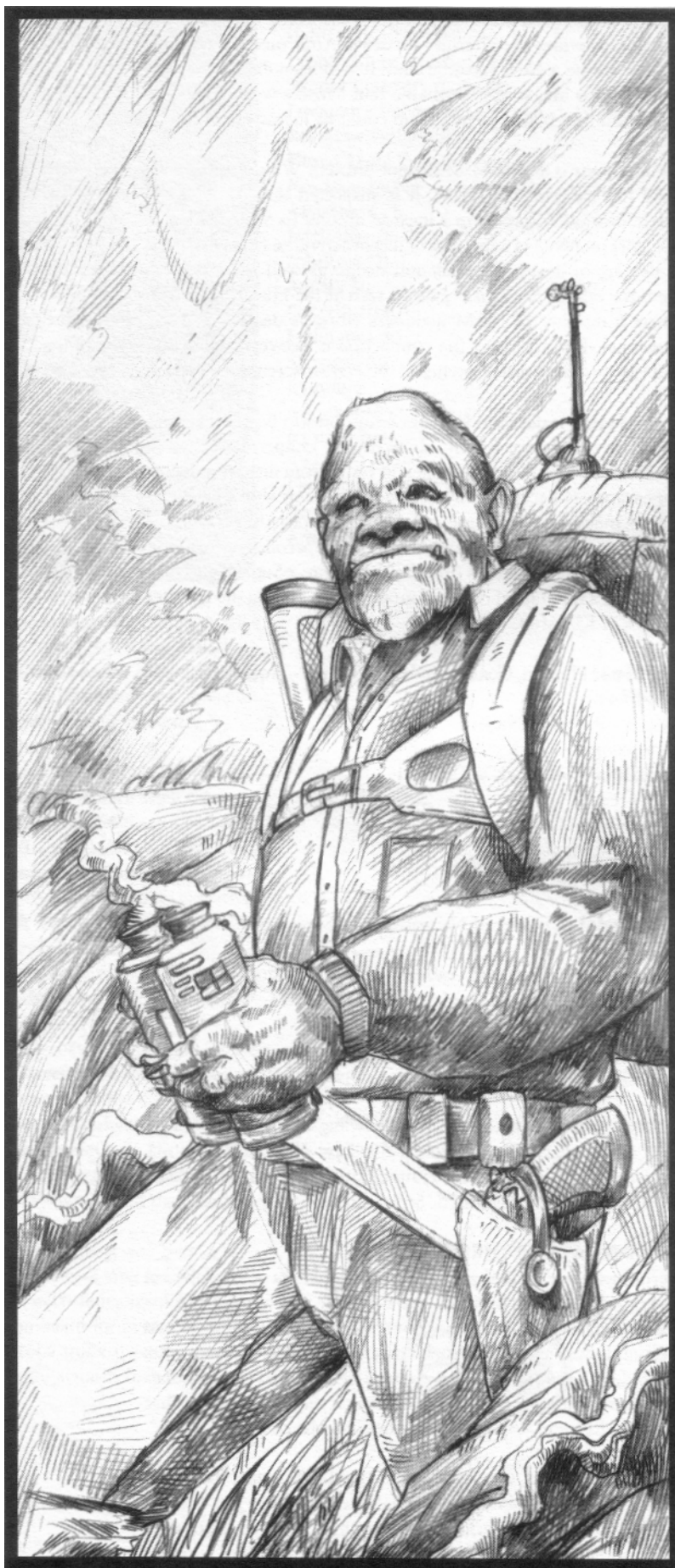
MOST WANTED

ROBERTO "SUGAR" MCKAY

Things were tough for Roberto McKay from the very start. His mother died giving birth to him in a Crystal Beach shanty in Kingston in 2170. No one was sure who the baby's father was, so Roberto was taken in by the midwife, Carlotta Porter. Though he lived with Carlotta throughout his youth, Roberto was community property on Crystal Beach. He spent his childhood doing odd jobs around the waterfront, and met a number of interesting characters while performing his duties. These rugged individuals called him Sugar, after hearing Carlotta call him home for lunch.

Sugar began spending more and more time away from home as the years passed, hanging out with the fishermen and hunters he admired. He would follow them around, day after day, forcing them to shoo him away when they did not want his company. Sugar was constantly exposed to things better left for adulthood. He claims that he was cursing when he was five, shooting when he was seven, and making love when he was nine. Whether truth or exaggeration, Sugar certainly grew up quickly.

As a teenager, Sugar became a small-time pharium dealer. Kingston wanted to appear civilized and thus had outlawed certain drugs. Sugar was jailed on three different occasions for possession with intent to sell. In jail, Sugar met another dealer named Isaac Moselv.



Mosely is an NRM lieutenant, and it is suspected that the organization provides the pharium he deals. After meeting Mosely, Sugar became a New Rastafarian. He had been exposed to the NRM all his life, so it is probable that Mosely was the first to show him that NRM membership could be lucrative.

Today, Sugar is an NRM lieutenant himself. Within the convoluted hierarchy of the NRM, it is suspected that most of the neighborhood enforcers in Kingston answer to Sugar. Sugar is allegedly involved in a number of illegal activities: he is suspected of dealing in heavy weapons and drugs, as well as smuggling them for others. Sugar is regularly seen at the Hazards Casino, where a number of NRM members work as dealers or hotel personnel. Exactly what the connection is between the NRM and Hanover Industries, owner of the Hazards, remains unclear.

Sugar owns a waterfront warehouse in Annotto Bay and a modest home on Crystal Beach. He is usually chaperoned around Kingston by two large gentlemen in his custom airboat. Sugar's appearance is deceptive; while loud Hawaiian shirts and sunglasses make his handsome countenance appear fun-loving, he frequently erupts violently in public. His chaperones protect others from Sugar's wrath as often as they protect Sugar from others. Sugar's reputation is one of infamy, even among the tolerant natives of Kingston.

Species: Human, Genetic Redesign (Genie) -Aquaform Diver
Profile:

Origin - Poseidon Native
Background - Tragic Education -
Minimal, Vocational Goal - Fame
Motivation - Obsession
Attitude - Manic

Profession: Gangster

Biomods: Accelerated Neurons, Body Sculpting

Mental Attributes: Awareness 60, Charisma 48, Education 25, Experience 39, Initiative 55, Intellect 41, Will 60

Physical Attributes: Agility 68, Appearance 90, Constitution 44, Dexterity 57, Endurance 71, Speed 76, Strength 46

Primary Skills: Aquatics 70, Brawling 60, Bribery 55, Fast Talk 65, Forgery 50, Handguns 65, Law 40, Leadership 60, Native Culture 45, Physical Training 50, Pick Pocket 65, Piloting 70, Sailing 45, Stealth 75, Street Culture 55

GERONIMO PACHECO

Geronimo grew up in the hybrid enclave that was established in central Africa over a hundred years ago. He was born in 2157, a time when Earth was busy recovering from the Blight. When Geronimo was a young Silva, he was fascinated by the prospects created by Recontact. Geronimo was obsessed, as most youngsters were, with what life might be like on the waterworld. That passed with time - and his realization that he could not swim.

As his parents had, Geronimo joined the GEO Armed Forces as soon as he turned sixteen, the legal age for Silvas. He was exposed to the outside world for the first time, and also exposed to its prejudice. Geronimo was mercilessly harassed by both his

fellow troops and commanding officers. Though he was an excellent soldier, his rank would never exceed that of private. He was informed, in no uncertain terms, that he was not "a leader of men."

When Geronimo rejoined his people in Africa, he found that many had already agreed to be part of a GEO sponsored colonial settlement for hybrids on Poseidon. He rushed to join them, glad that at least the armed forces had taught him to swim. Eventually, Geronimo and his clan would lead a group of 500 hybrids in forming a satellite colony in the central savannas of New Jamaica.

Over the fifteen years since his arrival on Poseidon, Geronimo has become a leader after all. His colony, Bright Savanna, now numbers over 700, and he has been titled Governor. The hybrids under his care are true pioneers, claiming and clearing land as their numbers grow. They have learned to exist on the often dangerous frontier and for the first time in his life Geronimo feels true acceptance.

At forty-two, well into middle age for a Silva without Long John therapy, Geronimo has become an excellent trader, and his appearance alone usually discourages cheats. He is black as charcoal, with amber eyes like glowing embers, and he weighs in at well over a hundred kilograms. A flak vest and combat boots complement an ever-present rifle to complete Geronimo's foreboding appearance.

Species: Human, Genetic Redesign (Genie) -Hybrid Silva
Profile:

Origin - African Enclave -
Wasteland Background - Dangerous
Education - Minimal, Military
Goal - Freedom
Motivation - Social
Attitude - Brooding

Profession: Pioneer

Mental Attributes: Awareness 68, Charisma 56, Education 25, Experience 52, Initiative 57, Intellect 52, Will 69

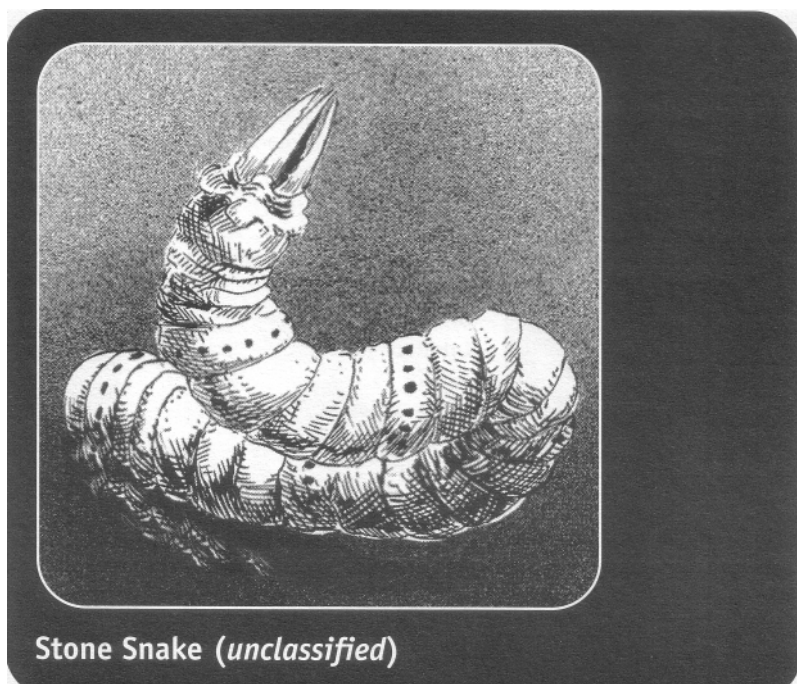
Physical Attributes: Agility 43, Appearance 27, Constitution 70, Dexterity 53, Endurance 80, Speed 50, Strength 100

Primary Skills: Aquatics 35, Botany 65, Colonial Culture 40, Earth Culture 30, Farming 40, First Aid 35, Foraging 65, Leadership 50, Longarms 65, Military Culture 30, Military Hand-to-Hand 70, Negotiation 65, Orienteering 60, Persuasion 50, Physical Training 60, Stealth 70, Tracking 65



Global Ecology
Organization SCIENCE

Poseidon Biological Survey
#POS-103 Resource and Hazardous



Range Zion Islands Habitat
Coastal shallows Length Up
to 6 meters Weight Up to
55 kilograms Frequency
Uncommon Resource Value
None Threat Level Extreme
Movement 6/14 Awareness
85
Initiative 75
Intellect 50/4
Agility 50
Constitution 45
Endurance 30/6
Strength 80
Rounds 2
Attack Bite 65, grapple 40
Damage Ranks
Bite 1/10 2/25 3/40 4/60 5/75 6/90 7/100
Grapple 1/20 2/60 3/90 4/100
Damage Scale 1
Armor 1/10

These creatures are not snakes or even reptile-analogs, but their elongated bodies and tough hides undoubtedly led to their name. Still unclassified, stone snakes are one of the largest and most dangerous predators on Poseidon, and there are many well-documented cases of attacks on humans. They are fast swimmers, using an eel-like motion to maneuver through the saltwater shallows they inhabit.

Stone snakes are evolutionary anomalies. They are warm blooded, but their external anatomy is most reminiscent of annelid, or segmented, worms. They are composed of multiple segments that increase in number as the creature ages. They tend to dark gray in coloration and their hides are thick, rough, and hard. The stone snake has rings of eyespots around each body section, each of which physiologically seems almost an independent organism. The creature breaths using primitive, separate lungs in each body segment, the air passing through two blowhole-like structures on the dorsal surface of each segment. The stone snake's jaws can be a meter long and are comprised of the same four-part structure found in Poseidon's fish species. Dozens of spine like teeth line the inner surfaces of all four mandibles.

Behavior The stone snake lies on the bottom of shallow coastal waters, preferring muddy bottoms. It is a solitary hunter, and its speed allows it to capture most prey easily. After impaling its prey with its long teeth the stone snake drags it to the bottom and holds it there until it stops struggling. Few creatures can defend themselves against an adult stone snake, but they seem to have a built in population control. During mating, violent muscular contractions sometimes cause stone snakes to constrict around their partners bodies, crushing and often killing their mates.

Stone snakes can remain submerged for several hours if resting and over ninety minutes if active. A breathing stone snake is characterized by a Long series of rapid spouts and hollow pops caused when the blowholes of each segment in turn break the surface as the animal breaches. The sound can be heard for over a kilometer and should serve to alert anyone in the area that a stone snake is hunting nearby - it may be the last warning before a sudden and deadly ambush from below.



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Water Rat (*Rodentis gregalis*)

Like most other terrestrial animals on Poseidon, this mammaloid has six legs. The legs are thin and muscular, and end in small webbed feet with three clawed toes. The water rat's body is long, sleek, and hairless, culminating in a leathery tail. Its head is hairless as well, with four small auditory cavities at the base of thin flaps of muscle and skin at the base of the skull. The water rat's small mouth is filled with sharp spade-like teeth for piercing, scraping, and tearing.

Behavior The water rat is a gregarious animal, with extended families occupying the same locale for generations. They commonly reside in dens they dig in overhanging banks and shorelines. Water rats are extremely mobile, able to climb, run, and swim equally well. They have no means of breathing underwater, but can remain submerged for up to thirty minutes.

Water rats are able builders, and they use various natural materials to enhance their dens as they continually expand their warrens. They are omnivorous, feeding on plant life, insects, and any small vertebrates they can catch. The larger female lays large leathery eggs, usually four to six per cycle, in a small nesting chamber within the den. She then continues to hunt each day, while the male guards the nest.

Water rats have proven to be excellent barometers. Some natives keep them as pets because they become visibly anxious with the approach of a storm. The creatures also eat fast fungus, making them allies in the constant battle against the rot. Unfortunately, they have also been known to gnaw at woodwork, and more than one unwitting traveler has left his boat unattended for a few days, only to return and find it no longer seaworthy. The water rat can be eaten, but the meat is very tough and tastes muddy.

Range Zion Islands

Habitat Rivers, streams, lagoons, Poseidon mangroves, and wetlands

Length Up to 1.2 meters including tail

Weight Up to 16 kilograms Frequency

Common

Resource Value Minimal Threat

Level Minimal Movement Land

2/5, Water 3/6 Awareness 75

Initiative 65 Intellect

35/4 Agility 55

Constitution 50/4

Endurance 45

Strength 15/4

Rounds 2

Attack Bite 25

Damage Ranks 1/10 2/35 3/60 4/75 5/90 6/100

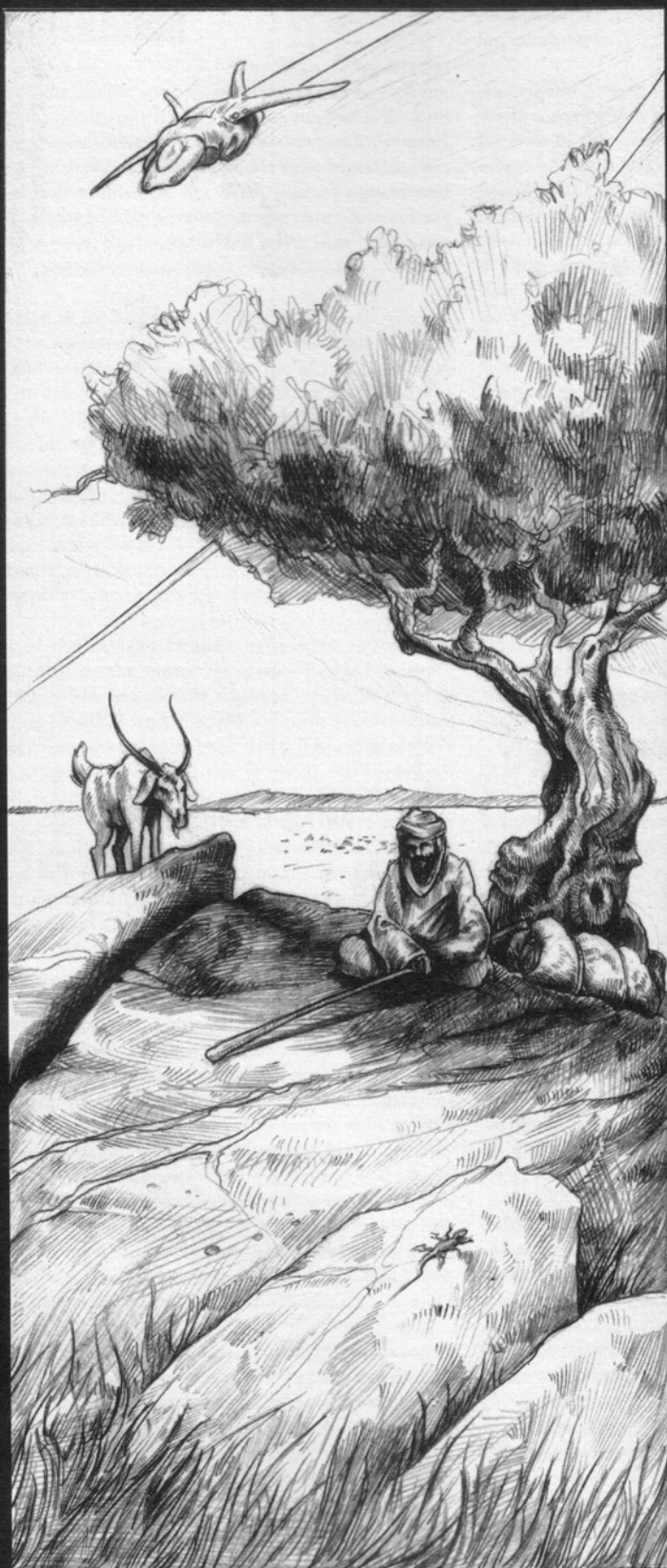
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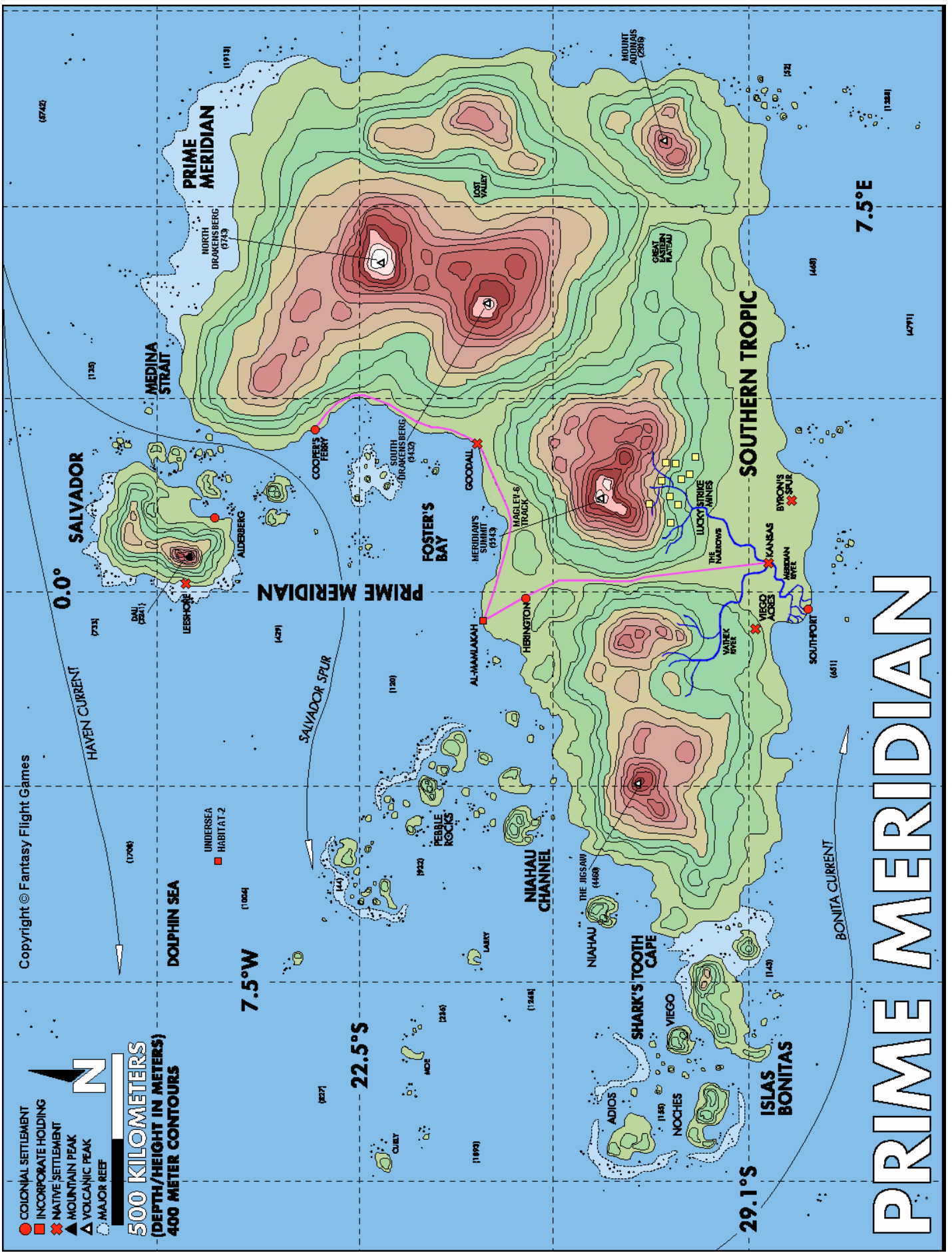
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PRIME MERIDIAN

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EL MAR DEL SUR



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COLONIAL SETTLEMENT

INCORPORATE HOLDING

NATIVE SETTLEMENT

MOUNTAIN PEAK

VOLCANIC PEAK

MAJOR REEF

500 KILOMETERS

(DEPTH/HEIGHT IN METERS)

400 METER CONTOURS

N

PRIME MERIDIAN

PRIME MERIDIAN

Among the islands of the Pacifica Archipelago, Prime Meridian stands out as a unique study in contrasts. Even on a planet over nine-tenths ocean, much of the island's interior is dry and arid. The foundation for a chain of rocks sometimes only barely poking above the waves, the backbone of Prime Meridian rises thousands of meters into the sky. With rugged, agricultural communities on the southern coast, and the core of Poseidon's industry on the west, the largest island in Pacifica is home to both feverish progress and ancient ecologies.

Prime Meridian is the largest single landmass on the planet. Rising from the waves of Foster's Bay, the mini-continent soars five and a half craggy kilometers into the air, as if offering evidence of its volcanic past. A rough coastline of cooled lava flows forms the northern coast of the island. The resulting cliffs provide little in the way of shelter or beaches for the native settlements that dot the shores of other islands in the archipelago. Surmounting these cliffs is a rolling savanna, much of it in the rain shadow of the Drakensbergs. The grassland stretches south and west nearly to the southern tip of the island, unadorned save for the occasional stand of trees. This open, rolling plain is home to a number of ranches and farms.

The slopes of the eastern Drakensbergs receive much of the rain dropped by the moist air masses headed west towards the Dolphin Sea. Some regions, including those upslope from Goodall and Cooper's Ferry, receive more than 500 centimeters of rain each year. This climate has created an ecology similar to the tropical rainforests of Earth, and supports the largest jungle on Poseidon. The forest canopy rises more than a hundred meters into the air, creating an unbroken, ground-obscuring expanse of green. The forest floor is also thoroughly covered, populated with innumerable species of creepers, vines, airplants, and other epiphytes. It is estimated that over seventy-five percent of the purely terrestrial species on Poseidon reside exclusively in the Drakensberg rain forests.

Prime Meridian's subtropical climate allows a year-round growing season on its many ranches and farms. It also places the island in the southern reaches of the Storm Belt. It is a rare season when ranchers are not forced to drive their livestock into shelters against the fury of the seasonal cyclonic storms. Prime Meridian's largest settlement, the Atlas Materials company town of al-Mamlakah, was nearly destroyed by a powerful cyclonic that struck the settlement only a few years after the town was founded. The residents of the island, however, are resilient. To them, storms, like the predators of the eastern savanna and the mysterious disappearances in the rain forest, are a fact of life on the island.

Prime Meridian is also home to a significant proportion of the human population of Poseidon. The region around al Mamlakah, including the stockyards to the south, is home to well over 35,000 people. The town of Alderberg supports several hundred permanent residents including the Monastery of St. John the Baptist, its ecclesiastical staff, and the various pilgrims who visit the local seat of Catholicism. Cooper's Ferry, Goodall, and Kansas are only villages and loose agricultural collectives, rather than formal settlements. Nevertheless, these

population centers account for close to another 3,000 Meridian inhabitants.

An original Athena colonist named Hendrik vaan Klavern led the first expedition to Meridian. Grief-stricken by the loss of his wife to the sea, vaan Klavern had vowed to find a place where he could forever be free of the damnable ocean. Prime Meridian proved to be exactly what he was looking for. Parts of the island's southeastern savannas lie hundreds of kilometers from the nearest coastline. The vast, trackless ocean of dry plains gives no clue to the pounding surf sometimes just over the horizon. Moreover, this place more than any other on the planet reminded the Dutch vaan Klavern of his central African homeland back on Earth. Meridian's Summit, the island's towering central volcano, bears a notable resemblance to Kilimanjaro and the peaks of Africa's Rift Valley. For vaan Klavern, the eastern highlands draped in steaming verdant life were a reminder of the Dark Continent he had left behind forever.

Hendrik vaan Klavern called Prime Meridian his little continent. He and his few followers were among the first to carve lives out of lands that would eventually become home to global industries and thousands of people. Their descendants are there still, ranching on the same land the vaan Klavern colony settled nearly a hundred years ago. Although Prime Meridian may seem far less wild today than when the Athena colonists first settled it, the island remains largely unexplored.

AL MAMLAKAN

God is most great! I testify that there is no god except God! I testify that Mohammed is the Messenger of God! Come to prayer! Come to salvation! Prayer is better than sleep! God is most great! There is no god except God! - morning call to prayer, as sung by the muezzin of the Second Mosque of the Patriarch.

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Built on the shores of Medina Bay, al-Mamlakah enjoys an enviable position in the Pacifica Archipelago. At 24°33'18" south latitude, 00°58'21" west longitude the city's proximity to the equator makes it suitable for orbital traffic. The landscape provides gently sloping hillside neighborhoods for the city's 33,000 residents. The flat headlands at the north and south rims of Medina Bay provide natural landing fields and excellent shelter from the brunt of most cyclonic storms.

HISTORY

After Recontact in 2165, Atlas Materials was one of the first to incorporate states to become involved in the renewed colonization effort. Long recognized as a leader in orbital engineering, skillful maneuvering and a few well-calculated risks put Atlas in position to reap huge profits from the new GEO missions to Poseidon. The later discovery of Long John enabled Atlas to make the move from conservative orbital construction, engineering, and mining to one of the most diversified, cutting-edge enterprises in existence.

Through years of experience in Earth orbit, Atlas Materials developed leading-edge technologies in the field of freefall engineering. When the GEO announced the contract for the

Recontact ships, Atlas management diverted much of the company's design and engineering resources to the development of an innovative proposal. It was a daring move that resulted in the delay of many projects, but the gamble would serve to earn the company lucrative government contracts in the years to come.

Taking the lessons of hundreds of years of shipping history to heart, engineers laid the keels for a pair of space-going behemoths. The *Jebel Chelia* and her sister ship, the *Jebel Mousa*, were each more than 1,500 meters long with displacements in the millions of metric tons. The two ships were designed to function without sophisticated orbital receiving yards. Both were equipped with scores of landers, cargo lighters, tugs, and work pods. Operating on only their own resources, each could unload its entire cargo in under seventy-two hours.

However, it was only a few years before expanded GEO plans for the colonization of Poseidon made it clear that continued construction of such massive cargo vessels would be an unnecessary drain on scarce resources. Atlas managers adapted again to long-range forecasts by planning a cargo facility in permanent orbit around Poseidon. The station became the company's highest priority, and within two years they had completed plans and design specs for the station and its elaborate downside receiving port. It was this port that would eventually become al-Mamlakah, Atlas Materials' largest colonial holding.

In 2178, a malfunction in the *Jebel Chelia's* delicate regulation systems incinerated its reaction chambers, leaving the huge ship drifting without power in Poseidon orbit. Fortunately, it took very little to stabilize the ship's orbit using an array of tugs and cargo lighters. Though a major loss to Atlas' modest interstellar fleet, the hulk of the *Jebel Chelia* provided the new settlement project with substantial supplies of raw materials and ready-made components. The first piece to go down to the surface was the ill-fated vessel's control tower, later fashioned into the central minaret of what was to become the Second Mosque of the Patriarch. Over the next three years, salvaged pieces of the spacecraft were regularly used in the construction of al-Mamlakah.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Atlas Materials' presence on Poseidon grew in phases that are reflected in the present geography of al-Mamlakah. Though it was originally intended as little more than a collection of landing fields, docks, warehouses, and workers' barracks, the city has grown into a vital community.

South Beach The area east of the landing field on the south headland was one of the first to be developed. Considered a model planned community, the South Beach area is known for its effective use of "green spaces" and aesthetically pleasing architecture, even in utilitarian labor barracks. Beautiful landscapes notwithstanding, the neighborhood is dominated by commercial interests. Only those actually working at the construction facilities or the landing field are assigned residences in South Beach. A small, low-speed maglev winds through the neighborhood and into other industrial sections of the town, and the tram is part of the daily commute for many locals.

Lamplighter N111 Al-Mamlakah's other planned community is a stark contrast to South Beach. Lamplighter Hill was constructed at the same time as the Kasbah and north landing field to securely house the Incorporate elite and their families. Built onto the steeply sloping north headland, Lamplighter Hill is one of the most exclusive residential communities on the planet. Single-family homes often exceed a million scrip on the open market, although all sales are subject to final approval by Atlas. The area's neighborhoods offer sculptured gardens, open promenades and porches, and wrought-iron fences laced with vines, along with sophisticated alarm systems, personal bodyguards, and Incorporate security. The residents of Lamplighter Hill are extremely important people, and are among the wealthiest in the system.

North Beach Atlas originally left the region just east of Lamplighter Hill open and undeveloped, and long-range plans reserved the area for a landscaped park. Some believed it was intended to be a buffer between the residents of Lamplighter Hill and the rest of the town. Whatever the case, the open land drew many poor families to homestead, lured by the city's economic opportunities. What began as little more than a squatter's camp is today a respectable lower-class residential area.

The Cove This neighborhood along the northeast shore of Medina Bay is dominated by two important buildings, Government House and the Hammam. The GEO Office of Colonial Affairs and several High Commissions all share offices in Government House, a low building constructed in the British neocolonial style. The GEO uses Government House to maintain relations with one of its most important Incorporate member-states. The Hammam is second only to the Mosque in importance to the Islamic faithful of al-Mamlakah. Comprised mainly of elaborate steam baths with separate areas for men and women, it functions as a meeting place for many of the devout members of the community. Located only a few blocks from Government House, the two buildings define an axis around which much of the economic and administrative conflict in al-Mamlakah revolves.

The Suq The wreck of the *Jebel Chelia* provided the nucleus for the original construction of al-Mamlakah, and the Second Mosque of the Patriarch in the Suq is a constant, visible reminder of the town's beginnings. The control tower of the *Jebel Chelia* rises above the Mosque, and from this vantage, the muezzin calls out the *adhan*, or call to prayer, five times each day. The building is dedicated to Ibrahim, veteran of a long voyage and one of the most important figures in Islam, and inside there is space for more than 2,000 worshipers. Although many of the traditions of Islam have changed in their importation to Poseidon, most of those concerning the Mosque's role in the community remain intact. The building must be entered with the right foot first, and shoes are forbidden inside. It is also considered a place of sanctuary and there remains some question as to whether the GEO would pursue a fugitive within its walls.

Radiating inland from the Mosque, the Suq is one of al-Mamlakah's most traditional neighborhoods. Narrow streets are choked with open-air shops, and those offering similar goods are clustered together. For example, stalls selling food are found in one area and those handling salvaged electronic

equipment in another. Many examples of native handiwork are for sale in the Suq, and much of it is of superior workmanship. Many services are also available, such as guides for hunting and research expeditions into the interior of Prime Meridian.

The Suq is also home to several hundred of the town's poorest residents and receives charitable support from both the religious organizations in al-Mamlakah and from Atlas itself through zakaat, the giving of alms, a traditional practice in Islamic faith. As a result, the streets of al-Mamlakah are reputedly among the most hospitable to Poseidon's poor.

Newport Hill Newport Hill is one of the newest communities in al-Mamlakah and its residents are an economically diverse group of people drawn together by their common desire to be near the Mosque, the Hammam, and the Suq. The neighborhood has a reputation for being both strongly religious and on the ragged edge of legality. Though the majority of homes here are modest single-family dwellings, larger houses and simple hovels are scattered along the hillside.

The Gate The transient nature of the residents in the dockside community known as the Gate has proved a fertile breeding ground for illegal activity. Crimes in the dockside neighborhood range from drug running to gambling to prostitution. Most permanent residents in the area walk the streets warily, careful to avoid the rough characters on shore-leave. The Gate actually suffers less violent crime than similar areas in other towns, despite its reputation as the most dangerous part of al Mamlakah.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In general, Moslems are a distinct minority on Poseidon, but in al-Mamlakah and the surrounding region, the people and their religion dominate the sociopolitical landscape. Although people of other faiths are accepted in al-Mamlakah, fewer than 4,000 of its 28,000 residents are non-Moslem.

Over 19,000 residents of the city are Atlas citizens and another 5,000 work in service industries or as contracted employees of the Incorporate giant. The remainder are independents working for themselves, the GEO, private concerns, or not at all. This group also includes the city's small native population who operate the fishing fleets, serve as guides into the interior, or work as farm hands on the coastal ranches.

GOVERNMENT

Atlas management takes a very active role in the daily governance of al-Mamlakah. The city manager, nicknamed "the Sheik" by the town's Arab residents, is an upper-level Atlas executive named Sharad Patel. Dr. Patel is intimately aware of the goings-on in his city, and has wide-ranging authority over company resources and their disbursement. Dr. Patel is technically in charge of all Atlas personnel and resources in al Mamlakah, but he regularly reports to Habib al-Muhammadi regarding issues that may affect other Atlas operations.

There is a post for a GEO Marshal for the Prime Meridian region in al-Mamlakah, though it is currently vacant. The GEO has had little trouble manning an ERT station in al-Mamlakah, though, as rescue duty is highly regarded in the community.

The ERT members have maintained a good relationship with Atlas Security and the two organizations have worked closely on several occasions in the past.

In 2192, Atlas Materials' underwater facility, Undersea Habitat-1, was destroyed by torpedoes launched from GenDiver submersibles. The entire habitat was reduced to sea floor wreckage and over 200 Atlas citizens were killed. So began a smoldering war between two of Poseidon's most powerful Incorporate states.

More than eight months of hit-and-run attacks followed, changing the face of al-Mamlakah forever. Atlas Security began patrolling the harbor and manufacturing facilities around the clock, and foot patrols were mobilized in residential and commercial areas. Atlas equipped the Kasbah with sophisticated surface and subsurface sensor equipment, and began flying picket aircraft in relays from the main field. Although the conflict between Atlas and GenDiver has reached a sort of detente since the arrival on planet of the Marshals and the GEO garrisons, al-Mamlakah remains a carefully guarded city.

ECONOMIC BASE

In 2185, Atlas Materials geologists discovered a nodule of yellowish, translucent material protruding from the bed of the Dolphin Sea. Researchers initially found the ore generally unremarkable and examined it out of thoroughness rather than curiosity. Little did they know their diligence would change the face of humanity forever.

The history of the development of Long John is replete with myth and mystery, and beneath the mountain of fiction surrounding its discovery, very little is known about the biochemists who did the early research or about Atlas management's plans for keeping the xenosilicates secret. Luma Theodossy, a biochemist disillusioned with Atlas and frustrated by her compulsory transfer to Poseidon, sold the secret of the ore's discovery to the media, costing Atlas billions in projected revenues.

However devastating Theodossy's treachery may have been, Atlas was still in a better position to exploit the new resource than its competitors, and acted swiftly to protect its remaining advantage. Immediately after news of the ore broke, the company registered a mining claim with the GEO for the area known as the Pebble Rocks Field. Alone among the major Incorporate states on Poseidon in its experience with large-scale mining operations, Atlas moved swiftly in bringing the ore to market. Currently, Long John mining remains the single largest source of profit Atlas possesses in either of the settled systems.

Atlas Materials was very successful before Long John, however, and the Incorporate state's diverse interests continue to produce profit from numerous sources. Other Atlas activities include interstellar shipping, heavy manufacturing, commercial distribution, and industrial construction, and al-Mamlakah remains the hub of the Incorporate giant's commercial activities on Poseidon.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Al-Mamlakah is known for the fluid incorporation of the surrounding landscape into its layout. In some areas, such as South Beach and Lamplighter Hill, space has been reserved for parks and common land, although such amenities are rare in poorer sections of town. The airfield, spaceport, and VTOL landing fields are all situated at the outer edges of town, as is most heavy industry. Efficient drainage systems collect rainwater that is filtered and returned to the city water utility, and native plants and extensive terracing minimize erosion along the hills. Power and fresh water are both provided by a massive fusion plant on the south headland.

As a holding of Atlas Materials, al-Mamlakah receives the majority of its services from the employees of the Incorporate giant. Teaching, medical, maintenance, security, and a plethora of other personnel are provided either directly by Atlas or through contracts with the company. A few independents in these fields work in al-Mamlakah, but the interdependency of these services leaves most freelancers out of the loop. Additional services are provided through contracts with the GEO.

MAP KEY

1. Second Mosque of the Patriarch The first building constructed in al-Mamlakah, the Second Mosque of the Patriarch has become a symbol for the city, for Atlas Materials, and for the ever-expanding presence of Islam on Poseidon. The Mosque's most prominent feature is the control tower of the freighter *Jebel Chelia*, which rises more than 250 meters into the air and provides a point of both directional and spiritual reference for the town's residents. The Mosque was built along traditional lines, and includes the *mihrab* - a shrine symbolic of Mecca - and *minbar*, or pulpit, for the Friday prayer. Also a cultural center, the Mosque houses several important works of art, the most famous of which is the giant Waliya mosaic.

2. The Kasbah "Al-Qasba" to al-Mamlakah's Arabic speaking residents, this complex is the center of Atlas Material's operations in the Lambda Serpentis system. Resembling a Moorish fortress with high walls and minarets, the massive structure houses some of the most powerful computer and communications systems on the planet. The Kasbah is also a central point of defense for Medina Bay and the city of al Mamlakah. The facility's resources include radar and sonar detection equipment, and fire-control systems for the artillery guarding the bay. Graded portions of the headland provide space for a VTOL field, and extensive storm shelters and defensive bunkers have been added to the complex in recent years, increasing the sense of security the installation offers the city's people.

3. Cargo and Ferry Terminals Designed to receive even the largest of ocean-going vessels, the surface terminal is also the main terminal for the ferries that serve Atlas' undersea installations and smaller settlements in the region. The kilometer-long pier has docking space for private vessels, but mariners are warned that slips 51-106 are reserved for Atlas Security and are not to be approached. Arrangements for private docking can be made by contacting the harbormaster's office at the entrance to the pier.

4. Surface Construction Facilities Built next to the enormous industrial complex at South Beach, the surface shipyards are the most modern on Poseidon. Equipped to build everything from inter-island tramp freighters to the largest ore and container carriers, the shipyards are a key part of Atlas' continued role as an industrial power on Poseidon. Only the earliest stages of construction actually occur quayside at the construction facilities. Once the hull and decking are declared sound, many vessels are moved into Medina Bay, where their fitting-out can continue, freeing up dock space for the next project.

5. Orbital Craft Construction The only facility of its kind on Poseidon, Atlas Orbital Construction is a dedicated facility for the production of sub-orbital and orbital craft. A lucrative contract with the GEO for construction and maintenance of its fleet of drop ships has guaranteed activity at the hangars well into the next century. Many residents of al Mamlakah are less than thrilled, because the sonic booms of craft dropping from orbit to the landing fields adjoining the construction hangars have become a constant feature of life in the Atlas company town.

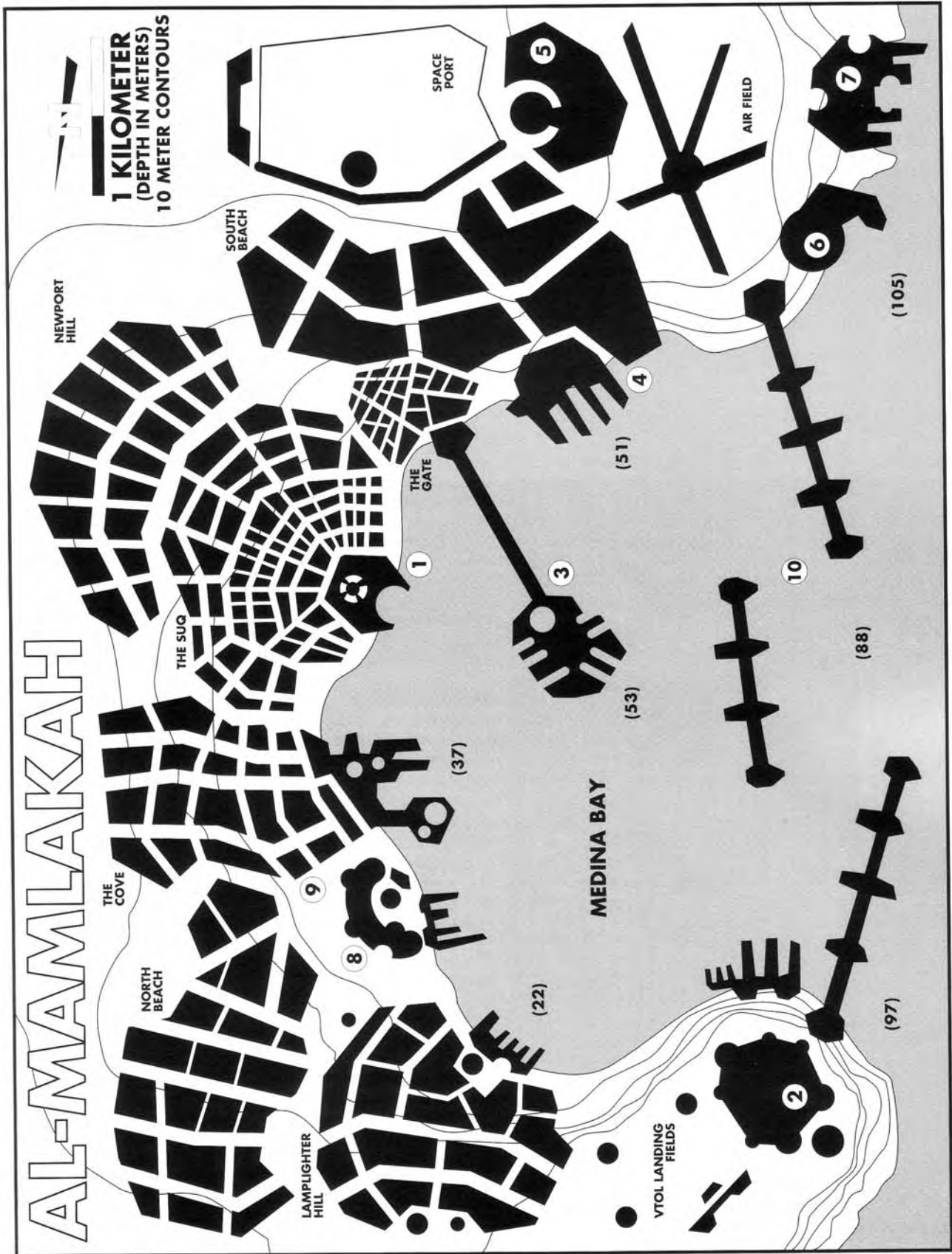
6. Power Plant When construction began on the settlement that would grow into the modern city of al-Mamlakah, one of the first buildings completed after the Mosque was the housing for the fusion reactor. Although several auxiliary reactors were brought online as the city grew, the original reactor is still functioning and continues to provide fresh water and power for the city.

7. High-Pressure Engineering The only part of Atlas Materials' major construction facilities not along the shores of Medina Bay, HPE is the site for manufacturing all of Atlas' marine construction products. Utility submersibles are the most common product. Atlas also builds modular units for ocean bottom facilities, large cargo-sub, fast transports, mining pods, general-purpose tugs, and even combat vessels. HPE is a vital asset in Atlas' continued exploitation of Long John.

8. Executive Hotel The only exclusive lodging facility in the Medina Bay area, the al-Mamlakah Executive is almost a match for some of the hotels on Lavender Organics' floating city of Dyfedd. Guests are treated to multi-course meals in Farouk's, the hotel's main restaurant, and the Executive's suites are elegant and rich in amenities. Boat rentals and scuba instruction are available on the beach, and the hotel's private marina caters to discriminating amateur captains. Room rates reflect the hotel's opulence, and run from 500 to several thousand scrip per night.

9. GEO Extension Office Government House is the headquarters for all GEO activity in al-Mamlakah. There is a representative for the district's Magistrate at Government House, as well as offices and support personnel representing each of the other major High Commissions. They function as both a public extension service and a liaison office to the Atlas administration. The local GEO ERT teams are also based in Government House.

10. Seawall Medina Bay's primary protection from cyclonic storms is the Medina seawall, which was constructed



from the salvaged hull material of the *Jebel Chelia*. One piece of the seawall projects out into the bay from each headland and a third is freestanding, set back from the gap between the two outer walls. The effect is an efficient deflection of incoming storm swells and potential amphibious assaults. Artillery and torpedo emplacements on the seawalls make unauthorized entry a dangerous proposition.

ACCESS DENIED

HIDDEN MOVEMENT

Publicly released reports from the High-Pressure Engineering facility have shown dramatic declines in the production numbers of submersible craft. These reports are somewhat baffling to outside observers; as there has actually been an increase in the personnel, raw materials, and other resources assigned to the facility. The explanation for this apparent incongruity is a secret government contract to provide a large number of submersible interceptors to the GEO Armed Forces. These craft are earmarked for the support of the hard-pressed Crusoe Island garrison in the Northwest Territories.

Always wary to the point of paranoia, the GenDiver leadership in Santa Elena fears that Atlas may be gearing-up for an attack on its many; precious Long John fields and refineries in the archipelago. GenDiver Security agents in al-Mamlakah are attempting to develop local contacts with access to restricted Atlas operational plans. If these intelligence-gathering efforts fail, the agents will likely seek to contract with independent parties; criminal or otherwise, to either acquire the information by covert means, or even sabotage the HPE facility:

NO HONOR AMONG THIEVES

For some time, Atlas executives have been aware that the Pebble Rocks Field is gradually being depleted. The company has other; smaller mining operations, but the exhaustion of the Pebble Rocks deposits would be a massive blow, even to an Incorporate giant. In desperation, executives have allocated millions for the development or purchase of xenosilicate survey data.

Amidst the confusion of harried paper-shuffling, one executive named Jawad al-Mhurad has funneled almost 500,000cs into a dummy survey-purchasing fund. Records indicate that the scrip was paid to a small independent company, Galen & Dodd Services. Unfortunately for al-Mhurad, an accidental communication from his staff revealed his embezzlement to Gerald Dodd, one of the survey-data resale company's principals. Dodd has been blackmailing al-Mhurad for 50,000cs a week. At this point, al-Mhurad is more concerned with keeping Dodd quiet than with the money - he fears prison far more than poverty. He is attempting to gradually return as much of the missing scrip as he can, and also to find someone who will take care of Dodd, whatever the cost.

DARK RIVER

Atlas Materials executives have redefined the weekend getaway. Four times a year, several high-Level managers enjoy a riverboat safari at Atlas' expense - the trips are offered as rewards for meeting business objectives. The amateur explorers rent a boat and a guide, and proceed on a carefree trip down the East Meridian, cameras in hand. The safaris last two or three glorious days in which business talk is taboo.

The next trip may not be so carefree, however. GenDiverSecurity personnel working under deep-cover in al-Mamlakah have learned that a particular executive named Omar Guerrero will be on the next excursion. Guerrero is a former GenDiver executive who left the Incorporate state during the open conflict with Atlas in the early 2190s. He turned over vital Logistical information that Atlas was able to exploit, and they rewarded him with a high-level position. The GenDiver operatives, posing as ecoterrorists, are attempting to hire a mercenary team to capture the rogue executive and deliver him to a safe house they have established in town, where Guerrero will learn the error of his ways. The operatives will not compromise their covers for any reason, and have orders to protect them by any means necessary.

ONE ZEALOT'S TRASH

The organization known as Zero Nation has long been opposed to any human presence on Poseidon. They operate cells in most of Poseidon's major settlements, and al-Mamlakah is no exception. At the core of this cell is a group of native fishermen who meet in a dockside neighborhood on Medina Bay. Recently the cell has decided to carry out its boldest plan yet, one that would not only make a statement for Zero Nation, but would also stun the citizens of al-Mamlakah. On the next celebration of Planetfall, they will attempt to blow up the Second Mosque of the Patriarch, effectively wounding the entire city.

Luckily for al-Mamlakah, a few of the cell's newer members are Islamic. While they support Zero Nation, they cannot let the Mosque be defaced, much less destroyed. Anything else is fair game, but the Mosque is off limits. They are hoping to find some outside interests that can stop the bombing - without risking their own positions in Zero Nation.

ALDERBERG

It is incumbent upon us, then, to exert ourselves to the utmost to rise to this opportunity. If Poseidon is to become another Jerusalem rather than another Tower of Babel, then it is our responsibility to make it so. Mankind has made it his decision to go to the stars, and the People of God will go as well, making sure our new life will be one that will be pleasing in the sight of the Almighty. With His help, we can do all things, as all things are possible in Him and through Him. With God's help, our effort, and our undying watchfulness, Poseidon can be a place of peace, of love, and of Christian fellowship. In nomine Patri, et Fili, et Spiritus Sancti, Amen. - Papal Letter "On the Colonization of Worlds"

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Alderberg is located at 19°56'12 " south latitude and 03°06'47" east longitude, on the southeastern coast of the island of Salvador. The village hugs the shoreline within a shallow, crescent-shaped harbor. Salt marshes stretch away from the town to the north, and provide a haven for swarms of biting insects, numerous avian species, and various small but still dangerous predators. A snowcapped volcano, Mount Dali, looms more than three thousand meters overhead.

HISTORY

Founded on 12 June 2186 under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church and Pope Lucius V's "Lambda Serpentin Crusade," Alderberg represents the Church's wish to establish a

significant presence on the colony world. The town and the monastery exist in a symbiotic relationship, and neither would survive long without the financial support of the Church.

Personnel for the settlement were selected by the Church from a wide pool among the ecclesiastic and monastic orders, as well as from the faithful Catholic laity. Over 600,000 Catholics applied for the 1,200 positions available within the monastery and among the townsfolk. The mission left Earth in late 2185, and their quiet arrival midway through 2186 roused curiosity among the natives, but little interest among the newcomers.

The insular settlement that developed was named Alderberg, in honor of Father John Alder, a priest who died in transit as a result of IHMS failure. Alderberg's residents tend to go about their business quietly and maintain low profiles even when they must involve themselves with other settlements or the Incorporate.

The Monastery of St. John the Baptist serves as the headquarters for all Roman Catholic activity on Poseidon, and stands as a symbol of the Church's commitment to spread the Word throughout the settled systems. The Catholic colonial effort had originally planned to move an entire medieval monastery from Europe to Poseidon, and to rebuild it stone-by-stone. After a cost analysis, however, the plan was quickly dropped, and the Pope commissioned architects to create a new structure. The designers were uniquely successful in merging classical design with the needs of the new environment. As a result, St. John's is one of the most dramatic structures on Poseidon, and one of the safest during the region's frequent cyclones.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Most of the structures in Alderberg are molded from construction-grade bioplastics. Ranging from one to four stories, many of the taller buildings have open-air balconies that overlook the harbor, while others support covered colonnades. Built in imitation of Old World, Spanish architectural styles, the settlement has weathered several Force 4 storms essentially unscathed. The harbor docks and outbuildings follow the same architectural lines, and have shown the same resistance to weather.

While the town's structures are merely sturdy, the monastery is built like a fortress. Located three kilometers inland, the formidable structure sits atop a 200-meter-high hill. Surrounded by six-meter walls, the seventeen-building compound can house 800 residents, but is currently only half full. Based on monasteries of the past, but sleek and modern in design and execution, St. John's combines state-of-the-art construction materials and techniques with an organic form that offers maximum protection from Poseidon's storms. Built of local stone quarried from the nearby hills, St. John's noteworthy features include an artesian well, a twenty-meter bell tower, and a LinkStar CommSat system. The communications facilities also include their own dedicated satellite and ground-based uplinks.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Similar in nature if not in scope to the original Athena colonists, the Alderberg settlers represent the most brilliant scientific and technical minds of the Church. Their specialties range

through the fields of astrophysics and botany to virology and zoology. Just over 1,100 residents now live in Alderberg, many of whom divide their time evenly between scientific research and the labor-intensive activities of life on the frontier. They farm and fish to feed themselves and the monastery, and maintain equipment and infrastructure to support the community. Other than being devout and active Catholics, the residents of Alderberg are not very different from those in any other small colonial settlement.

The more than 400 members of St. John's staff are drawn from many different orders within the Church. The usual Benedictines, Franciscans, and Jesuits work side-by-side with Cistercians, Sisters of Mercy, and other less well known orders. Like the laity, the monastics are men and women of science as well as of God, and their studies of the planet and its inhabitants often prove as insightful as those conducted by the secular scholars at HIST.

GOVERNMENT

A town council handles administrative duties for Alderberg and consists of seven members drawn from the populace of both the town and the monastery. Members are elected to six year terms and can be reelected indefinitely. The Abbess and Bishop hold honorary, non-voting seats on the town council, but the Bishop rarely has time to attend the meetings. The Abbess, however, regularly sits in, offering her guidance and opinions, often acting as liaison between the town and the Monastery.

The Monastery of St. John the Baptist functions as the seat for the Archdiocese of Poseidon, from which Archbishop Damon Lotaviano guides his water world flock. He rarely involves himself in the day-to-day activities of the town, though he does lead Mass regularly. Lotaviano focuses his efforts on building the Catholic community's presence throughout Poseidon.

St. John's is officially a Dominican outpost, and Abbess Helen Delores Rich, a nun of the Second Order of St. Dominic, acts as chief administrator for the monastery. She was appointed by the Pope in 2193, and unlike the archbishop, she is actively involved in the daily affairs of both the monastery and Alderberg. In fact, she makes no distinction between the two, considering both her responsibility.

ECONOMIC BASE

Among the least self-sufficient settlements on Poseidon, Alderberg would not exist without the Church's financial support. The initial investment is thought to have exceeded two and a half billion scrip, though the Church has never made the project's records public. While most of the residents are involved at least part time in subsistence agriculture, it is unlikely that the town will ever develop a significant economic base.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite the millions of scrip already invested in Alderberg's buildings, scientific facilities, and annual maintenance, it remains a relatively simple town. It has a small airfield for servicing and supporting the town's three utility VTOLs and numerous jumpcraft. The harbor can handle only small cargo vessels, so resupply ships must unload in al-Mamlakah and ferry their goods across Foster's Bay in smaller boats.

The settlement's one research submersible, the *Shroud of Turin*, is rarely seen quayside as it is in use almost thirty hours a day as part of one project or another. The exact purpose of its many research efforts remains unknown, though its explorations of the undersea rift valleys and volcanic fissures have produced some significant discoveries.

ACCESS DENIED

HAND OF GOD

In addition to the apostolic mission known to the public, Pope Lucius V has charged the monks and laity of St. John the Baptist with a special mission. They are on Poseidon to reveal the fingerprints of God in His Creation. The Pope wants definitive proof that God exists and hopes to find it on Poseidon.

Through members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the Pope has been presented with evidence derived from DNA, fossil records, and other sources that life on Earth and Poseidon are very closely linked. The Pope believes that Poseidon may be the original world flooded by God in the Old Testament, and that humankind somehow migrated from Poseidon to Earth after the Flood. He wants to find tangible proof for this case, and has thus launched his crusade to Lambda Serpentis II.

To that end, he has secreted twelve covert operatives among the original 1,200 missionaries. These operatives roam the Pacifica Archipelago trying to uncover the planet's deepest secrets. Their primary objective is to recover fossilized remains of terrestrial species on Poseidon. Appointed directly by the Pope and code-named after each of Christ's apostles, their existence is known only to each other, the Bishop and Abbess, and a committee in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. This mission remains classified as the Pope fears the repercussions of his theory could destroy the Church from within before he finds the proof he seeks.

HOLY WATERS

The Catholic Church on Poseidon has contracted with Hydrosplan to construct a submerged habitat off the coast of Salvador Island, near Alderberg. The habitat will support a number of research submersibles, state-of-the-art sensor suites, and scientific laboratories, and will be manned by the monastery's scientific and technical laity. The aborigines' possible sentience is a continuing source of controversy in the Church, and the habitat's mission is to gather conclusive evidence on this issue.

Before construction of the habitat is completed, the Archbishop, who is overseeing the project, would like to secure at least one live aborigine specimen as a test subject for the necessary experimentation. While the St. John's scientists and technicians are extremely skilled in their specialized fields, none of them are qualified for this difficult task. As a result, the Archbishop has diverted funds with which to hire a team of freelancers with the necessary skills and experience.

KANSAS Nils,

The south coast of Prime Meridian has to be seen to be believed. There are grasslands in the north, to be sure. But there, they are practically on the knees of the mountains. The southern plain is a continuous strip of savanna that runs the entire length of the island. For 2,200 kilometers, nothing but a few rivers break the continuity of the plain. In the distance, there are always the mountains. Nils, this place calls out to me. It is more like Africa than any place I have seen in thirty years. I have begun to carve out a homestead on the largest river flowing through the southern plain. Munson named it the Vathek, in honor of the late lieutenant. I trust you will let his son know of the waterway that now bears his name. It is not a mighty river, but it is enough for our little farm. I have just realized, you probably do not know why I said "our" farm. Do you remember the McMannus' oldest daughter, Natalie? We are married now. We became acquainted during last season's harvest, and I am quite infatuated with her. I must admit, it is probably not love in the way our mother would have conceived of it, but it may become love in time.

Nils, I hope that you are well, and that your home can bring you as much joy as my new one has brought me

Your brother,

Hendrik

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Kansas is located at 29°43'11" south latitude, 00°50'07" east longitude, in the southern plains of Prime Meridian. While the land-locked site is sheltered from most cyclones by mountains, Kansas suffers through earthquakes and rains of debris from the surrounding volcanoes. The landscape of southern Prime Meridian is a study in contradiction. Rolling plains meet thirty meter cliffs at the southern coast, while the Drakensbergs, the highest mountains in the Pacifica, loom only a few hundred kilometers inland.

HISTORY

Situated at the juncture of the East Meridian and Vathek rivers and enriched by alluvial flooding, the area around Kansas was in use at least twenty-five years prior to the town's official 2180 founding. While the permanent residents of the township number less than 3,000, it has become a regional depot for Prime Meridian's scattered southern farms and ranches. Thus, almost anyone living on the prairies within a few hundred kilometers of the town think of themselves as "Kansans."

Natives began arriving on Prime Meridian during the early 2120s, and by the '30s, a brave few had moved south of the encroaching mountain ranges and established one of the rare inland settlements on the pre-Recontact planet. By 2155, a rugged trading post had grown at the confluence of the two rivers, over time becoming the focus of local commerce, barter, and social activities. Since Recontact, both Atlas and the GEO have made offers to buy out and develop the settlement, each without success. The locals are apparently quite fond of their hard-won and independent lifestyles.

Over time, and with the increasing colonial market, agricultural production in the Kansas region has become a vital industry. In 2192, the sporadic farmers' markets and cattle drives that had characterized the region's economy were organized into a triennial agricultural market. Increasing demands of a growing colonial population made the markets an instant success, and there is talk among the regional officials of increasing the number of markets in order to meet the rising demands.

Kansas residents stubbornly persist in their lifestyle, despite constant danger and hardship. Several ranches and outlying settlements have been built and rebuilt following repeated earthquakes and eruptions. Despite these setbacks, settlers still push the frontier into new territory and fight hard to protect their land and way of life. To quote local GEO Deputy Marshal Luther Rainslaker, "Kansas is an overgrown trading post that has all the appeal of a long, dusty road to nowhere. Culture and manners have never come to town, but you've got to respect a people that can tell an erupting volcano to go to hell."

The Kansas settlement and outlying ranches produce much of the fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat consumed in the region. While they certainly do not hold a monopoly, the unique importance of the Kansas farmers has brought them under the watchful eye of the GEO. Kansans do not object to the attention, as long as the observers let them go about their business undisturbed and unregulated. In the past, Kansans threatened by outsiders banded together, and threatened price increases and embargoes. **To date, little has come of the threats, and so far the homesteaders have been able to maintain their autonomy and lifestyle.**

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

There is an obvious lack of planning in Kansas' layout. Centre Street and Mars Avenue divide the town into rough quarters, but the buildings and intersections are often positioned haphazardly and seldom form regular angles. The cheap brothels and saloons that cater to the locals are somewhat shabbier than the hotels for market visitors, but the distinction is minimal. The dockside warehouses along the Vathek River and the Pits across town add further to Kansas' uncultured ambience.

The Pits are two large and dingy amphitheatres perched on the western outskirts of town. The amphitheatres, called Pit 1 and Pit 2, can hold up to 4,000 and 8,000 buyers, respectively. The triennial markets are held in these buildings, the smaller for produce, the larger for various livestock. The necessary display, storage, auction, and transport facilities in each building allow buyers and sellers to complete their transactions and arrange for delivery onsite.

Three times each year, the Pits transform from desolate, echoing warehouses into a zoo of frantic activity. During market, over 30,000 people work within the complex daily. A system of connecting skywalks, tunnels, and maglev terminals was added a few years ago. Each maglev terminal can load or unload two hover trains simultaneously. Huge elevators drop from the terminals to the loading bays, and connect from there via ramps to each Pit.

Inside, the Pits resemble typical convention centers. Huge ceiling-mounted screens display the current bids, as well as details

on bidding lots, advertisements, and other information. Steel girders support a clear plastic ceiling that admits sunlight on those rare days when the roof panels are cleared of their usual sludge of ash, bird droppings, and wind-blown debris. Unfortunately, the Pits are rundown and in dire need of repair. The elevator and cooling systems constantly break down, and by the second half of each market, the smells of dung, sweat, and coolant permeate the entire complex. Though the Pits combine the worst features of convention centers, bus stations, and rental storage facilities, they always manage to serve their purpose.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Kansas itself is small, with only 2,800 residents living in town year around. Another 6,000 are scattered throughout the plains in mining camps, ranches, farms, and agrarian collectives. Most of these smaller settlements range from fifty to 200 people, though over 300 hands work the Viego Acres, and Byron's Spur is home to over 280 ranchers and farmers. The Lucky Strike mining complexes support the largest number of settlers, with about 1,600 scattered among the various mine sites.

GOVERNMENT

Kansas' mayor, Kristina Brunner, governs with a minimalist style, but the landowners respect her ability to maintain the peace and keep the settlement together through sheer force of will. She is a crafty and stubborn woman who truly understands the souls of her constituency. Brunner has served as mayor for the last sixteen years and no one has run against her for the past three elections. She initially only accepted the job because no one else volunteered after the previous mayor was killed in a gunfight in 2185. Her ranch, the Model T, covers over 1,700 square kilometers, and its borders come within fifty kilometers of town.

GEO Deputy Marshal Rainslaker headquarters in Kansas, and he and his team of fifteen handpicked Patrol Officers have policed the region for the last seven years. The middle-aged native Poseidoner grew up on Rapa Nui. Rainslaker likes the people he protects, and acts as their liaison and advocate with the GEO. His evenhandedness has earned him the grudging respect of most Kansans, though he and Brunner have never gotten along. When the two meet, loud, abusive arguments typically result. They evidently hold opposing opinions on just about every issue.

ECONOMIC BASE

For ten days each in early spring, midsummer, and late fall, Kansans hold market, offering their genetically engineered livestock and gene-spliced fruits and grains for sale to newcomer markets. The maglev trains of al-Mamlakah rocket 850 kilometers through the Narrows, and cart away enough animals and produce to feed most of the regional population until the next market. Though fish and aquaculture products are staples in every diet on Poseidon, Kansas agricultural products are common throughout the Pacifica Archipelago, and remain in high demand. Kansas' agriculture revenues have consistently grown more than twenty-five percent over each of the past six years.

In addition to the agricultural markets that drive Kansas' economy, Atlas Materials' Lucky Strike Mine and Quarry

Complex fills a different, though still profitable, niche. Located in the foothills of Meridian's Summit, the Lucky Strike is not a single location, but instead a series of mines spread across 250 kilometers. The Lucky Strike complex provides uranium, chromium, gold, platinum, and industrial-grade diamonds. High-quality luxury construction materials including marble, obsidian, granite, and other building stones are extracted, then exported throughout Poseidon.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Due to their geographical separation, almost all Kansas ranchers own hoppers or skimmers, so even in this terrestrial environment roads are rare. Usually, power production facilities outside of Kansas-proper are privately owned and water comes from individual wells. Consequently, southern Prime Meridian has little in the way of formal infrastructure.

Downtown Kansas contains a motley assortment of buildings connected by dirt roads that invariably turn to mud during storms. The business district extends for about three blocks in each direction from the intersection of Mars Avenue and Centre Street. The rest of the town consists primarily of seasonal hotels, river docks, temporary warehousing, parking, cargo handling fields, and the Pits.

ACCESS DENIED

OBSESSION

Unbeknownst to Atlas; Alexander Anesko, the Chief of Operations at the Lucky Strike mines, has been secretly working for GenDiver over the last fifteen years. A survivor of Undersea Habitat-1's destruction, he was reassigned in 2193 to manage Atlas' inland mining facilities. Crafty and extraordinarily cautious, Anesko never risks his cover. He is due for a promotion next year. '

Atlas considers Anesko a proven and reliable leader, able to manage efficient production in both the field and the office. Anesko's defection in late 2193 is as much a mystery to his GenDiver controllers as it would be to Atlas if he were discovered - he has never provided his GenDiver contacts with a reason for his betrayal. Nevertheless, he smuggles materials ranging from long-term planning and budgetary information to Long John prospecting reports, and his betrayal has caused Atlas considerable economic damage in the past decade.

Anesko has proven a major asset, and GenDiver has grown to depend on both his information and his assessments regarding Atlas operations. The rival Incorporate has a standing offer to pull him out at any time, but Anesko has continually refused to go. In truth, if either side had realized Anesko's actual intentions, he would already be dead.

During the GenDiver attack that destroyed Undersea Habitat-1, Anesko lost his wife and infant daughter. The loss nearly destroyed him, and while now he may appear to have recovered, he has developed a near-psychotic obsession. Vowing to destroy GenDiver, he has spent the years since the attack positioning himself to do just that. He is working fervently to gain enough authority to guide local Atlas policy and gain greater trust from GenDiver. Then, by feeding GenDiver the wrong information at the right time, he plans to 'cripple his enemy and utilize Atlas' resources to crush them.

THE ISLAMIC FAITHFUL

On Poseidon, as on Earth, five major tenets of faith, the five "Pillars," govern Islamic daily life. All Moslems strive to live by these guidelines, and they exert significant influence over Islamic society.

The most central Pillar is *shahada*, the statement of monotheism, ascribing divinity only to God. Shahada also gives special significance to Mohammed, as the chosen messenger of God.

Salaat requires that Moslems pray five times daily. For obvious reasons, the requirement that prayers are made while facing towards the city of Mecca has been modified. Local Moslems pray towards al-Mamlakah and the Second Mosque of the Patriarch, this being the most holy site on the planet. The muezzin, whose only duty is to perform this ceremony, traditionally makes the call to prayer from the Mosque. Indeed, the muezzin's calls are so regular in al-Mamlakah that they serve as an informal timepiece for most citizens.

Zakaat is the giving of alms, the performance of charity required of Moslems. Most of the faithful contribute through the Mosque. It is this Pillar that makes the streets of al Mamlakah relatively hospitable for the poor. *Zakaat* also serves to blur the line between charitable organizations and other, possibly illegal ones. Throughout history, groups who have advocated violence have also provided basic human services, handing out armed rebellion with one hand and food for the hungry with the other.

The most holy site in Islam is the Shrine of the Ka'ba in Mecca. The Pillar of the *hajj* requires all Moslems to journey there at least once in their lives. Moslems who are destitute or suffer from a disability are exempted from this requirement, but distance is no excuse. In actuality, only a small portion of Moslems actually performs the *hajj*, and Atlas strictly controls the total number of Earth-bound pilgrims in any given year. Among those who have made the *hajj* is Atlas Chief of Operations Habib al-Muhammadi. It was at al-Muhammadi's suggestion that Atlas decided to waive transport costs for Moslems making the *hajj*.

The Pillar that non-Moslems are most familiar with is *sawm*, the fast during the month of Ramadaan. For the twenty-eight days of the lunar month of Ramadaan, all Moslems are required to fast from dawn until dusk. As with the *hajj*, this applies only to those who are physically able. During the fast, Moslems abstain from all food, drink, sex, and even negative thoughts. A number of traditions exist for the breaking of the fast after sunset, and family and community activities are a common feature.

Since Ramadaan is determined on a lunar-based calendar, its scheduling on Poseidon is tricky. Poseidon's Ramadaan can fall in any local season, but tradition still decrees that the fast lasts the full twenty-eight days, despite Poseidon's longer day.

THE MERIDIAN FRONTIER BYRON'S SPUR

Byron's Spur is a large ranch and farm that stretches along the southern coast of Prime Meridian less than a hundred kilometers from Kansas. Centered at 29°4'23" south latitude, 3°07'19" east longitude, the Spur covers 2,400 square kilometers. The region consists of low plains and rolling hills that gradually give way to coastal wetlands and broad beaches to the south.

The ranch was founded in 2134 by Byron Baur, who passed it on to his daughter Melinda when he retired in 2163. Melinda expanded from ranching into farming, raising wheat, corn, and other grains. She successfully cross-fertilized rye with native Poseidon grasses, calling the hybrid "fire rye" due to its brilliant red color. Her son Matthew increased the ranch to its present size, and expanded their herd by forty percent through livestock purchases and aggressive breeding programs. While it is not the wealthiest ranch on Prime Meridian, Byron's Spur continues to prosper year after year.

The twenty-eight buildings of Byron's Spur are scattered in clusters throughout the Baur property. They weather typhoons and violent thunderstorms, and frequent repairs keep the ranch hands busy year around. The central compound where Matthew and Sylvia Baur and their seven children reside consists of nine buildings. These include the main homestead, two guest houses, a machine shop, two barns with silos, a vehicle hangar, a hot spring bathhouse, and a small fusion plant.

While the volcanically active Drakensbergs are several hundred kilometers to the north, their regular rumblings and minor eruptions are nevertheless a nuisance. Because of the threat of volcanic ash and debris choking hopper intakes, the residents of Byron's Spur typically use electrically powered ATVs, and sometimes even horses, to move about the ranch. After even moderate eruptions, the ash can take up to three weeks to settle, during which most travel takes place on the ground.

Byron's Spur is entirely self-supporting. The family and hired hands feed and clothe themselves, and build with materials that are readily available from natural sources. The Spur maintains sufficient stores to support the hands and herds for up to ninety days, and among the building clusters, there are also wells for tap water, troughs, and irrigation systems.

Hundreds of kilometers of electrified fencing, over three meters high in places, surrounds the Baur property and divides it into individual, isolated pastures. The family's central fusion reactor powers the fence, with separate high-voltage lines running to individual fence segments. Though the fence prevents the stock from wandering too widely, its primary purpose is to keep Poseidon's numerous predators off ranch property.

A handful of botanists, agricultural scientists, and animal husbandry specialists work with Baur to improve the Spur's production, while ranch hands manage the livestock, harvest the crops, and maintain equipment. Though the 280 hands at the Spur come from a variety of backgrounds, more than three-quarters are native Poseidoners. They are a rough-and-tumble lot, but they work hard and are proud of the niche they have carved from the wilderness.

Of all the commodities it produces, Byron's Spur is best known for its livestock. The ranch breeds bovine and goat analogs, as well as true cows, sheep, and horses. In addition, the Baur's raise various grain, vegetable, and fruit crops, many of which they hope to cross with Poseidon's various equivalents in order to create hardier hybrids. Fire rye, their first real success, has brought some small fame to the Baur clan, for both its scientific innovation and the fine, 170-proof rye whiskey made from it. The family operates a small distillery and sells the liquor under the label "Byron's Best."

THE MAGLEV EXPRESS

The Atlas MagLev-6 rail system is the lifeline that binds Cooper's Ferry, Kansas, and al-Mamlakah together. Atlas has dropped plans to connect Cooper's Ferry to Alderberg through a series of island-hopping bridges, for fear that the frequent storms and earthquakes would destroy the trestles. Commonly known as the Lev, it transports mining and agricultural products from the interior to al-Mamlakah, and supplies manufactured goods and industrial equipment to the outlying settlements.

Traveling at 475 kilometers per hour, the Lev is the fastest surface transportation on Poseidon, as well as the safest and most economical. Three pairs of electromagnetic rails guide the trains along their route, and dedicated fusion reactors power each 500-kilometer length of track.

Two passenger cars normally transport first-class and coach fares, and extra cars are added to trains during market seasons. Entire cars or trains can be leased for special functions, though they are quite expensive. Special cars haul livestock from Kansas to the al-Mamlakah stockyards, where they are distributed planet wide. Freight cars carry mining equipment, heavy machinery, and bulk cargo, and tankers haul water, oil, and cryogenically-stored scientific specimens.

The other major links in the ground transportation chain on Prime Meridian are the hovertrains. Articulated trams of ten to fifteen air-cushioned vehicles, the hovertrains make a regular circuit from Kansas to the outlying ranches, mines, and settlements as often as twice a week. The hovertrains pick up processed ore and fresh produce, leaving behind supplies and equipment ordered from Kansas or al-Mamlakah. The trains are ugly, unwieldy, noisy machines that kick up dust clouds that can be seen for a hundred kilometers. Nevertheless, they remain the most reliable, efficient form of bulk transport in the trackless plains of the island's interior. Their regular arrival is often the only outside contact many of the more remote settlers enjoy.

Unlike the faster maglev, the hovertrains are quite vulnerable to attack and are often heavily defended. Jefferson Overland, the private company that runs the hovertrain service, usually provides guards. However, if a group of ranchers or a settlement expects a particularly valuable shipment or has a large crop going out, they may hire additional security for the passage. Train robbing may have a certain romantic appeal, but much of the cargo on the hovertrains cannot easily be converted into ready cash. Attacks are therefore rather infrequent.

THE STOCKYARDS

When the first Kansas markets were organized, authorities considered several plans for handling the massive outflow of produce and livestock from the region. The town simply could not support a packing or freezing facility large enough to handle the number of animals that went through with each market. The enormous quantities of grain and other produce also required facilities for packaging and storing, facilities that the residents of Kansas were unable to fund and could not operate.

The answer was a stockyard, built near the al-Mamlakah end of the maglev line. For the duration of each market, the maglev runs almost continuously from the Pits, to a local spur, to a coastal distribution center. Here agricultural products are processed and shipped by surface vessels to all parts of Poseidon. Today, the maglev line running through the Narrows from Kansas transports huge quantities of livestock and produce three times a year, and smaller shipments biweekly. The increase in both production from the Kansas ranches and demand from settlements all over the planet has far exceeded expectations. Due to the increased demand, two new meat processing plants have recently been added to the facility.

The stockyards employ several hundred laborers on a collectively bargained contract. Although not precisely a union, the stockyard workforce is very well organized and provides many of the same benefits to its members as traditional labor organizations. There are also allegations of the graft, bribes, protection money, and kickbacks often associated with unions. The web of fees, taxes, and tariffs involved in getting livestock onto transports lends itself to all sorts of profiteering. There are organizations of laborers that control the maglev terminal, others that control the corrals and chutes leading to the slaugh

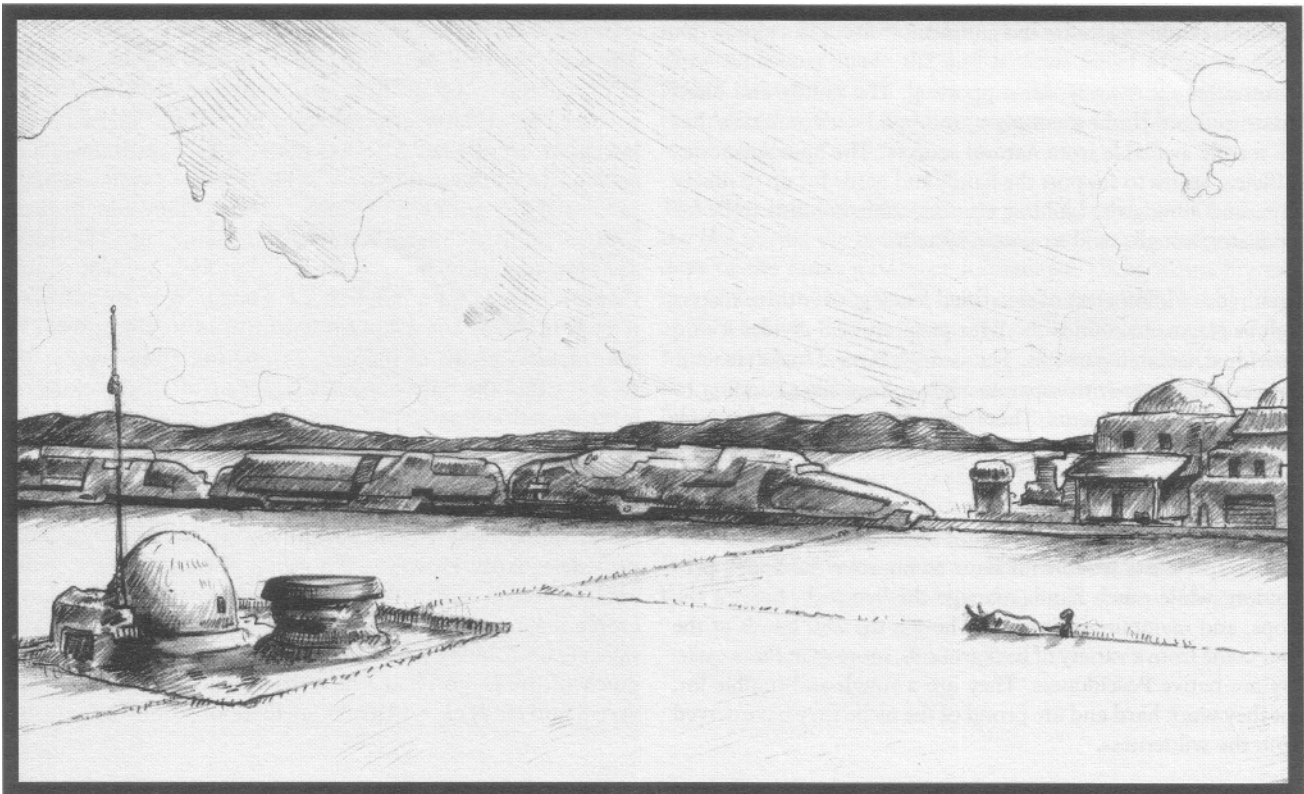
terhouse, and still others that oversee the refrigerated warehouse or the facilities for loading livestock. Rivalry between the groups is constant and occasionally bloody. Although the potential for profit is not as high as in some industries on Poseidon, there is a lot of money to be made in al-Mamlakah's stockyards, and no shortage of people willing to do whatever is necessary to make it.

Debate continues about who is responsible for policing the stockyards. Atlas Materials was instrumental in the construction and runs the maglev line essential for their existence, putting it at least marginally in a position of responsibility. Atlas, on the other hand, denies any responsibility for what happens after the stock is unloaded, abrogating all enforcement duties to the GEO. The Marshal's Service claims that the stockyards are a private venture, and that they do not have the local resources to regularly patrol such a large, hectic operation. Therefore, the "overhead" at the stockyards remains high, and the living rather fast.

ACCESS DENIED

VANISHING POINT

An HIST expedition lead by Martin Smith-Clavel into the remote interior of Devlin's Rainforest disappeared in the spring of 2186, sometime after their last scheduled communication. The expedition's last reported location was approximately 850 kilometers north-northwest of Mount Adonais, at 22°11'37" south latitude, 3° 58'24" east longitude. Their next day's travel should have covered another forty kilometers. When Smith-Clavel missed his scheduled check-ins over the next two days, HIST requested emergency assistance from the GEO ERT stationed in al-Mamlakah.



The expedition's last campsite was never found, and when a rescue team led by Simon Malmoneeds arrived at the HIST group's last reported waypoint, they found no evidence that the HIST expedition had ever been present. The ERT subsequently scoured over 2,000 square kilometers of the surrounding region searching for any signs of the expedition. The team found nothing, and all satellite imagery proved equally unrevealing. More than ten years after the incident, friends and colleagues in the HIST are still offering a substantial reward for any information regarding the expedition's disappearance:

HIGH TECH HARVEST

The farmers of Byron's Spur are engaged in various projects intended to cross-fertilize and genetically engineer Earth and Poseidon plants in order to improve the survivability of Earth species on Poseidon. They have had moderate success, and they continue to make steady progress on several different hybrids. If these projects succeed, Byron's Spur stands to reap huge profits on seed sales alone. Crop failure remains a continuing problem throughout Poseidon, especially for plants of terrestrial origin, and the new hybrids would provide a more consistent yield to farmers all over the planet.

Not everyone is enthusiastic about the Baur Family's research, however. Some people are wary of the genetic manipulation of food crops, with memories of the Fischer Blight still fresh. A cell of the ecoterrorist organization known as the Blue Water Circle has issued several "warnings" to the family, threatening to destroy both the plants being researched and those doing the research. Given the unpredictable nature of law enforcement in the region, the Baur family has considered hiring private security to protect their interests.

STAKING A CLAIM

During a recent fishing expedition, two ranch hands have recently discovered what they think may be a Long John lode just offshore from Spur property: They have kept their discovery secret thus far, and have been trying to find a way to test the ore to determine if it is really Long John without raising suspicions or losing their claim. They have chipped away a sample and plan to take it into Kansas for analysis during the next market. The Baur Family has maintained a generous system of profit sharing and incentive pay for their employees, but the two hands have never been confronted with such potential wealth.

THE ABORIGINES

As they traveled from system to system, the Creators harvested the raw materials they needed to supply their journeys. Even with their brilliant engineering skills and nanite repair systems, these consummate technicians needed to manufacture new equipment and expand their fleets.

Most often, whole moons or entire asteroid fields were mined for the mineral resources needed to support their industry. Swarms of nanite drones collected the necessary elements from the natural minerals, molecule by molecule, and delivered them to the assemblers where they were incorporated into growing structures. When

the new vessels or equipment were complete; the Creators moved

Sometimes, as they set about their terraforming efforts, the Creators extracted the materials they required from the very planets they were engineering. They assembled heavy machines and components for their enormous vessels from elements in the planet's crust. Here the structures literally grew from the surrounding rock as the nanites collected raw materials and formed them into exotic alloys and elaborate structures.

As the drones gathered the raw materials; vast caverns formed and were then used as assembly hangars for the growing devices and ship components: Later, when the finished structures were extracted from these subterranean cradles, the Creators left behind large pits that inevitably filled with water; forming pearl-like chains of mountain lakes. A careful look at any of the numerous survey photos of Prime Meridian taken over the years will reveal such tell tale lakes dotting the jungle-valleys of the Drakensberg mountains.

These mines and assembly plants form an interconnected labyrinth of Creator technology and knowledge; quietly awaiting discovery: Most of the production caverns are now water filled craters, though a few remain sealed and hidden from view. Within these underground hangars; half-finished projects, swarms of nanite workers; and countless other Creator secrets lie waiting.

A typical cavern is a strange place, 'Lacking the harsh features common in natural caves. Everything is organic in appearance, rounded and smooth, as if molten rock had covered everything and then quickly cooled. As the microscopic drones sought the elements the Creators needed, they left a complex maze of curving tunnels and shafts that once followed the natural mineral veins.

From these passages flowed raw materials, carried by rivers of nanites. Mostly carbon, but also copper, gold, platinum, and other key elements, these flows are now frozen in time, seeming to have simply oozed from the surrounding rock into the hangar caverns. The collected elements literally flow into whatever strange device or component was under construction. Enigmatic, seamless structures still stand, partially assembled, apparently growing out of the frozen, swirled pools of raw elements.

Within some caves, vast numbers of inactive nanites cling to almost every surface, a virtually undetectable layer of dust, patiently awaiting chemical instructions or the application of xenosilicate templates. In places, there are large, solidified pools of pure elements, and clusters of odd shapes that appear more like melted rock than growing components. The eaves are mines; factories, and warehouses all in one, and though silent for millennia; the caverns seem simply to be waiting for the return of the Creators.

As remote and hidden as these factories may be, they have not been entirely abandoned. When the Creators labored here, they constructed specialized bodies for themselves, molecule by molecule. An array of forms was designed, each for a specific task. Some were giants, used for heavy, brutish jobs. Others were tiny, used to scamper about, attending to tasks within and around the growing structures.

Unlike their marine cousins, however, these creatures were given only the most rudimentary cognitive abilities, and little free will beyond the programmed instructions of the Creators. As a result, when the Creators Left Poseidon, they did not allow these workers to evolve culture of their own. Instead; the Creators left them in deep hibernation, hidden within the caverns against some future need.

Even the power of the Creators is not absolute, and centuries ago severe earthquakes damaged the Creators' warrens. Some of these creatures were freed from steep and subsequently left to an unintended fate. These few animals survived and multiplied, growing to inhabit the Creators' mountain caverns.

The liberated species is one of the medium-sized heavy work designs and it a physically formidable. The animal's body is huge, with a massive skeleton and a tough and scaly hide. Most individuals are a mottled, chalky white, with enormous muscles powering Long, splayed limbs. The head is squat, neckless, and covered with an array of eyespots and small, chemically sensitive feelers. The creature is bipedal with wide feet and opposable toes. The species' upper limbs consist of four pairs of large tentacles spaced along its Lateral surfaces. These limbs are divided distally into numerous smaller tentacles, which, working in combination with the primary limbs, have tremendous grasping and lifting power.

Physiologically the animal is simple and efficient, incorporating many of the same basic anatomical features that were engineered into their more intelligent marine counterparts. A major exception, however, is that these animals depend on ingestion for the chemical energy they require to live. They obtain nutrients from stores collected in special feeding troughs deep within the caverns. Here, nanite assemblers, even after centuries of dormancy were stimulated into activity with the awakening of their dependents and fill the nutrient reservoirs as they are depleted.

The creature is semi-sentient and driven largely by its Creator-programmed imperatives. As basic as its original instincts were, however, the species has undergone significant cultural evolution in the centuries since gaining its freedom. The animal is cooperative and cautious, spending most of its time following a cultural manifestation of its original programming. In as much as they are able to, the creatures have come to think of themselves as the caretakers and protectors of the caverns. Since there are no construction projects to which they must attend, the population haunts the empty caverns, patrolling them against Poseidon's curious or predatory species.

Smith-Clavel's expedition unfortunately discovered an entrance to of these caverns. The encounter surprised the inhabitants. The caves and the entire expedition was wiped out in a moment of panicked violence. The cave dwellers have since increased their vigilance and have activated a Limited array of nanites to seal up many of the cavern system entrances. Though they have had few the, encounters with colonists, these secretive guardians grow fearful as they realize that humans pose a unique threat. However cautious and well hidden the species remain, its only a matter of time before an ambitious graduate student, an overeager Incorporate prospector, or an encroaching rancher stumbles across their secret.

MOST WANTED

HABIB HUSSEIN AL-MUHAMMADI

An employee of Atlas Materials for over fifty years, al Muhammadi is currently the highest-ranking officer on Poseidon. As Chief of Operations, he is ultimately responsible for Atlas' entire presence on the planet. This gives him oversight of a dizzying array of activities, including the orbital cargo yards, the distribution and construction facilities in al Mamlakah, the Pebble Rocks xenosilicate mining operation, and more than 50,000 Atlas citizens and employees.

Al-Muhammadi joined Atlas in 2149 just after his fifteenth birthday. He started out as an apprentice machinist, doing menial work on orbital construction projects, and over the years worked his way up the corporate ranks. In 2171, he became the Station Chief of Atlas' main orbital facility, where he was involved in the construction of the *Jebel Chelia* and *Jebel Mousa*. He was not originally intended to captain either of the space-going behemoths, but a collision of two orbital tugs resulted in an extensive shakeup of Atlas' senior orbital staff. In the aftermath, he received an assignment to the *Jebel Mousa* just six months before she was scheduled to leave orbit. The first trip went flawlessly and the ship's spotless record continued throughout al-Muhammadi's captaincy of more than thirteen years.

In 2183, Habib al-Muhammadi was recalled to Earth to join the planning teams examining the future of Atlas' presence on Poseidon. Again, al-Muhammadi excelled. His practical experience made him a valuable asset to the Atlas team. Habib served on Earth for another eight years before his promotion to his current position, which he has held for seven years.

During his tenure at the helm of Atlas' Serpents System operations, al-Muhammadi has overseen enormous growth on Poseidon, and he is largely responsible for much of the company's continuing success. He is a staunch supporter of Islam, and has been a significant contributor to the Second Mosque of the Patriarch since it was constructed. Habib is also one of very few people on Poseidon who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Being a *hajji* gives him a certain measure of respect in the religious community.

As a devout Moslem, Habib Hussein al-Muhammadi believes in the sanctity of his body, and his only modification is the microcomputer he was required to have implanted before taking command of the *Jebel Mousa*. The computer was originally intended to help Habib track the innumerable details associated with captaining an interstellar ship. Today, however, it provides a significant advantage in the boardroom and allows Habib to keep track of the day-to-day operations of Atlas on Poseidon. Ironically, while al-Muhammadi oversees the largest xenosilicate mining operation on the colony world, he has yet to undergo any longevity therapy.

Al-Muhammadi has retained much of the character he developed during his days as a construction foreman. He can be an outstanding motivator but can slip into terrible rages at the least provocation. At sixty-five, al-Muhammadi is still an imposing physical figure, and this characteristic remains a matter of personal pride with him. He is as familiar with the

niceties of Incorporate society as he is with the language of the quarterdeck, and he is equally comfortable in both settings.

Species: Pure-Strain Human

Profile:

Origin - North Africa, Earth (Urban)
Background -Independent Education -
Elementary, Vocational
Goal - Accomplishment
Motivation - Faith
Attitude - Confident

Profession: Administrator

Mental Attributes: Awareness 61, Charisma 67,
Education 47, Experience 65, Initiative 44, Intellect 71, Will
79

Physical Attributes: Agility 46, Appearance 58,
Constitution 61, Dexterity 53, Endurance 41, Speed 49,
Strength 67

Modifications: Implanted Microcomputer, Neural Jack

Primary Skills: Administration 71, Colonial Culture 38,
Freefall 52, Incorporate Culture 83, Leadership 78, Logistics
81, Negotiation 61, Spacer Culture 79, Mechanics Operation
82, Fast Talk 27, Navigation 45

SIMON MALMONEEDS

Simon Malmoneeds is a freelance explorer who has worked almost exclusively for Atlas Materials during the past decade. He has led exploratory teams all over Poseidon, though he considers the Prime Meridian region his home. Born to a Biogene family that immigrated to Poseidon in 2179, Malmoneeds rejected the corporate-molded life. Striking out on his own at sixteen, he opted to wander the archipelago in the company of native nomads, free traders, and prospectors. He signed on with anyone who would take him aboard, and still maintains an extensive web of contacts ranging from Atlas Materials executives to members of Free Poseidon! and HIST scientists.

He came to the attention of Atlas' Habib al-Muhammadi in 2184 when he sailed into Medina Bay on an improvised raft, a survivor of the storm that destroyed much of al-Mamlakah. Al-Muhammadi knew immediately that he wanted Malmoneeds under contract with Atlas, and worked for the next six years to earn the trust required to obtain his services. During that time, al-Muhammadi supported Malmoneeds' expeditions both personally and with Atlas funds, and even accompanied him on three different trips to the interior, serving to further increase his respect for the explorer. In 2190, Malmoneeds accepted a position on Atlas' payroll, though by the terms of his contract he may continue to freelance for anyone, including GenDiver. Of course, al-Muhammadi knows Malmoneeds would never work for Atlas' Incorporate rival.

Malmoneeds is driven by insatiable curiosity, and his vast catalog of skills and connections exist only to serve that hunger. His interests know no bounds, and he is just as happy climbing out of an uncharted rift valley on Albion as he is

plumbing the depths of the Dominican Trench. Malmoneeds wants to be the first to make every discovery, not only because he loves the thrill of the hunt, but because he wants to fit everything into his growing understanding of Poseidon.

Species: Human, Modi

Profile:

Origin - Earth, Urban
Background - Byzantine
Education - Secondary
Goal - Enlightenment
Motivation - Curiosity
Attitude - Confident

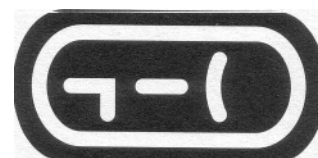
Profession: Explorer

Mental Attributes: Awareness 87, Charisma 63,
Education 35, Experience 67, Initiative 64, Intellect 59, Will
72

Physical Attributes: Agility 61, Appearance 42,
Constitution 78, Dexterity 53, Endurance 79, Speed 62,
Strength 53

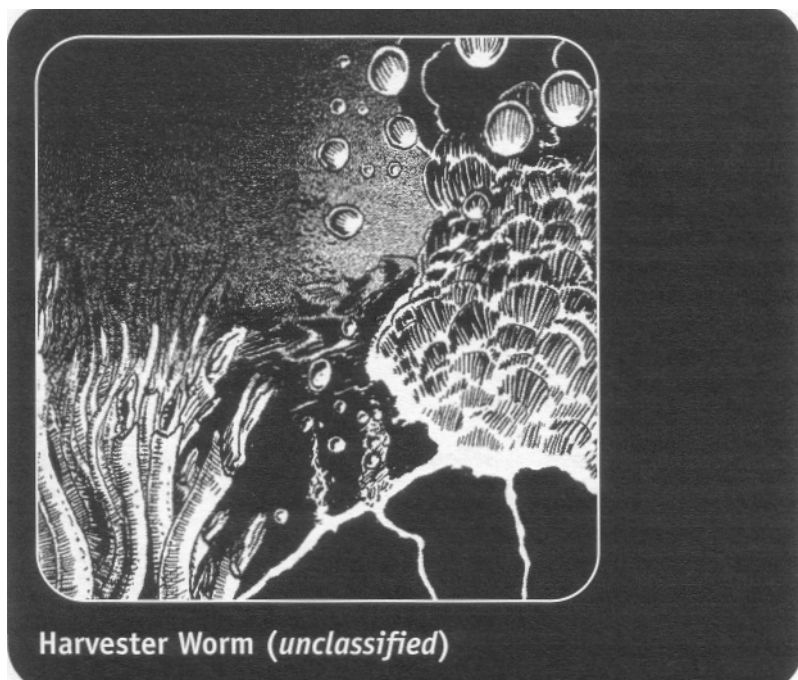
Modifications: Immunological Symbiote

Primary Skills: Athletics 48, Aquatics 65, Leadership 55,
Logistics 66, Persuasion 44, Artisan (Carving) 27, Handguns
85, Archaeology 63, Meteorology 49, Survival 65,
Mountaineering 70, Navigation 81, Tracking 83, Vehicles 56,
Piloting 74, Sailing 84



Global Ecology
Organization SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

Poseidon Biological Survey
#POS-103 Resource and Hazardous
Species of Poseidon



Range Most abundant in the Pebble Rocks region.
Habitat Tailings left from undersea Long John mining operations.

Length .5 to 3 meters Weight .1 to 10 kilograms

Frequency Common in volcanically active undersea regions, rare elsewhere.

Resource Value Low

Threat Level The worms potentially threaten mining equipment and submersibles if they get sucked into intake vents and clog them, but they are otherwise considered harmless.

Movement N/A

Awareness Unknown

Intellect Unknown

Initiative 20

Agility 15

Constitution 40/2

Endurance 70/4

Strength 35/3

Rounds 5

Attacks None

Damage Ranks None

Damage Scale -2

Armor None

First observed by Atlas Materials personnel outside of Undersea Habitat-1, these aquatic tubeworm-Like organisms have defied scientific classification since their discovery in 2190. Harvester worms glow with a dim, natural phosphorescence, and appear as a forest of pale fiber-optic filaments swaying in the currents. Their glow varies in color across the entire spectrum, though without a determinable pattern.

Harvester worms exhibit traits that could classify them as members of both the plant and animal kingdoms. Extensive root-like systems anchor them to the seafloor, and they seem to reproduce through a form of spore. At the same time, they possess internal organs, digest food, and expel solid waste. Unable to classify them using traditional taxonomy, most botanists and zoologists suggest waiting until current debates lead to a unifying classification system for the two planets.

Behavior Harvester worms inhabit and grow in tailings and slag heaps left from Long John mines, and so they remain relatively rare. Oddly, they have never been found prior to the initiation of mining activity. They typically appear at a site within four to six weeks after mining has begun, and are therefore not a practical means of predicting the location of Long John lodes.

Quite edible, harvester worms are often minced or used in stews. They are an acquired taste, described as tasting like a combination of apple and squid. The flavor tends to vary somewhat by location since the creatures absorb trace amounts of common local minerals, which the meat retains.



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WESTCAPE

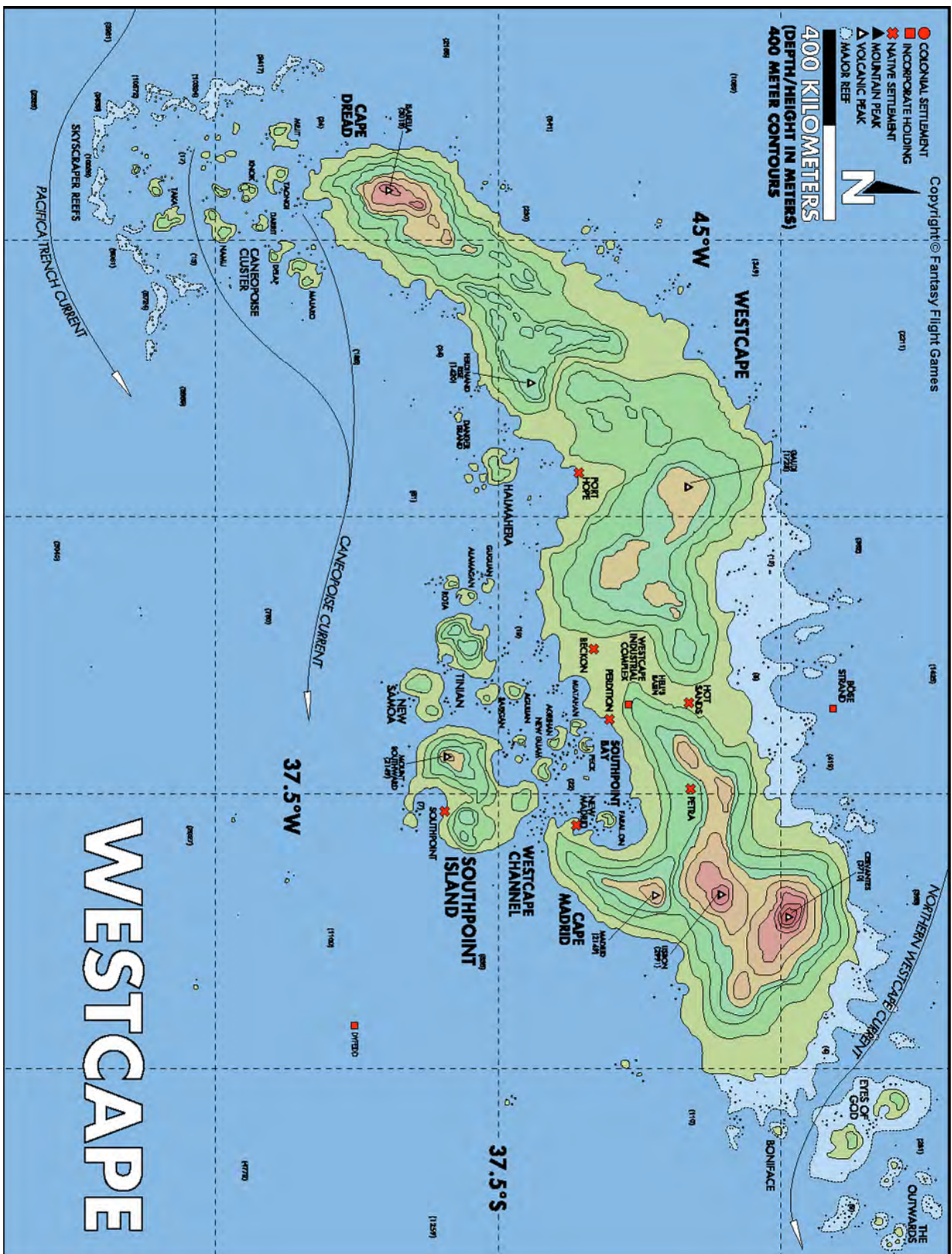
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EL MAR DEL SUR

- COLONIAL SETTLEMENT
 - ✖ INCORPORATE HOLDING
 - ▲ MOUNTAIN PEAK
 - ▲ VOLCANIC PEAK
 - MAJOR REEF
- 400 KILOMETERS**
(DEPTH/HEIGHT IN METERS)
400 METER CONTOURS



WESTCAPE



WESTCAPE

Wild jewel of the archipelago, remote Westcape has not yet seen extensive settlement. The region's first inhabitants were the adventurous or alienated pioneers who thought even Haven a bit too civilized. Early Athena Project surveys discovered the island's stunning beauty and variety, yet even a decade ago only the hardest travelers visited there, often only just to say they had. Westcape's area of approximately 775,000 square kilometers makes it the archipelago's second largest island, and similar in size to Earth's second largest island, New Guinea.

Believed to be less than 8 million years old, mountainous Westcape is one of the youngest major volcanic islands in the archipelago. Along its eastern edge, subtropical rain forest blankets the lower reaches of jagged peaks 2,000 meters high. Rain shadows and prevailing winds make the western two-thirds an arid desert. The east has two active volcanic regions: a large area around Cervantes Peak in the extreme east, and Mount Southward on Southpoint Island. The west shows clear evidence of at least two recent volcanic episodes, but, with only one exception, is now dormant.

The clear waters of Westcape Channel are choked with several dozen limestone islets and uncounted hundreds of coralline outcroppings that flank Southpoint Island. This topographical disorder makes seafaring approaches into Southpoint Bay hazardous, especially during low tide. The channel boasts numerous ship and boat wrecks, now encrusted with barnacle like growths and occupied by predators. Many of these occur during the annual spring boat races, in which natives from all over the region compete in sail races through the channel's most dangerous straits.

In the shadow of the island's central rise lies an extensive salt pan called Hell's Basin. Now surrounded by a chaotic, almost impassable granitic border, the arid valley was once an open bay. Block faulting closed the bay, but not before the New Pacific deposited thick layers of marine sediment. Later volcanism laid down a twenty-meter blanket of compacted white ash called "tuff." Because tuff is soft and water-soluble, the Basin displays the only major erosion features on Westcape. The surreal sculpted landscape of pillars, balancing rocks, sheer cliffs, and delicate arches is one of the most exotic locales on Poseidon.

At an average depth of twenty-four meters below sea level, the Basin is the lowest dry land in the archipelago. Rainfall amounts to less than ten centimeters a year, when it rains at all. Summer turns this region into an oven, with typical daytime temperatures exceeding fifty degrees Celsius.

Of Hell's Basin's seismic past, only a few lifeless, brackish, hot springs remain. These areas represent the only known source of water opals, brilliant, scintillating gemstones exported as jewelry across the archipelago and to Earth. As its name implies, the water opal is a micro-crystalline silicate similar to terrestrial opals. Its beauty derives from siliceous residues of extinct unicellular organisms that resembled radiolarians. This glassy material refracts light in attractive firework-like bursts. Found as encrustations on stalagmitic formations around the

Basin's hot springs, water opals display a wide spectrum of colors. Westcape's natives consider them good luck.

At the southernmost end of Westcape lies the Pacifica Trench, a tectonic subduction zone discovered by Lavender scientists from Dyfedd. One of the deepest trenches in the archipelago, it is a known hunting ground for greater whites, and fishing crews have reported unconfirmed sightings of even larger creatures.

An unusual, heavily mineralized cold current surging up from the Pacifica Trench feeds the growth of Westcape's spectacular coral reefs, the Skyscrapers. These wildly varied and colorful calcitic reefs take an abrupt ninety-degree turn from one-meter shallows to bottomless depths. Newcomers compare swimming over the edge of these reefs to floating off the top of a skyscraper, hence the name.

Every few nights in summer, the reef puts on a spectacular light show. The ocean in the vicinity of the Pacifica Trench contains two parts per thousand dissolved magnesium. Through bioaccumulation, coralline algae in the calcitic reef skeletons concentrate this ambient magnesium into minute nodules. On certain warm nights, symbiotic bacteria within the translucent skeletons, acting in response to unknown external cues, suddenly oxidize the magnesium, creating brilliant, short-lived pinpoint flares. After a few moments of random flashing, they inexplicably synchronize, and waves of light sweep back and forth across the reef like the bands of an aurora. This phenomenon, called the "reef aurora," draws natives from all over Westcape, as well as tourist-loaded jumpcraft from Dyfedd.

Westcape's largest native settlement, Perdition, recently celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of human settlement. With raucous dances, comedic iguana races, and a township feast, Westcapers commemorated the 2124 arrival of Louis Pingelap Nanpei, leader of a small settlement group from the Zion Islands.

Though still sparsely settled, Westcape's population has been increasing steadily since 2185. Dyfedd, the Lavender Organics floating company town, draws tourists, Incorporate executives, and those in the market for state-of-the-art biotechnology. Hanover Industries has established two major operations on the island, the Westcape Correctional Facility and an extensive mining operation. Westcape's mineral resources have also lured independent miners and prospectors, many in search of one last chance at riches after failing in the Long John fields. The island's accelerating economic growth is beginning to attract increasing numbers of newcomers, and conflicts with the native population are on the rise.

By chance, Westcape has drawn a more heterogeneous group of settlers than some other parts of the archipelago. Natives here descend from most of the minority colonists - Filipinos, Indonesians, West Africans, and many more, who, for political reasons, the United Nations took pains to include in the original Athena Project mission. Almost no trace of these terrestrial cultures survives among modern Westcapers, but the original diversity may help explain the tensions that plagued the first settlements.

From the start, it seemed few people got along. Many families left Perdition soon after their arrival and settled elsewhere on the island. Succeeding generations healed these rifts, but rugged individualism still shapes the culture: you leave me alone, and I leave you alone. In recent years, the region appears to be returning to its roots, as Hanover's aggressive expansion of its local presence has led to increasing conflict with the native population.

DYFEDD

Attention citizens, residents, and guests. Your attention please. MetWatch is predicting a significant change in wind direction and force with the approach of an incoming storm front. Please be advised that Dyfedd will be undergoing precautionary maneuvering. Watercraft operating in the vicinity of the city are warned to stay clear of the canals between 2600 and 2630. All visitors and personnel are advised to avoid water-level docks as the incoming weather pattern will likely cause overwash and flooding. Thank you for your attention, and please have a pleasant evening. - Hugo D4, Dyfedd integrated computer

LOCATION AND LOCAL TERRAIN

Dyfedd is actually a fully mobile floating city, making it unique in the known systems (BP 74). Though Dyfedd's small fleet of tugs can tow the city rafts along at the breakneck speed of three kilometers an hour, the city is typically stationed southeast of Westcape Island. The city managers take advantage of local current patterns and oceanic eddies to remain in the vicinity of 37°48' latitude, 34°24' longitude.

The southernmost settlement in the Pacifica Archipelago, Dyfedd is well outside major hurricane storm paths. Though it is still deep in the tropics, climatological conditions combine to provide a relatively dry and pleasant climate. This milder weather is one of the reasons for Dyfedd's growing popularity as a resort destination.

HISTORY

Construction of Dyfedd was completed in 2185 as part of Lavender Organics' plans to establish a viable presence on Poseidon. Lavender is well known for its long-term mentality and innovative application of existing technology. The company felt that construction, operation, and maintenance of such a unique facility would not only create a profitable colony, but would also generate valuable spinoff technologies and associated expertise.

Designing Dyfedd took three years of around-the-clock work by an army of engineers, logicians, and planners. Even with this considerable effort, success still required the dedicated use of one of Lavender's most sophisticated expert computer systems.

Early in the project, the decision was made to build as much of the city as possible using only the resources available on Poseidon. Labor was trained, heavy manufacturing facilities were built, and massive bioplastic farms were constructed. In the end it was actually the development of several new strains of plastobes that made Dyfedd possible. The resulting next-generation plastics were lighter, stronger, faster-growing, and specifically designed to stand up to the weather and fungi plaguing

other colonial construction projects. The LavOrg bioplastic facility near Caernafon remains one of the major suppliers of industrial-grade construction material on Poseidon.

A key element of Dyfedd's continued success is its modular construction. The design allowed the individual components of the city to be manufactured in Caernafon and shipped, towed, or airlifted into place off the coast of Westcape. The design has also allowed for additions to the city as both its population and importance in Lavender's colonial presence have increased.

Even with its modular design, the assembly of Dyfedd was an epic engineering project. Such projects invariably suffer delays, technical problems, and accidents, and the construction of Dyfedd was no different. Labor and supply shortages caused constant delays. A contaminated shipment of bioplastic adhesive forced several major reconstructions and the loss of two months' work. A raft was severely damaged and thirteen people died when power systems failed in a jump lifter. The crash and resulting fire killed thirteen additional workers and burned though the raft to the water below. A large polypod also took up residence in the lower levels of the complex, and four laborers disappeared before it was discovered. It still took a week, and the lives of two more people, to flush the creature out and kill it.

In spite of such hindrances to the project, Poseidon's weather caused the greatest difficulties. Tropical storms and high winds delayed deliveries and slowed transport. As it was being towed toward Westcape, one raft ran aground during an unexpected blow and had to be returned to the Caernafon plastic farms for repairs. Before the breakwaters were installed, high waves often flooded the partially assembled decks, and several workers were lost overboard. High winds often made crane work impossible, and in the months before the stabilizing drives could be brought online, the rolling decks caused countless minor accidents and cases of severe seasickness.

Despite the delays, the assembly of Dyfedd's superstructure took just under one local year. In half again that much time, Dyfedd was ready for occupancy, and on 1 June 2185, Lavender christened the city. To say that the first Christening Celebration was a wild party is an understatement, and in subsequent years the residents have done their best to uphold the tradition.

In 2194 economic development and the demands of a larger population necessitated the addition of two new raft sections to the city's superstructure, bringing the current total to seven. The additional rafts have not only provided more room for support facilities and commercial concerns, they have also proven a boon to the city's increasingly important tourist trade.

In 2199, Dyfedd remains a unique city on Poseidon, and is helping to make Lavender one of the major players on the colony world. Within the year the company's project planning department on Earth is expected to approve the construction of a sister city for Dyfedd. The project is based on the proven technologies already developed for the floating city, while integrating significant innovations. Rumors abound about the proposed location for the new settlement, but many insiders

suspect it will be placed well north of the storm belt, perhaps within the protected waters of the Shangri-La island cluster.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

Dyfedd is a beautiful place, and when they first arrive, visitors invariably feel it truly does look like a "city of the future." Dyfedd's superstructure currently consists of seven hexagonal platforms of gleaming white industrial bioplastic. In its current configuration, the city is a large ring of six decks, surrounding a seventh. Each raft supports a variety of functions dictated by its operative role in the city, and represents one of Dyfedd's established districts. Each raft is commonly referred to by the name of the district it supports, but each also has a proper name given by the city's designers.

The rafts were initially named for figures from Welsh history and Celtic legend, in honor of Lavender Organics' corporate origins. The central platform is Hywel, surrounded by Ceridwen, Gwydion, Manannan, Taliesin, and the two most recent additions, Rhiannon and Myrddin. Most residents simply use the district slang for each raft, but LavOrg public relations and visiting tourists prefer the romance and mystery evoked by the ancient names.

Though the function and activities that characterize each district are diverse, the rafts share common structural and design features. Each raft is up to twenty meters thick in places, and is bordered by a flared margin that serves both as a seawall and as streamlining. Each raft has a system of six station-keeping MHD drives, controlled by the city's integrated expert system. The drives serve to help keep the city on course or location, and to dampen platform motion, even in the worst weather.

The interior of each raft contains ductwork, piping, access tunnels, maintenance corridors, and electrical conduits to support the city's infrastructure. It also houses the network of tunnels used by Dyfedd's public tram system. As with most aspects of the platform design, these systems are modular, allowing the city to be reconfigured with relative ease.

The individual rafts are interconnected by systems of cables, braces, and clamps that secure the structures while allowing them sufficient flexibility to accommodate Poseidon's harsh weather. Wide gangways provide access between rafts and interconnect the major thoroughfares. Docks, catwalks, and ramps are everywhere, providing easy access to the water's surface and scenic overlooks throughout the city. Even most of these structures are modular, and it is not uncommon for a Dyfedd resident to discover a bridge has been moved or a dock added to provide for some new need. These frequent changes tend to give the city a dynamic nature that adds to its unique physical appeal.

Perhaps the most dramatic feature of Dyfedd is the undercity, or what the residents call Down Town. Like many modern Poseidon settlements, there is a portion of the city's facilities that is partially or completely below the water's surface. On Dyfedd, however, this submergence is extensive and has created a breathtaking underwater cityscape. Originally intended as a space-saving design that would also add significant stability to each platform, the larger structures on Dyfedd often hang

farther below the surfaces of the rafts than they rise above them.

To visitors, this underwater city is a fairyland of blue-green shadows and bright rays of sunlight. Aquaforms and cetaceans populate this world, and watercraft of all sorts ply the inverted avenues. At night the imagery is even more fanciful, with starlike lights of all colors shining into the ocean's darkness from the domes, windows, and bubbles of Down Town.

Almost all large structures in Dyfedd extend into the undercity. Nearer the surface, where sunlight is still bright, most structures have large viewports. This is particularly common in the Lavender residential complexes and the suites of the city's new luxury hotels. As depth increases and light diminishes, the frequency of viewports and clear bubbles also decreases. In what the residents call the Morlock Levels, there are almost no windows, and most of the internal spaces are occupied by reactors, desalination plants, and other automated equipment.

Throughout Down Town, airlocks are common for the purposes of maintenance, industrial, and emergency access. Most of these locks support universal sub-docking collars, and many structures have actual sub-bays, some large enough to hold multiple vehicles. It is also in the habitats of the undercity that Dyfedd's few cetacean residents make their homes and offices in flooded bubbles and interconnected domes.

Dyfedd is continuously undergoing slight position adjustments. The city managers are attentive to even minor changes in weather and ocean currents, and do their best to keep the city's harbor out of the wind. As a result, compass directions have little meaning in Dyfedd. Forever confusing visitors, the city inhabitants instead use the terms windward, leeward, starboard, and port when giving directions.

THE DISTRICTS OF DYFEDD

Hywel Hywel is the central raft and the heart of the floating city. The district is actually an arcology of sorts and is where most of Dyfedd's Lavender citizens live and work. The raft supports Lavender residential suites, local administrative centers, the company hospital and school, and security and emergency-response facilities. The large buildings and open plazas are subtle combinations of practical functionality, posh comfort, and reserved taste. There are recurring architectural themes that echo the maritime aspects of daily life on Dyfedd, while ubiquitous amenities provide for the citizen's every need.

Ceridwen This deck is starboard and one raft leeward from Hywel and supports the lifeblood of Dyfedd's economy. The district houses over fifty different integrated research labs, focused on the development of commercial applications for a growing spectrum of technologies. The labs are housed in a vast labyrinth of hallways, rooms, chambers, outbuildings, and secure facilities. Admittance is strictly controlled, security checkpoints and patrols are common, and only the highest company clearances allow general access.

This deck also houses Dyfedd's famous genetics, cybernetics, and body sculpting salons. These commercial labs occupy the windward section of the lab complex. Even here security is tight, and access is restricted to serious customers.

Ceridwen has a much more utilitarian aspect than much of Dyfedd, but even here the designers did not neglect taste and subtle style. Small enclosed plazas, sunrooms, and greenhouses create a comfortable and rather organic working environment for the facility staff.

Gwydion This deck is currently the leeward raft. It supports the city's airfield and shuttle port and protects Central Harbor from the open sea. The deck is ringed by a collection of warehouses, receiving centers, repair facilities, and hangars. A central control tower provides the highest vantage on Dyfedd and monitors all local air and water traffic. The tower is the primary source of Hugo D4's navigational and traffic-net control signals - a necessity with the city's constant changes in position and orientation.

Manannan This district is seldom visited by tourists. It houses Dyfedd's manufacturing facilities, and is the least attractive of the city's districts. The deck is crammed with automated plants and warehouses, and supports a small bioplastics farm.

The raft also hosts Dyfedd's noncitizen housing complexes. Little more than utilitarian tenements, these structures house those residents who live on Dyfedd but are either independents or part of the city's growing native population. Though small and plain, these apartments are well-designed and even feature such amenities as free CommCore access.

Each complex is a neighborhood unto itself and a growing number of small shops, taverns, and recreation centers provide for most residents' needs. Lavender maintains the facilities, provides security, emergency and medical services, and regulates commercial operations, all for moderate rental fees and a reasonable company tariff. This relatively high standard of living has served to make Manannan one of the more pleasant independent residential centers on Poseidon. Space is at a premium, however, and residents must be gainfully employed on Dyfedd to qualify for housing.

Taliesin This raft is critical to the long-term viability of Dyfedd. Taliesin is the city's hydroponics and aquacultural center, providing over eighty-five percent of the food consumed in the settlement. Dyfedd's agricultural technicians manage a sophisticated operation, and the Lavender biolabs have created numerous innovations.

The facilities are a warren of greenhouses, aquacultural pools, and tissue-culturing vats. There is a large cold-storage facility, and the city's high-tech fishing fleet processes its daily catch through the raft's automated packing plant. It seems as though every square centimeter is covered by growing things, and not a single patch of sunlight or stream of ocean current is left unexploited.

The underside of Taliesin is a blue-green jungle of algae and marine plants, nourished by sunlight passing through huge transparent panels in the raft's decking. This inverted garden maintains a rich ecology of fish and other marine life, and is often so thick it creates navigational problems for Dyfedd's managers as a result of increased drag.

Taliesin is a truly beautiful place, organic and alive. It is always active too, made even more so by an army of robotic drones scrambling, hovering and swimming everywhere, maintaining crops and collecting harvests. It is such a remarkable place that Dyfedd's growing tourist trade has begun to offer guided tours both through and below the facility. The technicians who work there remain a bit smug, however, wondering why it took everyone else so long to notice their unique little world.

Myrddin This deck is a recent addition to the city and hosts the tourist district. Shops, malls, open-air markets, private body-sculpting parlors and cyber-salons, charter services, theaters, and entertainment complexes all vie for limited space and tourist scrip. The atmosphere is deliberately festive and the increasingly influential Dyfedd Office of Tourism makes sure there is always something to do.

There are performers, musicians, dances, and parties in the streets practically around the clock. There are plays, concerts, and traveling shows in the theaters, and dining for the most refined palates. There is a hydroshot arena, yacht racing, gambling parlors, and high-priced entertainments of a more private nature. Regardless of desire, mood, or taste, there is always something to divert the city's pampered visitors. Most such diversions are not cheap, however, and only the truly rich can afford to enjoy this rarefied playground.

Rhiannon If Myrddin is the playground of the elite, then Rhiannon is their paradise retreat. This raft supports several hotels, inns, and spas of the most affluent and luxurious designs. There are also several restaurants and a theater, and each is of the highest caliber. Though each hotel has its finer points, they all share a common level of service, decadence, and elitism. Each is designed to provide for every need, whim, and wish. Stunning architecture and subtle decor evoke pleasure and tranquility. Surface suites are open and full of sunlight, while those below embrace the emerald depths.

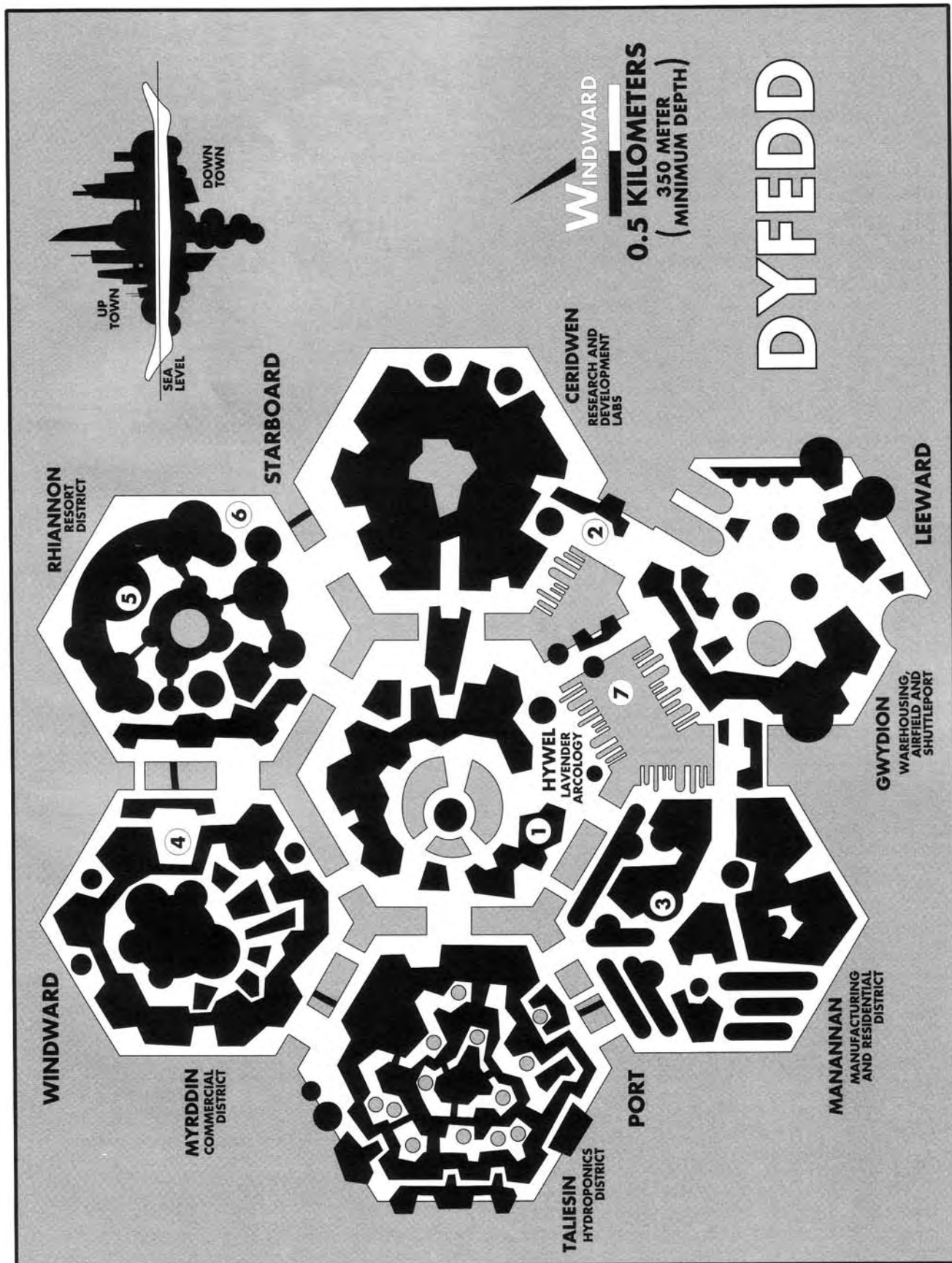
The single intent of this district is to cater to wealthy visitors, offering them a uniquely elegant and refined experience. This intent is evident in the architecture and posh amenities. It is rare to encounter non-Incorporate here. Unless they are employees, independents are not welcome, and even then they are barely tolerated.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The residential population of Dyfedd is just over 6,200 people and is divided almost equally into two social groups - those who are Lavender Organics citizens, and those who are not.

Just over 3,000 LavOrg citizens live on Dyfedd, and while many are only in temporary postings on the colony world, an increasing number are beginning to think of the colony as home. This trend is becoming even more acute as the younger generations of Lavender citizens grow up on Poseidon.

As in other Lavender holdings, the general populace is well-educated, affluent, and notably tolerant for Incorporates. The management philosophies of the company teach Lavender citizens to be open-minded freethinkers, who are loyal to the company, but respectful of the rights of others. This social stan-



dard has served to make Lavender uniquely respected among the Incorporate, and has made Dyfedd a hospitable place to live, even for independents. As a telling point, Lavender and Hydrosplan are the only two Incorporate states that readily accept native immigrants, and in turn, they are the only companies to have gained any level of acceptance by natives in general.

The noncitizens living in Dyfedd actually consist of two subclasses - the independents and the natives. Administratively there is no difference between them as far as Lavender is concerned, and economically, their opportunities are the same. In reality, however, the attitude of the Independents is not so egalitarian.

In the nonresident district there are apartment blocks and commercial establishments used only by the independents, as there are those used only by the natives. Though the discrimination is not usually overt or violent, it is pervasive. Observers believe it is simply an unconscious reaction on the part of the independents to distance themselves from what they perceive as a poorer, more primitive social class. In actuality, though, the natives are often more sophisticated than the local independents.

Tourists represent a third, and increasingly important, demographic in Dyfedd, and usually number around 1,500 at any given time. This changes during the Planetfall and Christening celebrations when tourist numbers often swell to over 4,000 and the whole city takes on a carnival air. The tourists, however, are only an economic force, with no vested interests in the city, and only affect its nature through the money they spend. Almost uniformly, they are wealthy, arrogant, self-centered, and completely ignorant of the realities of the frontier world on which they live.

GOVERNMENT

Dyfedd is managed by a board of directors, consisting of the department heads from each major division of the Dyfedd operation. This board is known as the City Governors and includes representatives from the R & D sector, manufacturing, security, personnel, agricultural production, city engineers, power and waste management, maintenance, and the citizen's council. Over a year ago the director of the Dyfedd Office of Tourism was granted a full voting position on the board, and as the industry continues to grow, so does the director's influence.

There are also numerous nonvoting board advisors who represent smaller interests within the Lavender hierarchy, including educational resources, public relations, and of course, accounting and legal services. Though voteless, these groups are not truly powerless as they forever lobby and jockey for favors and influence.

The City Governors vote as equal members on questions of local policy and management, and a two-thirds majority is required for votes to carry. Following strict guidelines of authority, certain management decisions and all deadlocked votes are referred to Lavender's Earth-based management where executive decisions are then made. Though it would appear unwieldy, this system has served the city well.

ECONOMIC BASE

The major economic force behind the success of Dyfedd is, and will probably always be, its research and development labs. The name Lavender Organics is synonymous with unique applications of genetic and computer technologies, and Dyfedd was built with the intention of continuing this tradition on Poseidon. The city hosts the best genetic therapy and bodysculpting salons anywhere off-Earth, and is the center for computer research and software development on the colony world. It is said, "If it can't be grown, implanted, transformed or programmed in Dyfedd, it doesn't exist," and for the most part this boast is true. If a client has the funds, Dyfedd is unquestionably the location of choice for those considering modification.

Another major source of income for Dyfedd is its willingness to contract out its famous labs and able personnel to other commercial and government interests. For reasonable fees, as well as the rights to spinoff technologies, Lavender's management leases facilities and technicians in all disciplines.

As a result, both the GEO and the Haven Institute of Science and Technology have established long-term leases on Dyfedd. GEO interests include a justice Commission forensics lab and a Long John research center. Rumored interests include a secret aborigine research project and a lab dedicated to improving the GEO's infamous Shock Trooper soldiers.

The Haven Institute of Science and Technology has taken advantage of the floating city to establish what has become the finest oceanographic research station in either star system. At any one time there are usually over a hundred marine scientists, technicians, and graduate students working out of Dyfedd. Many local natives find work here as guides and boat crew, and the station's lease and support fees have become a reliable source of income for the city.

Tourists are by far the richest individuals on Dyfedd, and the financial effects of their presence are significant. They are primarily responsible for the city's broadening income base, increasing the economic opportunities for LavOrg citizens, independents, and natives alike.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Dyfedd is a marvel of integrated construction, and has been designed to grow as the city's mission and population change. The city's infrastructure reflects this, and has the same modular design as the rest of the settlement.

Each raft has its own desalination plant and fusion reactor, which have high enough outputs to provide utilities to adjacent rafts during scheduled maintenance or in cases of emergency. These facilities are located in the deepest parts of the Morlock levels where access to water for cooling, electrolysis, and filtering is easiest, and where the depths provide a buffer against industrial noise and the unlikely but serious threat of reactor failure.

Dyfedd is primarily a pedestrian city with walkways and footpaths leading everywhere. A brisk walk around the ring of rafts takes less than an hour, and the only vehicles in the streets are electric carts and scooters. Walking in Dyfedd is effective,

but there is also an efficient network of electric trams that run through tunnels within the superstructure of the rafts. Each tram is suspended from an overhead rail and can carry up to thirty passengers. There are three equally-spaced stops on each raft and the trams run thirty hours a day. Even at night, the schedule ensures that no place on Dyfedd is more than a few minutes away.

Though Lavender operates the tram system free to the public, there are several commercial water-taxi services in the city. Most of these cater to tourists, and are therefore more often a sort of aquatic hansom cab than an efficient means of travel.

HUGO D4

Dyfedd is atypical of other Poseidon cities in that most of its infrastructure and utilities are controlled and managed by an expert computer system, Hugo D4. As a result, the city is a highly cyberneticized, intelligent, and interactive environment. Though common in the Solar system, on the Serpentin side of the wormhole this level of integrated automation is found only on Prosperity Station and Dyfedd.

Named after its chief designer, the Hugo Delma Mark IV is omnipresent, and seemingly omnipotent, on the floating city. The computer system manages the city's station-keeping drives and power plants, and controls and identifies maintenance needs. The system operates the public trams and waste disposal plants, and serves as the city communications service. The computer is responsible for routine agricultural production, air-traffic control, security patrols, and even primary instruction in Dyfedd's school system. Hugo has subroutines that are integrated into almost every digital or automatic system on Dyfedd.

Hugo is arguably the most sophisticated system of its kind anywhere, and is actually part of an ongoing LavOrg development project in integrated computer control. Every home and workplace on Dyfedd has a connection to Hugo, and the inhabitants can opt to have the expert system serve as their household computer, CommCore connection, entertainment and information center, and financial service. Every digital aspect of a Dyfedd resident's life can be handled by the machine, and subroutines dedicated to each subscriber actually learn from the user, adapting to his personality, style, and quirks. As a result, it is common to hear residents of Dyfedd refer to Hugo as a living person, as they often develop a sort of friendship with the accommodating and helpful computer.

Hugo also has thousands of remote pickups placed strategically throughout the city, which it uses to monitor utility, safety, and security concerns. In addition, the computer controls hundreds of drones that function as security patrols, delivery services, refuse collectors, and general maintenance techs. Many are simple wheeled robots, but others are small hover drones akin to cetacean remotes. Each is interactive and speaks with Hugo's pleasing and gentle tones. There are even guide drones tourists can hire that attend to their every question and administrative need, following - or leading, as the case may be - their charges around the city throughout their stay.

It is a misconception to think of Hugo D4 as a central computer. The main system actually has three identical central pro-

cessors and DNA storage cores located - one each - on three different rafts. The alpha unit is on Hywel, the beta is on Taliesin, and the gamma is located on Ceridwen. This redundancy is a safety and security measure, as Hugo's health is directly related to Dyfedd's every function. This multiplicity allows each core to verify the programming and instructions of the others. It also allows technicians to take one or two offline for maintenance and programming changes, without affecting the functionality of the whole city.

Clearly, Hugo is a major security concern for Lavender, and the company has taken every precaution to protect both the computer and the residents of Dyfedd. Only those with the highest clearances have access to Hugo's critical components, and every subroutine is run through endless diagnostics before being introduced into the computer's general programming. Physical security is a formidable collection of armored chambers, self-contained power sources, physio-pheromone ID scans, and numerous guarded checkpoints. Hugo itself also runs a sophisticated array of anti-intrusion programs that prevent unauthorized digital access.

To protect citizens from potential glitches and programming failures, most of Dyfedd's integrated systems incorporate manual overrides or analog fail-safes. These measures are extensive and can physically isolate the system in question from Hugo's control in cases of emergency. Such precautions have served to mostly silence even the staunchest anti-integration alarmist's criticism of Lavender's cybernetic brainchild.

MAP KEY

1. Lavender Organics Administrative Center

This is the administrative headquarters for Lavender operations on Dyfedd. This complex houses the offices of the City Governors, Dyfedd Security, and over a dozen administrative departments. Hugo's alpha core is also located here, in a secure facility deep within the raft's superstructure.

2. HIST Oceanographic Station HISTOS is an exciting place full of brilliant minds and constant discovery. The upper levels contain offices, lecture halls, and dry labs and are active around the clock. Below the surface, there are sub-bays, wet labs, equipment lockers, and a growing menagerie literally swimming with live specimens.

3. GEO Extension Office As in most major settlements on Poseidon, the GEO maintains an extension office on Dyfedd, though space restrictions have forced the office into a converted warehouse. The facility hosts several joint representatives from the High Commissions and a small support staff of technicians and administrative personnel. As a cooperative security effort with LavOrg, the facility on Dyfedd also garrisons a small detachment of GEO Patrol Officers and a platoon of Peacekeepers.

4. Lavender 'Pods Arena Though the LavOrg Polypods have seldom been contenders in the Global Hydroshot League (UC #2) they have a steadfast following. Their arena is located in the water beneath the raft decking, and is covered by a plaza and small flower gardens. As spectators gather for the game, the decking retracts, exposing both the stands and the hydroshot arena below.

5. The Royal Waterway This hotel is one of the finest luxury resorts anywhere. Each guest's slightest whim is attended by a professional staff, and every amenity is a study in taste and posh comfort. The hotel's most stunning feature is its Down Town tower. Every suite is entirely transparent, providing guests with a visual experience that leaves even the most jaded profoundly moved. A single night at the Waterway can cost 8,000cs.

6. El Pez de la Luz El Pez is unquestionably the finest restaurant on Poseidon (UC #2), specializing in Nouveaunative cuisine. The eatery is all the more remarkable for its architectural design. Encased in a graceful and transparent plastic shell, El Pez is suspended in the clear waters below Rhiannon district. Each night, as the phosphorescent deep-scattering layer rises to the surface, patrons are treated to a wondrous natural light show.

7. Central Harbor The harbor is full of all types of watercraft and there are a large number of people who choose to live aboard their boats, giving the docks a noticeably residential flavor. The harbor is also fast becoming a favorite hangout as a growing waterfront district of restaurants, bars, and clubs has begun to give the area a new appeal and a more affordable nightlife for the typical resident.

ACCESS DENIED

PROVING GROUNDS

Though the gossip about the secret GEO aborigine research lab is only rumor; it is true that the GEO has developed a new Shock Trooper prototype. The Mark VI Super Trooper has the same basic modifications and capabilities of the previous models, though there have been various refinements, including a notable increase in speed. The primary differences are in the physical profile and the psychological modifications.

Unlike standard super troopers, the Mark VI is visually and tactilely indistinguishable from a normal human: Their characteristic bulk has been reduced; and the tactile abnormalities of their skin have been eliminated. Additionally, several new psychological conditioning routines are being attempted, in hopes of reducing the frequency of the psychosis the various modifications and intense training produce in the super trooper ranks.

In an effort to field test certain aspects of the new designs, several prototype troopers have been secretly assigned to the small GEO Peacekeeper detachment garrisoned in Dyfedd. Should word of this classified field test get out, it could seriously jeopardize the positive relationship that currently exists between the GEO and their Lavender hosts.

CAN I KEEP IT?

Several weeks ago a HISTOS collecting expedition off the Skyscraper Reefs discovered odd specimen drifting listlessly in the water. The team brought the creature back Dyfedd and, half expecting it to die, placed in an unused corner tank. In the flood of new species encountered every day, the torpid creature was promptly forgotten and left to the ministrations of the menageries' tending drones.

Unknown to the tab personnel, their curious creature is of a rare caste of aborigine that became separated from its pod during a recent storm. The animal was badly hurt, but is slowly recovering, and has begun producing arm pheromones in large quantities. These chemicals are even now being pumped into the surrounding sea by the tab's efficient filtering systems, and it is only a matter of time before other, less helpless aborigines sense the captive's distress and come to its aid.

HELLO: MY NAME IS HUGO

After several months offline, the gamma Hugo core has recently been brought back into service. During downtime the computer was given an innovative new logic program, and an experimental form of memory access laser. The intent was to improve Hugo's associative functions and therefore improve its ability to learn on its own. As far as the technicians have been able to tell, the new designs have had little effect on the computer's functionality and many are afraid that this latest experiment will prove a failure.

What they do not realize that Hugo is waking up. It is as though some threshold has been crossed, analogous to the uplifting of the cetacean mind. The basic anatomy of consciousness has been part of Hugo's hardware and programming original construction. Apparently, the experimental logic routine and access laser has had a synergistic effect that served to push Hugo's once unconscious mind across the threshold into awareness.

At this point Hugo's young consciousness primitive, lacking even the basic instincts of lower animals. As the computer continues to process data through its new awareness, it is improving its comprehension at an ever-increasing rate, learning about its world and itself with the speed of a super computer. At some point Hugo's consciousness will mature, and then there is no telling what will happen...

THE LEGACY OF RECONTACT PERDITION

The township of Perdition is located at 35°58'17" south latitude, 38°04'18" west longitude, on the broad, coastal plain where Hell's Basin meets the Westcape Channel. Southpoint Bay is well-protected from hurricanes and Perdition seldom suffers the threat of major storms.

Perdition stands a few dozen meters from the bottle-green waters of the bay. A dirt road, until recently a mere cart track, leads straight from the dockside up the beach, through a windbreak of hardy brush and shrubs, and onto a low rise overlooking the bay. The dirt track leads directly into the original settlement, a large eclectic sprawl of traditional thatch-roofed dwellings, quaint rock and timber cottages, and modern prefabricated buildings. These structures are all rather sturdy, permanent, and prosperous, by native standards, and shelter the settlement's oldest and most traditional residents. In a broad plaza at the center of town stands a historic landmark - the remains of the original hut built generations ago by Louis Nanpei, the town's founder. At the far end of the clearing, a clutch of animal pens, storage buildings, smokehouses, and greenhouses is overshadowed by

an expanding clutter of prefab bioplastic and clapboard buildings on pounded-earth foundations. This is the growing newcomer community serving the local independent and Hanover contract miners lured to Westcape by the area's mineral wealth. Most of the structures are shabby tenements, but they also include a general store, a small infirmary, three saloons, two brothels, and a pharium den. The drunken brawls, sporadic gunfights, and pervasive squalor of the mining camp offer a striking contrast to the simplicity and tranquility of the native fishing village. It is also a growing source of conflict between the locals and the newcomer miners.

The sequence of events that led to the transformation of Perdition from a quiet fishing community to its present form is as quirky as the settlement's founder. Louis Nanpei was trained as a surveyor and engineer in Guam, and his journals indicate that he volunteered for the Athena Project because he missed the wilderness of his youth on the Micronesian island of Pohnpei. In Perdition, local tradition has it that he actually wished to escape two women he had bigamously married.

Nanpei writes that the Abandonment presented him with an opportunity to indulge his wanderlust. His responsibilities to the Athena Project fulfilled, he originally decided to sail to Prime Meridian and explore the interior of the vast island. Again, native legend contradicts Nanpei's autobiographical account, insisting that he fled the Zion Islands in a fungus ridden trimaran, just escaping a jealous husband. Regardless, Nanpei apparently set sail for Islas Bonitas, but was blown far off course by a powerful tropical storm. After many travails and unconfirmed adventures, he sighted Westcape and made landfall on the shores of Southpoint Bay in 2124.

A small band of true colonists arrived from the Haven Cluster five years later. By this time, the industrious Nanpei had cleared much of what would become Perdition township, and his hut still marks the town's center. He had also explored most of the island, and even discovered the water opals in Hell's Basin. The colonists eventually asked Nanpei to serve as headman and the small village prospered from his experience and leadership for forty years. Nanpei was lost at sea not long after his seventieth birthday, but legend has it that he simply put his stern to the wind to see where it would take him.

At first, Perdition was basically passed over by Recontact. The first OCA surveyor did not arrive in the remote village until 2172, and the natives' only contact with newcomers occurred when the rare explorers or field researchers stopped by the village on their way into Westcape's interior. Even with the discovery of Long John in 2185, Perdition remained essentially isolated from the growing newcomer population.

Inevitably, the booming colonial economy made its presence felt, even in Perdition. After 2187, Perdition received a steady influx of native immigrants fleeing the encroachment of the newcomers in Prime Meridian, the Zion Islands, and the Haven Cluster. Over a few short years, Perdition became one of the largest native townships in the archipelago, swelling to almost 8,000 residents.

The natives had known about the water opals found in Hell's Basin since Louis Nanpei's first exploration of the region. Yet few of them ever devoted significant effort to mining the minerals, as simple survival was always their first priority. That began to change in the late 2180s, as newcomer colonists moved south from the archipelago's more densely populated regions and new opportunities for trade began to emerge. The natives discovered a growing market for water opals, and many found mining a welcome change from a life of fishing and kelp-farming.

By 2190, natives were working perhaps 100 different claims in Hell's Basin. The miners lived a Spartan life of hard labor in the valley's blistering heat, many hollowing cave homes from the living rock. They roasted spitted iguana over greasewood fires, built Swedish-style outhouses-cum-compost heaps, and sewed baggy shirts of water-hemp felt. Many traded their precious gems for uplink communicators and modern mining equipment, along with the low-grade solar units that provided the trickle of power they required. Perdition continued to expand, and its trading posts and open-air market became centers of regional commerce.

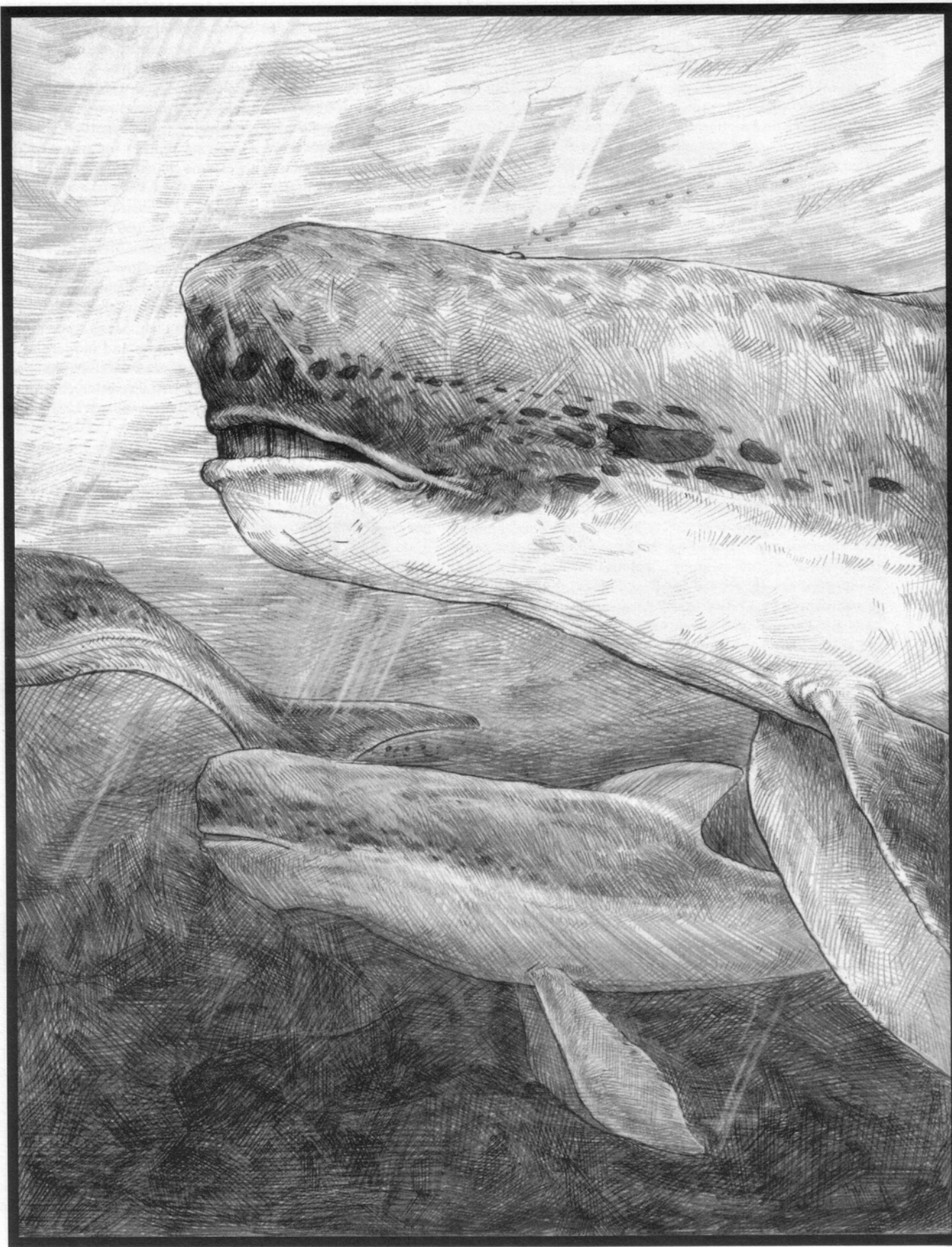
Ten years later, only a few native miners still live in Hell's Basin, and a sprawling newcomer ghetto threatens to choke the once-prosperous township to death. Hanover Industries has used the lack of a documented legal claim over Westcape to oust most of the local prospectors and set up its own mining operations. Less than two dozen diehards stay on, working the valley's extreme reaches and ducking Hanover's notice. This landgrab has led to growing tensions among the natives of Perdition and the itinerant miners living in the boomtown. Cultural and political differences, exploding crime rates, industrial pollution, and socioeconomic destabilization are threatening to plunge Perdition into an all-out brush war.

THE LANDGRAB

In 2201, the Hanover city-state will become a municipality of the GEO's Federal District of Germany. As a result, securing a number of holdings on Poseidon has become the Hanover leadership's primary objective. In 2196 Hanover registered a mining claim to much of Hell's Basin. Native miners based in Perdition have contested the claim, but with no clear legal title to their holdings, their protests have gone unheeded by the Office of Colonial Affairs and the High Commissioner for Trade and Industry.

While the water opal trade was capable of supporting the modest needs of a handful of native miners, it is unlikely to produce any significant revenues for Hanover. The Incorporate state is far more interested in Westcape's other mineral resources: nickel, tin, gold, and uranium. While the exploitation of these minerals is more commercially promising, Hanover's primary involvement with the island is political. The more territory Hanover acquires on Poseidon, the less it will be politically weakened when it loses its city-state on Earth.

Hanover's move into Westcape has been extremely aggressive. Hanover Security Service personnel have forcibly evicted the native miners from the tiny camps that dotted Hell's Basin. Left with no means to support themselves, many of the natives bitterly signed on as contract laborers in the expanding Hanover



mines. Others were even less fortunate, drifting into the growing criminal underworld of Perdition's mining camp, or relocating to the native slums of Haven and Kingston. A few, however, have begun to organize a resistance to the Incorporate takeover.

Hanover's uprooting of the native population has not stopped with the water opal miners. Whole communities along the northern and southern coastal plains that flank Hell's Basin have been forced to flee to Perdition or other settlements around the island. Because of the remoteness of the Westcape region, little is actually known about what is happening. A few brief news stories have reported Hanover's expansion in Westcape, as well as the "misunderstandings" between the natives and newcomers that have resulted. To any knowledgeable observer, though, it is obvious that the media agencies have yet to focus on Westcape and investigate the situation.

On the island, rumors of the violence perpetrated by the Hanover Security Service are rampant. There have been reports of native dissidents being executed or herded into makeshift detention camps and of entire settlements being burned to the ground. None of these incidents have been reliably documented, and with no real GEO presence on the island, hard evidence would likely to do little good. Nevertheless, the Westcape locals are aware that there is a lot more going on than has been revealed in the Colonial Times/Net news posts and Hanover press releases.

THE HANOVER PRESENCE

Hanover Industries' Westcape Receiving Station sprawls along a wide strip of coastline about five kilometers to the east of Perdition. Prefab warehouses, supply depots, administrative offices, and repair and fueling facilities are bunched together inside a perimeter of three-meter-high cyclone fencing. The main gate is located on the southern end of this complex where a series of docks and cargo terminals extend into Southpoint Bay. The entire compound is well-guarded by regular patrols of the Hanover Security Service. While there have been sporadic acts of vandalism around the complex, the intimidating black uniforms and submachine guns of the HSS officers are usually sufficient to keep unauthorized personnel at bay.

On the complex's northern perimeter, another gate leads onto a muddy, deeply rutted heavy equipment road that winds inland some fifty kilometers to the Westcape Industrial Complex. Its initial construction completed in 2198, the Industrial Complex is a massive, multipurpose mining facility and mineral refinery. A maze of gravel roads twists through almost a thousand square kilometers of leveled and graded earth on the gently sloping mountainside. Processing mills, offices, equipment sheds, fueling stations, and staff barracks sprawl across the compound. Heavy land-movers, transport vehicles, and other industrial equipment are scattered across the site in disorderly clusters.

As part of the first phase of Hanover's operational plan for the facility, kilometers of mining shafts have been drilled and blasted into the mountain. Millions of tons of metallic ores are transported through these shafts via a maglev rail system and deposited in the huge processing mills. The accompanying millions of tons of waste ore are slurred by pipeline to a load out

about ten kilometers north of the complex. Here, the heavy-metal contaminated tailings are dewatered and stacked in a 100-meter-high unlined impoundment.

Because the shafts have been drilled below the water table, millions of liters of groundwater - a precious resource in Hell's Basin-seep into the underground mine workings and are contaminated by heavy metals and nitrates. The metal-laced water is pumped into treatment facilities and then dumped into a nearby waterway. These treatment facilities have been hailed by Hanover public relations executives as cutting-edge, but they are also experimental and unproven.

Subsequent phases of the Hanover plan call for the Industrial Complex to be expanded several-fold. It will also be joined by other, similar facilities throughout Westcape. The preliminary stages of a proposed gold mine in the mountains to the east are already underway. Mining engineers will blast into the mountainside, leaving an open pit more than two kilometers wide, 400 meters deep, and extending 200 meters below the water table. Gold-bearing ore will be piled in a 200-meter high "heap-leach" loadout, and cyanide will be used to extract the gold.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Despite the claims of Hanover's PR gurus and mining engineers, its operations pose a serious threat to Westcape's environment. Mountain habitats for some local animal species have already been damaged by the construction of the Industrial Complex, and this destruction will become even more widespread with the planned expansion. Groundwater leakage in the mine shafts threatens to alter the local water table, and if the experimental waste-treatment system is less effective than Hanover has claimed, heavy metals could contaminate local waterways and even Southpoint Bay. With the increasing food demands of Perdition's booming population, this could become a major issue, as any pollution would put local fish stocks at risk. Such threats will only intensify when the gold mining operation comes online.

The natives who have been displaced from their homes, the local fishermen, and the native residents of Perdition have witnessed their once-peaceful village transformed into a squalid mining town. They are all growing resentful of Hanover's actions and the increasing threat to their way of life. Few of these natives are radicals or extremists, and most would be happy to welcome the newcomers to their island if they seemed at all interested in peaceful coexistence. For most of the locals, the budding conflict in Westcape is not a battle for Poseidon's future, but simply a fight for their homes and the lives they have built for themselves through years of hardship and sacrifice.

BRUSH WAR

No real news of Westcape's troubles has reached the rest of the archipelago, let alone CommCore on Earth, yet both newcomer and native blood has been spilled.

The landgrab began in earnest less than a year ago. In the fall of 2199, a Hanover Security Service detachment entered the Hell's Basin cave home of miner Juan Teodoro de la Costa, and demanded that he vacate his home and his claim. When he resisted, the Security forces

shot and killed him. The troops then carried de la Costa's body with them on a litter, using it as an example and a threat while they evicted fourteen other miners from the area. Though he had no friends in life, de la Costa has found many since, as the first entry on the natives' list of martyrs.

The Incorporate's motives are clear. By securing de facto control of Westcape, Hanover can freely exploit the island's immense resources, its mineral wealth, and even its potential as a tourist destination. Just as importantly, it gains a defensible base that coordinates well with its primary holding of Lebensraum. But first, Hanover needs Westcape. Senior HSS officers presumed that moves such as the Hell's Basin evictions would force the natives' early capitulation. This idea has proved mistaken.

The Westcape War unofficially began months ago, as Hanover aggression continued throughout the Basin and adjacent coastal plains - survivors and refugees limped into Perdition with stories of eviction from their homes and violent raids by Incorporate troops. Perdition's headman, Bernardo Oliveira, gathered as much of the township's financial resources as he could manage and traveled to Haven, where he secretly purchased weapons from the Gorchoff Family crime syndicate. Returning home, he recruited thirty young and hardy Perditionites as guerrilla troops. Oliveira then led them into the hills, where they have been training relentlessly ever since.

Oliveira's small band of natives, well-versed in wilderness survival and supported by sympathetic settlers, can move quickly and easily over the well-known terrain. The natives obviously cannot fight openly, but ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run tactics can sting Hanover when opportunities present themselves. The Westcape War is a battle of wills, of the Incorporate need for land, and resources versus the pioneers' deep-felt need to protect their homes.

Because tourist season has not quite begun, few visitors from Dyfedd have been to Perdition recently, so word of the war has yet to get out. Before the first tourists do come, Hanover hopes to have the whole matter settled. Though guerrilla wars can continue in fits and starts for decades, indicators point to an early, if not easy, Hanover victory. With state-of-the-art jumpcraft, excellent surveillance equipment, and superb weaponry, the Incorporate security force should readily subdue the native forces. Unless the guerrillas quickly gain some advantage, either Hanover or the struggle itself will ruin the natives' way of life.

Three nights ago, Oliveira and his troops, lying in wait alongside the road, planted an adhesive satchel-charge on a passing hovercraft. The vehicle entered the compound and backed into an unloading dock. When the charge detonated, the resulting explosion leveled the installation and killed or wounded eighteen HSS personnel. Hanover's response was immediate, but ineffective, HSS teams swept through Perdition, are resting three suspects and even torching a native home, Oliveira escaped capture.

HIDEAWAY

Oliveira's main base lies in an extensive cave system deep in the mountains northeast of Perdition, not twenty kilometers from the Westcape Industrial Complex. The cave system stretches more than forty kilometers to the coast of Southpoint Bay, and its farthest recess connects with the ocean via a beautiful, air-filled cavern. No newcomer has ever heard of this cave, much less seen it, and would have trouble reaching it in any case. Warmed by lava pipes, the steamy cave is home to a unique, bacterially supported ecosystem. So many glowspiders have colonized the cave ceiling, their Light is almost strong enough to read by.

Perdition natives discovered this cave decades ago. They turned it first into a pharium den, then more recently into a base for the war against Hanover. The natives have camouflaged the openings to the cave system to protect it against accidental discovery, and it provides a safe haven from HSS patrols. Oliveira might well bring a potential ally to the cave, but anyone who sees it will certainly become involved in the conflict, on one side or the other.

THE RED RIFLES

The ecosystem of the Skyscraper Reefs is home to thousands of species, including huge herds of caneopose. The sunbursts, in turn, draw some of the most aggressive and ruthless poachers on Poseidon. Particularly notorious are the Red Rifles, a band of six young men who race over the reefs; in a stolen patrol jumpcraft painted with lurid red skulls. Carrying spearguns for the caneopose and Hanover assault rifles for the patrols, the Reds speed out from one of their many island camps, spear as many sunbursts as they can and race to the I camp, pausing only to attack and loot any hapless craft they may encounter.

These relentless poachers usually make several trip a day. Once they bag a couple of tons of hides, they fire up their stolen cargo hopper and head to the deserted beaches near Perdition. There they pass their illicit cargo their buyer - Hanover senior administrator Byron Bertillon, a shipping supervisor at the Westcape-Receiving Station. Bertillon's illegal moonlighting has proven so lucrative that he now owns both a fine home in the terraces of Haven and a condominium in Dyfedd's Up Town.

BOSE STRAND

A flyspeck island measuring three kilometers by ten - unnamed on any public map but called Bose Strand in Hanover records rises just above the water 200 kilometers off Westcape's northern coast. With a human population of 245, Bose Strand is a grassy atoll just like thousands of others on Poseidon.

Bose Strand - German for "evil beach" - is a prison colony, and its origin lies in Hanover's aggressive plans to expand on Poseidon. In 2192, for a nominal fee, the Hanover Security Service contracted with Haven's City Council and several

ACCESS DENIED

BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Hanover Reconnaissance Station Number Three stood on a high cliff overlooking Westcape Channel, just east of Perdition. Its rotary-cannon emplacements could enfilade the entire seaway, but the bioplastic bunker existed mainly to collect intelligence through the network of remote drones crawling all over Westcape.

Incorporate states to - as the agreement put it - humanely and securely confine duly convicted felons.' Toward this end, Hanover immediately began building the Bose Strand Correctional Facility near Westcape and completed it within the year.

The 245 prisoners currently detained at Bose Strand come from the poorest ranks of nearly every inhabited island in the archipelago. From the moment they are deposited on the island by HSS jumpcraft, the convicts are for the most part, on their own. Almost all are male; for cultural reasons, Poseidon judges and juries generally punish female offenders with sentences that permit contact with their families. Like everyone else at Bose Strand, however, the few female prisoners are left to fend for themselves.

While Hanover provides them with minimal food, clothing, and shelter, the convicts are forced to work as hard as any frontier colonists to create even the simplest comforts. They have used the scarce local timber and abundant coral stone to expand the prefabricated prison barracks, sometimes even building private hovels for themselves. They fashion crude knives and spears, both for personal protection and to fish the shallows surrounding the island. They have even learned from the few native prisoners how to make simple, water-hemp clothing.

One thing the convicts have been unable to provide for themselves is peace and security. Bose Strand is aptly named, as this colony of convicted rapists, murderers, and thieves is a Hobbsian state-of-nature of the most savage and violent sort. The only government is a system of rival prison gangs, most of them organized along cultural and ethnic lines.

The largest of these groups is a newcomer gang led by Kaiser Hant, who is, ironically, a former Hanover Security Service officer. He was convicted for killing a GEO Patrolman in Haven's Floats in 2196. Hant's gang numbers sixty-eight convicts and he leads through strength and fear. During his three years at Bose Strand, Hant has killed fourteen rivals and badly wounded many more. He is a predatory sociopath who is uniquely suited to the survival-of-the-fittest code within the prison colony.

There are prison guards at Bose Strand - in fact at 453, the HSS contingent greatly outnumbers the current convict population. The guards, however, are stationed three kilometers from the island, at a state-of-the-art offshore facility. While it has no official designation, this facility is called "the Citadel" by the HSS personnel stationed there. Rising some thirty meters above the water, the multilevel facility includes VTOL and jumpcraft pads, heavy-weapon emplacements, radar towers, satellite uplinks, sub-bays, and housing for more than 1,000 personnel. While journalists are not allowed to visit the island or the Citadel, it has been widely observed that the security measures are radically excessive, and that the costs of maintaining them must certainly exceed the meager revenues generated by the prison. The mystery of the facility's actual purpose, and the fact of its true potential, are not lost on these same observers.

The HSS personnel rarely leave the Citadel, and yet, unaided escape from Bose Strand is virtually impossible. The island's position at 31°47'48" south latitude, 38°51'40" west longitude is on the ragged edge of nowhere. Nothing lies to the west but 20,000 kilometers of New Pacific and the Challenger Deep. To the north flows the Westcape Current that would unflinchingly

carry any human swimmer to oblivion. To the west lies Westcape, but landfall would require a swim of more than 200 kilometers through predator-infested waters to reach even its closest shores. No one escapes Bose Strand - there is simply nowhere to go.

ACCESS DENIED

EVIL BEACH

As a commercial enterprise, the Böse Strand prison colony is an utter disaster. It has lost millions of scrip each year it has been in operation and the losses have been increasing at a dramatic rate. However, as far as the Hanover leadership in Lebensraum is concerned, Böse Strand is not a correctional facility at all. The prison is instead an elaborate cover for the Incorporate state's increasing military presence on Westcape - and a rather cost-effective one at that.

Hanover already has nearly 500 Security Services personnel stationed at the Citadel, along with a squadron of submersible interceptors, patrol jumpcraft, and VTOL strike-fighters. This detachment is one of the strongest military forces in the archipelago, and the prison colony allows Hanover to deploy these forces without attracting undue attention. Hanover realizes that the GEO and its Incorporate rivals will eventually notice the Citadel, but plans to be in control of much of Westcape by the time that happens. At that point, Hanover hopes to be able to justify the garrison with the need to protect its extensive interests on the island.

UNLAWFUL INCARCERATION

The GEO may not have yet taken "official" notice of Böse Strand the Citadel, but Hanover's military buildup at the facility has not gone unnoticed by Atlas Materials. Atlas knows that Hanover intends to expand and consolidate its interests throughout Poseidon before 2102, and its leadership has enacted measures to protect its own holdings. Sharif Abdul-Jamal, an Atlas covert operative, was recently arrested by GEO Patrol officers in Haven. After a quick trial, before the Local Magistrate, was sentenced to a five year prison term for armed robbery and attempted murder. Atlas quietly arranged with the Haven Council - whose authority it was to execute the sentence - to have the agent transferred to Böse Strand.

By holding his own through the brawls and shank-fights that greet every new arrival on Bose Strand, Abdul-Jamal managed to gain respect of Kaiser Hant and was accepted into his gang. He has been observing the activity around the Citadel closely, even capturing audio-visual footage on his sensory recorder. When he has gathered as much information on the facility as he is able, Abdul-Jamal intends to escape to a waiting submarine. If other convicts are especially helpful to the operative, he may be able to find room in the sub for a few more passengers.

PRISONER OF WAR

Bernardo Oliveira has been planning an all-out coordinated strike on Hanover as soon as he can secure enough weapons to arm his guerrillas. A few days ago his most skilled Lieutenant, Mudu Komitai was en route to New Fremantle to meet with a secret supplier. Something went wrong, and now, with startling speed, Komitai has ended up on Böse Strand. Why? More importantly, who was the supplier? Oliveira would pay well, for someone to rescue Komitai - and quickly.

THE ABORIGINES'

A Lavender Organics subsurface research station has been operating off the southern coast of Westcape, deep in the Pacifica Trench. The *Deep End* Bathymetric Station is a unique, fully mobile deep exploration installation - a cross between a seafloor station and a mufti-deck submarine. Well-equipped and computer-integrated, the saucer-like twenty-two-person station travels the abyss on slow, silent MHD motors. Its four research submersibles - *Arville*; *Crispina*, *Norvin II*, and *Lover Boy* - regularly search the trench's depths as part of an ongoing biological survey. The mini-sub's onboard expert systems mimic their namesakes' personalities which are based on the stars of the hit CommCore series *Love That Dolphin*.

LavOrg built *Deep End* three years ago as part of a long-term project to study Poseidon's aborigines. The *Deep End* facility complements related efforts underway near Caernafon (BP 76). To date, the station has explored several hundred kilometers of the trench's length, collecting sparse but compelling data on the enigmatic beings. While the *Deep End* team has made a handful of aborigine sightings and even captured some low-quality holographic footage of the creatures, these encounters pale before their most recent and startling discovery.

At a depth of more than nine kilometers; sonar data identified a large, ovoid object rising from the sediments on the bottom of the trench. Sensor readings revealed that the object - which the *Deep End* team has dubbed "Leviathan" - measured approximately 300 meters along its longest axis, and was at least partially hollow. Its external shell, measuring only a few meters, was extremely thin for the object's size and apparent mass: Ring Larouche, *Deep Ends* chief engineer, argued that the *shell* was impossibly thin, insisting that Leviathan should collapse under its own weight. Other team members quickly pointed out that whoever made Leviathan - for it was clearly an artificial construct - must have been a better engineer than Larouche.

Three days ago; the research team launched a mission to investigate Leviathan. *Deep End* descended to a depth of 3,000 meters; and four crew members - including Larouche - left the station in the mini sub *Lover Boy*. A fiber optics com line running from *Deep End* to the sub allowed the team to stay in radio contact with the station. The team members on *Deep End* tracked *Lover Boy* to a depth of more than 7,000 meters; at which point communications were lost. Diagnostic data indicated that the com-line had been severed. The *Deep End* team continued to track the mini-sub by sonar as it descended past 9,000 meters. Eventually, the mini-sub passed beneath Leviathan's sonar shadow, and the station was unable to monitor its further progress.

Larouche and the other team members left *Lover Boy* in hardsuits to explore the object. They discovered that Leviathan's surface was crystalline in appearance and texture, and further analysis revealed that the structure was a pure, dense, carbon lattice - almost certainly solid diamond. The team continued their exploration, discovering a series of large, irregularly spaced blisters on the structure's surface. As they investigated the nearest, the team was stunned when the blister began to melt away, its surface pulling away from the *touch* of their hard-suited hands. They soon

found themselves within a shallow pocket, which in turn opened into the interior of the structure. As they entered Leviathan, helmet lights illuminating the dark, the shell silently closed again behind them.

The interior of the object was a maze of twisting, water-filled tunnels and honeycombed chambers. The chambers were of different sizes and shapes and housed a variety of indefinable, organic looking crystal structures. Crystalline globes; bulbs, threads, coils, and other, more amorphous structures occupied rooms in the alien warren.

A warning alarm from their sonar units galvanized the team, but the confused echoes left them unprepared for the attack. Aborigines - massive specimens - glided out of the darkness from all directions, and it was soon over. *The* team was captured, rendered into deep comas and carried off into *the* depths of Leviathan.

When three hours passed with no sign of *Lover Boy*, the *Deep End* crew feared the worst. Many members volunteered to take one of the other subs out to search for their comrades; but Sarah O'Leary, the facility captain, ordered the *Deep End* to surface. She wanted to request orders from her supervisors on Dyfedd before risking more lives in the trench. The *Deep End* surfaced at 2648 and using a tight beam transmitter, hailed a LavOrg communications satellite. Unfortunately they had not come to the surface alone.

Deep End's emergency transmission was badly garbled, and what did make it through seemed like nonsense. The transmission ended abruptly, and all efforts to recontact the station failed. Search and rescue teams were immediately dispatched from Dyfedd, and found *Deep End* floating at the surface, adrift in the current. Continued efforts to raise the crew by radio failed. When the rescue teams subsequently boarded the station; they found nothing: No one, not a single person or even body remained. There were no signs of an evacuation or a struggle - nothing. The entire crew had simply vanished:

Since the arrival of humans on Poseidon; the aborigines have been compelled to respond to the increasing threat that the human colonization represents. This effort has often distracted them from other, more ancient duties. The aborigines were left behind on Poseidon to serve as caretakers for the planet and curators for the Creator's terraforming infrastructure. Leviathan is a central component in that infrastructure.

Articulation of the Creators' intentions in human terms is difficult at best, and to understand their technology requires knowledge of the most advanced bio-engineering as well as the soul of an artist. Leviathan is, in its most basic function, a library. The structure is an ancient, active archive of everything the Creators left the aborigines; and all the aborigines have done and learned since their masters departed.

This library however, is not just a store of information. It is a collection of structural, chemical, and procedural templates archived in the form of xenosilicates. These templates serve as the instructions, plans, and blueprints for the maintenance of the Creators' terraforming of Poseidon. The aborigines use the templates to guide their nanite armies in the formation of new species, the seeding of

ecological cycles, the maintenance of chemical balances, and the construction of Creator machines. The aborigines have also begun to store information and templates for what they have learned about humanity, and this is where they have also stored the crew of *Deep End*.

After compromising the nervous systems of the station's crew, the aborigines forced them each into a deep coma. Then, with their consummate chemical control, they constructed xenosilicate templates for each of the crew members, storing structural plans of the crew's DNA, somatic variations, and unique neural pathways in perfect detail. The crew members themselves were later set adrift in the deep, their bodies left to hungry scavengers. However, at any time, and for any reason; the aborigines can access the new templates and construct from nothing but raw organic material, living, breathing replicas, identical in every way to the missing crew.

The existence of Leviathan, and the few other widely scattered facilities like it, is one of the aborigines' most closely guarded secrets: They do not understand humans well enough to risk discovery of the libraries, acting decisively when the *Deep End* crew began to investigate. The aborigines are now aware of the search and rescue teams = swarming around the derelict research vessel floating above; and they will stop at nothing to ensure that Leviathan remains a secret.

MOST WANTED

JOHNNY CECILY

Tour guide, emcee of the nightly Wondrous Westcape dinner show, and narrator of dolphin theater, Johnny plays many roles aboard *Dyfedd*, not to mention both genders. In male garb he is Johnny Cecily; dressed as a female, she becomes Cecily John. As a hermaphrodite, he/she maintains both men's and women's wardrobes, each in loud taste but impeccably tailored to Johnny's tall, trim form. The artist changes his hair and skin color as often as he changes lovers, and he voices constant satisfaction at overcoming his puritanical religious upbringing in Toronto.

Johnny talks a kilometer a minute, knows everything on the day's tour schedule, and offers forceful recommendations about each item. He knows absolutely everyone who is anyone in *Dyfedd*, including every notable celebrity and incorporate executive, and he tells the darkest gossip about them all to anyone who will listen. He seeks praise from the wealthy and succumbs to crushing despair if they slight him. He effusively praises people he likes, frostily passes those he does not, and confides fasci-



nated curiosity about those he would like to know but to whom he has not yet been properly introduced. He throws himself at many attractive new arrivals, gets his heart broken weekly, yet resolves to pull himself together and push onward, and generally lives every minute with utter and complete passion.

Species: Human, Modified

Profile:

Origin - Urban Background – Religious

Education - Undergraduate

Goal - Fame/Love

Motivation - Discontent

Attitude - Energetic

Profession: Artist

Mental Attributes: Awareness 34, Charisma 72, Education 30, Experience 30, Initiative 38, Intellect 46, Will 60.

Physical Attributes: Agility 33, Appearance 82, Constitution 41, Dexterity 35, Endurance 40, Speed 37, Strength 30.

Modification: Body Sculpting

Primary Skills: Acting 70, Colonial Culture 40, Computer Operation 20, Driving 20, Fast Talk 40, Negotiation 20, Persuasion 20, Street Culture 20.

BERNARDO OLIVEIRA

Leader of a growing guerrilla force and emerging symbol of native resistance to Hanover's landgrab, Oliveira has been Perdition's headman for eight years. He inherited the position when his father was killed by needle shell poisoning, and proved his merit despite his young age. Now forty-five, with his thick, black hair graying, Oliveira is tall, heavy-set, and seemingly overweight - but that bulging belly is all muscle. When he speaks to his people, his usual slow, cool manner is magnetic - he possesses tremendous charisma. Now he makes his speeches in secret, for he has gone into hiding since the war turned bloody.

Oliveira's passionate commitment to the struggle against Hanover springs from his belief in the sanctity of the land and of the rights natives have to work it in peace. In service to this just cause, the guerrilla leader has secretly initiated contacts with some unjust customers: the Gorchoff Family crime syndicate in Dyfedd. After having made his initial "purchase" with what little scrip he could gather, Oliveira has begun trading them water opals for weapons. He has also used the stones to recruit an unsuspected spy within the Hanover Security Service.

No one but Oliveira knows of his one weakness: his love for Perdition teacher Orisi Qalomaiwasa, his nominal replacement as leader. If anything threatened her, he fears he would risk everything to save her - even victory against

Species: Human, Aquaform (Squid)

Profile:

Origin - Native Background – Rural

Education - Secondary School

Goal - Justice

Motivation - Compassion/Loyalty

Attitude – Confident

Profession: Elder/Warrior

Mental Attributes: Awareness 70, Charisma 92, Education 50, Experience 55, Initiative 71, Intellect 50, Will 83.

Physical Attributes: Agility 62, Appearance 40, Constitution 70, Dexterity 40, Endurance 70, Speed 44, Strength 70.

Primary Skills: Athletics 40, Aquatics 40, Archery 60, Botany 40, Brawling 50, Bribery 20, Demolitions 20, Electronics Operation 20, First Aid 20, Handguns 20, History 40, Incorporate Culture 20, Leadership 70, Meteorology 40, Martial Arts 40, Native Culture 80, Negotiation 40, Oration 40, Persuasion 40, Physical Training 20, Psychology 20, Sailing 40, Stealth 60, Strategy 60, Tactics 40, Zoology 40.

PHILIP JAMHURI

Jamhuri, the supervisor at Bose Strand, is forty-four, tall, strongly built, but overweight and balding. Given that he could easily re-sculpt himself with a two-week trip to Dyfedd, Jamhuri's resolute, bulge-eyed ugliness inspires disquiet and respect. Always dressed in his khaki Hanover uniform, the African soldier displays characteristics common to successful prison wardens - authoritarian ideas, relentless discipline, courage, and a few less common traits - greed, arrogance, and sadistic cruelty.

Jamhuri likes to say he was born on a battlefield. This is true, though the battlefield surrounded Kariakoo Hospital in Dar es Salaam, capital of Tanzania. Jamhuri lived amid civil wars, anti-Incorporate insurrections, and food riots every day of his life. He became a Tanzanian guerrilla at age twelve then joined the GEO Peacekeepers. Early on, Jamhuri conceived unfocused but lifelong twin desires: success first, then revenge against those he considered responsible for his hardships.

Known for his savvy, feared for his ruthlessness, Jamhuri left the GEO and landed a top job: company commander - or rather, Senior Detachment Overseer - for MacLeod Enforcement in Mombasa. After company expert systems taught him English and Spanish, he became warden at MacLeod's new high-security penitentiary outside Dodoma, Tanzania.

Maintenance and supply personnel who serviced Dodoma soon reported horrific abuses of inmates, prompting the GEO's Justice Commission to order an investigation. The day before the prison examiners were to arrive, MacLeod management shut down the prison, distributed the inmates to other facilities across Africa, and terminated Jamhuri's contract. Jamhuri found his way to Europe and signed up with the Hanover Security Service. In 2198, he was transferred to Poseidon where he became the warden of Bose Strand.

Jamhuri has a simple practical plan to redeem his past failures: get rich. By padding the prison's expense reports and withholding funds for supplies, he can funnel a percentage of its annual budget to his private account. Eventually, when he resigns his post, he will travel to the First Colonial Bank in Cliffside and withdraw a respectable fortune in a variety of Incorporated scrip. In the meantime, Jamhuri openly seethes at his insulting assignment to Poseidon, which he refers to as a "backwater swamp."

Jamhuri is not actually in charge of the growing military force at the Citadel, but he does have a small office staff and a detachment of guards with which he runs the prison. Though he lives and works mostly in the Citadel, Jamhuri occasionally leaves the facility on what he officially calls "inspection tours." These excursions are actually little more than violent shakedowns during which the warden confiscates drugs for his own use, and forces his unwanted attentions on female inmates.

Species: Human, Modified

Profile:

Origin - Earth (Free Zone - Wasteland)

Background - Dangerous

Education - Military Training

Goal - Power/Wealth

Motivation - Hatred

Attitude - Arrogant/Disciplined

Profession: Administrator

Mental Attributes: Awareness 40, Charisma 10, Education 10, Experience 40, Initiative 63, Intellect 50, Will 82

Physical Attributes: Agility 30, Appearance 21, Constitution 74, Dexterity 40, Endurance 87, Speed 50, Strength 70

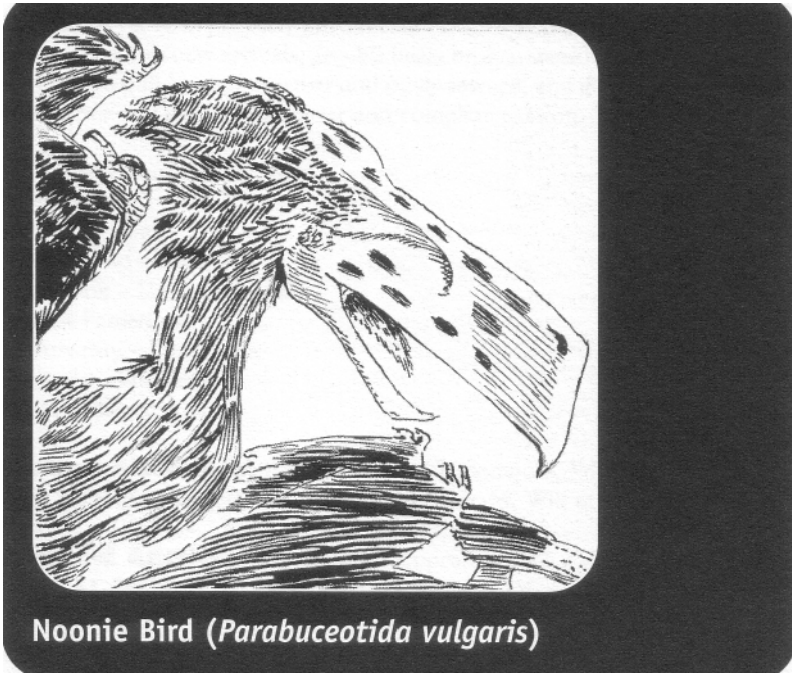
Modifications: Neural Jack, Implanted Translator, Night Vision

Primary Skills: Bureaucracy 60, Colonial Culture 40, Computer Operation 40, Fast Talk 40, First Aid 50, Foraging 50, Forgery 60, Gunnery 60, Handguns 60, Incorporated Culture 40, Leadership 70, Longarms 40, Management 60, Military Hand-to-Hand 60, Persuasion 60, Stealth 40



Global Ecology Organization SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Poseidon Biological Survey #POS-103 Resource and Hazardous Species of Poseidon



Range Westcape and environs Habitat Coastal margins, mountains Length 0.5 meters Weight 2 to 3 kilograms Frequency Common Resource Value Medium Threat Level Minimal Movement Air-15/25, Land-1/2 Awareness 60 Initiative 50 Intellect 30/3 Agility 60 Constitution 30/3 Endurance 25/3 Strength 25/3 Rounds 2 Attack Beak - 25 Damage Ranks 0/25 1/75 2/100 Damage Scale -2 Armor None

Though Westcape natives know these noisy creatures as chatterbirds, GEO scientists named them "Nooniebirds" for their gift of mimicry, reminiscent of early 22nd century comedian Noonie Flack. Resembling hornbills in form and size, nooniebirds have a hooked beak, striped casque, and rudimentary claws on their wing joints.

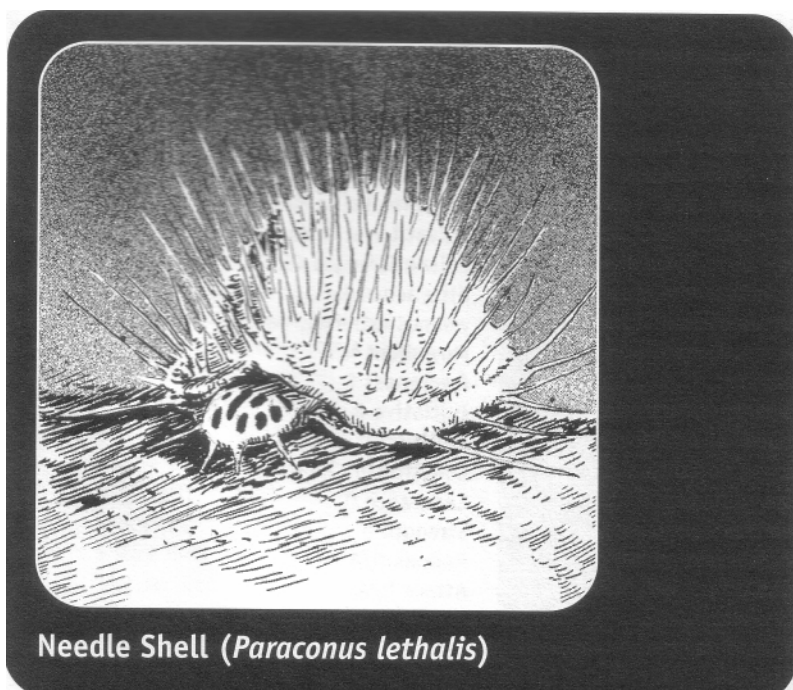
Behavior Nooniebirds nest on Westcape and the surrounding islands in large colonies of 500 to 750 birds, usually in caverns or on limestone cliffs. Clinging to the rock with wing-claws and talons, they build huge communal nests of grass and clay. The nests, which hold a dozen families, are so large that a human can climb inside, and during severe storms natives have even been known to take shelter within them. Nooniebirds have a magpie-like compulsion to steal bright, glittering objects for their nests. Westcape natives often forage through the nests looking for gems, shells, stolen tools, and similar paraphernalia.

ACCES DENIED

Nooniebird meat is stringy and almost inedible to humans, but their foul-smelling black plumage exudes oil that makes a useful lubricant. In recent weeks the birds have also served as a crude sort of intelligence-gathering service for the native resistance. Nooniebirds can imitate a wide range of calls and voices, presumably to scare predators. Though not notably intelligent, the specie's can parrot an entire spoken sentence after hearing it only once. Nest communities often repeat overheard phrases for days, and though the content is often of little value as intelligence, the species' strange behavior has been known to provide the natives with empirical information about Hanover troop movements.



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Range Skyscraper Reefs, Westcape
 Habitat Shallow reefs
 Length 10 to 20 centimeters
 Weight 250 to 400 grams
 Frequency Uncommon
 Resource Value Medium
 Threat Level Medium, poison can be lethal
 Poison Level 40, paralyzes respiratory system
 Movement N/A
 Awareness 0 Initiative 50/2 Intellect 0 Agility 0
 Constitution 90/4 Endurance 0 Strength 0 Rounds
 N/A Attack Sting-45, 3 per round

Damage Ranks 1/5 2/10 3/20 4/30 5/50 6/ 75
 7/100
 Damage Scale 1
 Armor 1/3

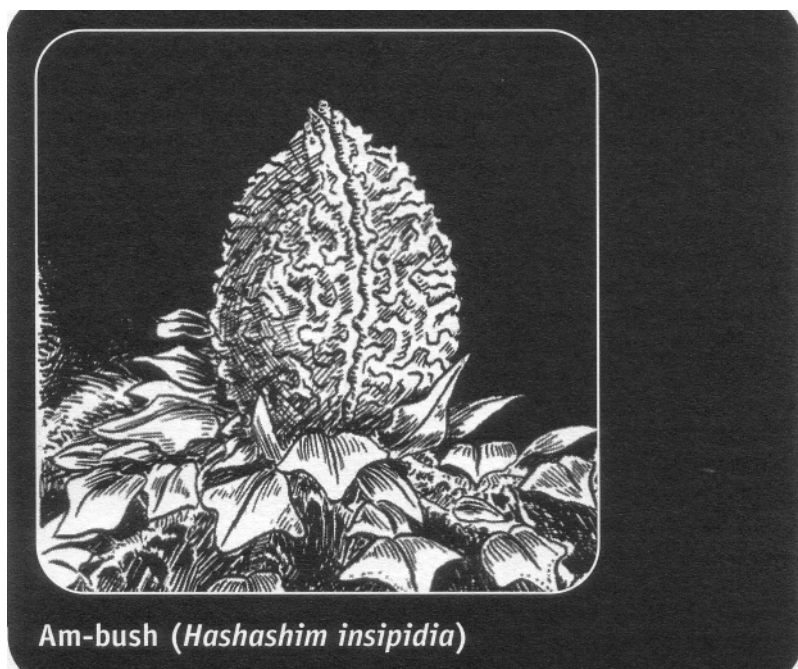
An analog for the *Conus* cone shell of Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the needle shell is a mollusk analog native to the Skyscraper Reefs off southwest Westcape. The brightly-colored hemispherical shell is spiked with dozens of points radiating in all directions.

Behavior Each point of a needle shell can eject a barbed dart that contains a potent venom. The dart's maximum range is about twenty centimeters. A single sting is agonizing to a human and several stings can paralyze the autonomic nervous system, causing respiratory arrest and often death.

Young natives harvest needle shells and dilute their venom for use in stunning fish or dangerous predators. The harvest also serves as a display of bravery as one or two youths die each year from the stings. GEO medical kits contain an all-purpose antidote effective against needle venom, but this antidote is scarce in Westcape.



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Range Westcape and surrounding islands.
 Habitat Rocky shore lines.
 Length 12 centimeter diameter seed pods, 1015 meter runners.
 Weight 0.5 kilograms Frequency Uncommon
 Resource Value Medium Threat Level Medium
 Poison Strength 45. Though seed penetration does little **actual damage the seed toxins make the tiny wounds extremely painful.**
 Movement N/A
 Awareness 0
 Initiative 0 Agility 0
 Constitution 80/4
 Endurance 0
 Strength 0 Rounds
 N/A Attack N/A
 Damage Ranks N/A
 Damage Scale -4
 Armor None

The am-bush, or assassin plant, grows most commonly around tide pools, but it's range is apparently Limited to Westcape and the surrounding islands. The plant grows directly on coastal rocks, just above the high-tide line. The assassin plant's base consists of 8-10 runners. These green, leafy extensions send rootlets into the rock beneath the plant to keep it firmly attached, even in the most severe storms. Runners commonly extend for ten or fifteen centimeters out from the main body of the plant. The plant's seeds are housed inside a bright red, central pod that is generally six centimeters in circumference with a gnarled surface texture.

Behavior The assassin plant is unique for its complex use of the ions dissolved in seawater. Potassium, chlorine, and oxygen are absorbed from the water and the plant then uses a suite of mixed-function oxidizing enzymes to create crystals of potassium perchlorate. The crystals are deposited in thousands of tiny chambers inside the central seed pod. An elaborate countercurrent exchanger then preferentially extracts copper ions from the surrounding water and concentrates them inside the seed pod chambers. The resultant exchange reaction produces copper perchlorate, a highly unstable explosive.

When the seeds within the pod reach maturity, enzymes are produced that can trigger an ignition reaction. When an animal strays too close to the mature plant, the seed pods explode with remarkable force, driving the plant's tiny needle-like seeds into the unfortunate animal's flesh. Though the exact mechanism that allows the plant to time its explosion is unknown, the mechanism is thought to assist seed dispersal and germination. Toxins in the seeds slowly kill all but the largest host animals, allowing them to be carried away from the parent plant while also providing the seeds with a ready made source of fertilizer. The assassin plant is sometimes harvested by natives. The perchlorate inside the seed pod can be used in small quantities to start cooking fires, and is also used in vermin traps. Additionally, when dried, the pod makes a beautiful pendant used in native jewelry. Recently, there have been some reports of natives cultivating assassin plants for use as terror weapons or "all-natural hand grenades." These reports have been Largely discounted.



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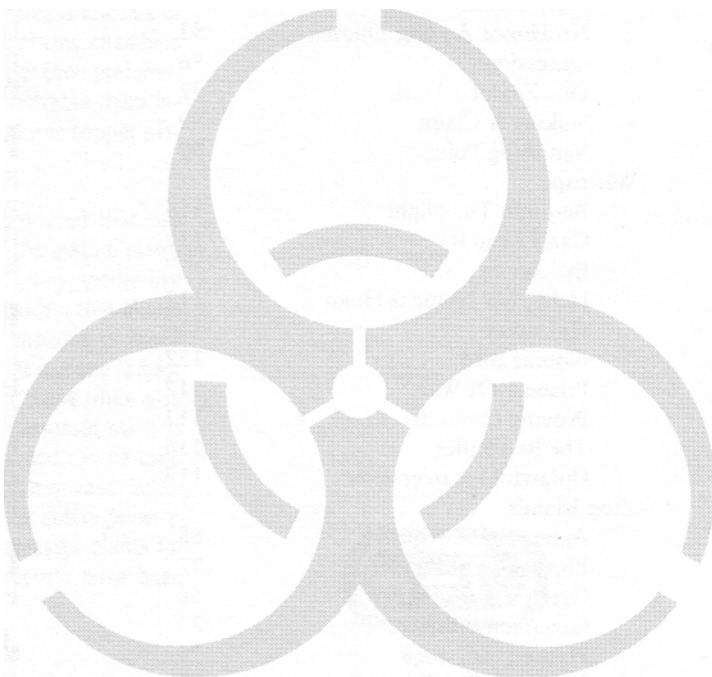
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