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BUCK ROGERS®

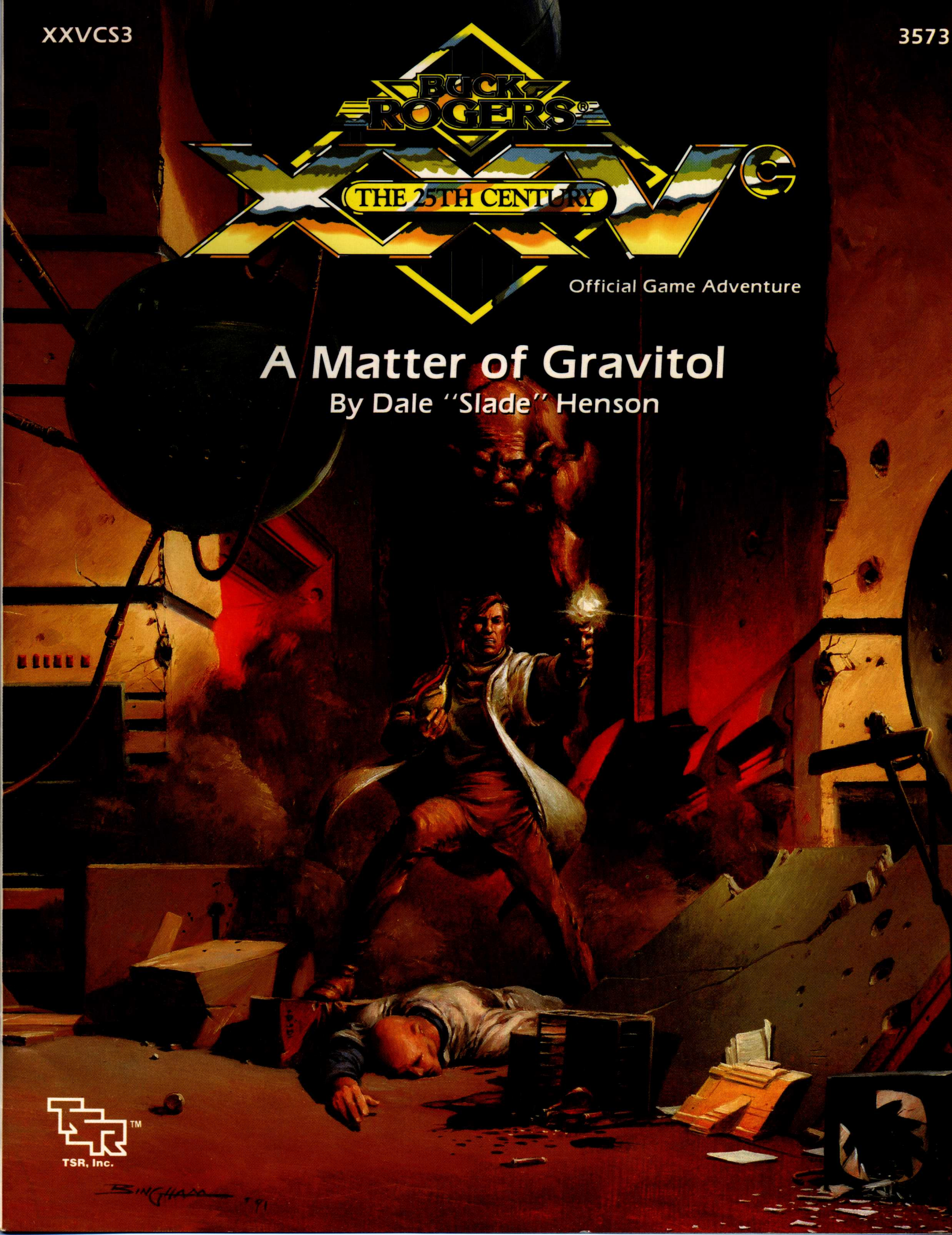
XXVC

THE 25TH CENTURY

Official Game Adventure

A Matter of Gravitol

By Dale "Slade" Henson



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Each of the following ship combat scenarios tells the players how many ships they get and where these can be placed.

Movement is the first action that the players perform. The ships with the smallest movement rates move first, while those with the highest movement rates move last. This means that all ships with a movement rate of 1 move first no matter what side they are on. Then the players move the ships with movements of 2, then 3, etc.

Once all movement is finished, the ships perform combat. During combat, the ships with the highest movement rate fire first, while the ships with the lowest movement rate fire last. Ships with the same movement rate fire simultaneously. If a fast ship successfully destroys the last weapons on the slower ship, this ship loses its ability to fire.

Movement and combat continue until one side concedes or is destroyed. If the referee wishes, he may use these scenarios as a way to determine how the off-scene combat scenarios occur in his XXVc™ game universe. This gives the RAM fleet a chance to destroy the Venusian fleet at the end of the adventure, instead of the other way around. This can create a bleak scene for the Venusians as RAM moves in to take over.

Scenario One

The characters are sent in their *C-17 Shroud* to capture the *RMS Mediabloc XIX*. At the start of the scenario, this ship is 15 hexes away from the character's ship and moving away at a speed of 1. When the characters attack, the *Mediabloc* attacks as well. Once the RAM ship learns that it has a problem targeting the characters' ship, because of the *Shroud*'s muting systems, it turns tail, running at full speed. It points its back-facing weapons, the missile mounts and one pumped laser, toward the characters' ship. The RAM ship fires at the characters with a -4 attack roll penalty.

This RAM ship surrenders if the characters knock one system down, or if they cause 50% damage to the Sensors/Commo or the Life Support. Otherwise, it continues to run away at top speed. Once this ship is out of firing range, the scenario is over.

C-17 Shroud: Hit Points—Hull 800, Sensors/Commo 400, Controls 200, Life Support 400, Fuel 600, Engine 600; AC 4; THAC0 corresponds to the characters' THAC0; Weapons—5 Beamed Lasers, 5 Pumped Lasers, 5 Missile Mount; Crew 60; Speed 2; Reaction Bonus +0; AC Defense Bonus +1, -3 when muted.

RMS Mediabloc XIX: Hit Points—Hull 400, Sensors/Commo 200, Controls 100, Life Support 200, Fuel 300, Engine 300; AC 6; THAC0 18; Weapons—2 Beamed Lasers, 2 Pumped Lasers, 1 Missile Mount; Crew 30; Speed 3; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +1.

Scenario Two

This scenario shows the damage caused by the RAM fleet when it invaded the orbital space of Venus. The RAM fleet came with six battlers, eight tankers, six fighter carriers, and 360 fighters. The Venusians had only seven battlers in their orbital space at the time. It is suggested that the fighters be clumped into squadrons to ease handling. Allow the players to determine how many fighters are in a squadron. Then, add up their total hit points and the total damage that these squadrons cause, and use those numbers, instead of keeping track of 360 fighters' hit points and attack strength.

The star grid map from the boxed set should be used. Set the map so that the XXVc logo is on top. The Venusian players can set their ships anywhere between the first and second folds from the bottom. Once the Venusians are set up, RAM sets up its ships anywhere between the second and the third folds from the bottom of the map.

RAM Battlers (6): Hit Points—Hull 20,000, Sensors/Commo 5,000, Controls 5,000, Life Support 10,000, Fuel 15,000, Engine 15,000; AC 0; THAC0 15; Weapons—100 Pumped Lasers, 50 Heavy Missile Mounts, 50 Gyrocannons, 20 Missile Mounts, 20 K-Cannons; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +2; AC Defense Bonus +5.

RAM Tankers (8): Hit Points—Hull 4,000, Sensors/Commo 2,000, Controls 1,000, Life Support 2,000, Fuel 75,000, Engine 3,000; AC 6; THAC0 17; Weapons—20 Beamed Lasers; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

RAM Fighter Carriers (6): Hit Points—Hull 22,000, Sensors/Commo 5,500, Controls 5,500, Life Support 11,000, Fuel 8,500, Engine 8,500; AC 8; THAC0 18; Weapons—30 Pumped Lasers; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

Matter of Gravitol

Contents

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Introduction

Matter of Gravitol is an adventure module designed for the XXVc™ role-playing game. Before playing this module, the referee and the players all should become familiar with the XXVc game rules.

This module is specifically designed for the game referee's eyes only. If you intend to run a player character in this adventure, you should not read any further!

Usually the mystery and suspense that adventures like these require are completely lost if the players gain the information before the start of the game. In fact, there is a great chance that it may spoil the play for everyone.

After this adventure is played, there is nothing wrong with the players purchasing it to complete their role-playing game library. There are several new gadgets and ships included in the reference sections in the back of the book that they may find useful.

This adventure also gives rules for using the star field poster map in the boxed set to play out ship-to-ship combat scenarios.

The Player Characters

This adventure works best if at least one character is present from three or four of the main careers. Each one has a different skill that can increase the party's chance of success. These careers are the Rocket Jock, Warrior, Scout, and the Medic. A Rogue and an Engineer can be of great help as well.

Career levels of 6th through 8th are suggested, but characters of greater skill than this should suffer no penalty for their higher advancement. Characters of less than 6th level might find this adventure somewhat lethal, so the referee may want to adjust the levels of the opponents.

If most of the player characters are higher than 8th level, the referee may find that the risk level of the adventure needs to be raised. Do this by increasing the levels of the opponents or by upgrading their equipment and weapons.

Feel free to tailor this adventure to the capabilities of your player characters. Balance the RAM opposition with their levels of advancement if you can, but remember that the opponents should sometimes be stronger than the characters; the true test of merit is the ability to better an enemy who is stronger, smarter, more technologically advanced, or genetically superior.

The reward that the referee receives is the return of the players. This is one of the more gratifying aspects of any role-playing campaign game. The reward the players get is the satisfaction of outsmarting their opposition once again.

Starting Out

The characters can begin this module anywhere in the inner or outer solar system, but this adventure officially starts when the characters enter the Salvation III space station. This is when the leadership of NEO learns about the destruction of their base in the Sargasso, which is a rogue set of asteroids that orbits the sun in a quasi-cometary orbit. This Sargasso is introduced in XXVCS2, *Sargasso of Space*. The NEO leaders call the characters to Salvation III to brief them on the recent happenings.

Salvation III is fully documented in XXVCR2, the *Earth in the 25th Century* ac-

cessory. It is not necessary to have a copy of XXVXR2 to run this adventure. If the characters are at the Sargasso introduced in the *Sargasso of Space* adventure, they should be sent on a small search-and-destroy mission to save their necks when the RAM battle fleet approaches the asteroid cluster.

A Matter of Gravitol climaxes in the Venusian Lowlands and in Venusian orbital space, while the closing remarks occur where the adventure begins: Salvation III.

Salvation III is home to the largest mechanical trash dump in all the inner system, with only the asteroid belt and the trojan points of Jupiter (both being in the outer system) containing more junk. The inner system is all the planets within the orbits of the asteroids. Set in the fifth Lagrangian point of Earth, this space station orbits Earth, silently following the moon in its month-long journey.

This station possesses a weak gravitational force, so her inhabitants walk with magnetic soled boots to keep their balance and footing. This old, squeaky space station is the off-planet hideout for the New Earth Organization.

This space-island is owned and operated by a man named Carlton Turabian. This man has dedicated his whole space station to NEO and its cause. When he was first approached by NEO, he imposed the condition that NEO must remain as covert as possible, and all transmissions must be coded or completely masked. Turabian does not wish to lose his station (which he inherited from his father) to the wiles and whims of RAM. Thus far, NEO has cooperated with this single demand.

Trojan point: In a multi-body system, any point at which gravitational forces cancel to zero. Trojan points tend to accumulate "space garbage."

Background

Gravitol is a wonder drug that keeps the body from deteriorating while outside the gravitational pull of planetary bodies. It has always been produced only in the Venusian Lowlands. Its rare chemical nature and expensive processing have made it impossible to produce anywhere else in the solar system, until now. Please see the *Gravitol* section in the reference chapter of this book for more information relating to gravitol and gravitol V12 and their effects upon humans and gennies.

The Ishtar Confederation has created a synthetic gravitol that can be produced anywhere in the solar system with at least a 0.3 gravitational field. The technique is tricky, but the gravitol created is nearly half the standard price. The Ishtarians have the formula, or at least an Ishtarian scientist named Alexis Hansen has it, and they do not wish to publish it for system-wide production until all testing has been conducted. Currently, the only people tested have been Ishtarians. Ishtar has kept the formula secret, and they trademarked the name of this new substance as well. They call it gravitol V12.

RAM has placed an incredibly high bid for the rights to produce this drug on their planet. The Ishtar Confederation, up to now, has refused to allow RAM to acquire the formula. RAM's corporate spies have met with repeated failure as well.

Irked by Ishtar's refusal to sell the formula, RAM has sent their best man, a modified terrine named Marcus Wolfe, currently the Director of Corporate Security, to capture the formula at any expense. Marcus Wolfe is a homicidal individual, and if that is not bad enough, he has all the machinery and personnel he desires at his fingertips.

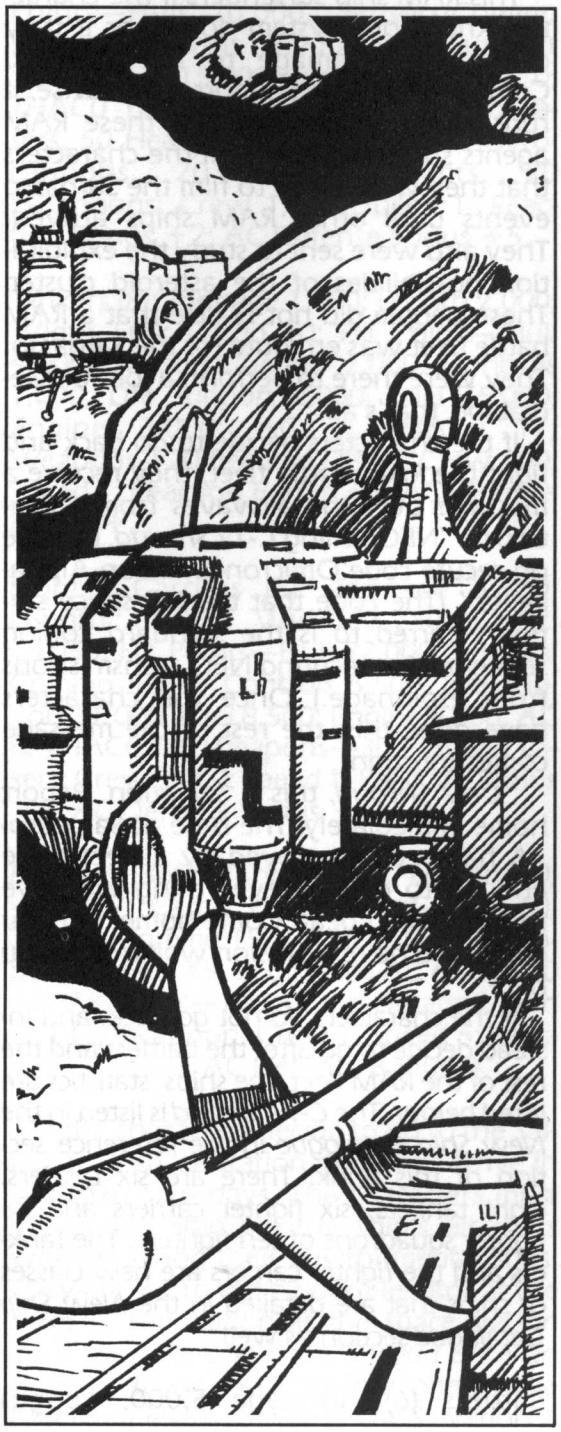
Several years before this adventure takes place, a group of RAM Talon gennies was sent on a mission to retrieve a valuable NEO prototype ship called the *C-17 Shroud*. These Talons, once they achieved their objective, never returned to Mars. Instead, they began a life of privateering. They discovered a cluster of asteroids in a cometary orbit and made that their pirate base. They planned to terrorize the space lines in the inner system until they stole what they felt was enough to warrant a retirement.

Subsequently, these ex-RAM Talon gennies were either destroyed or escaped unnoticed when NEO found that their prototype stealth ship was stolen and taken to the Sargasso. Soon after this short battle, NEO set up their own base of operations there.

Back on Mars, Marcus ordered a fleet of six battlers, eight tankers, six fighter carriers and a total of 36 fighter squadrons of ten fighters each to the newly discovered Sargasso when he found that it was soon to reach its closest approach to Venus. Knowing the asteroids would serve very well as cover, he sent this massive battle fleet there to hide until it could strike with deadly force.

When his battle fleet reached the Sargasso, he discovered a small NEO outpost in operation. The base was not prepared for such an overwhelming attack, so the RAM battle fleet completely obliterated every environmental unit, every person, and every ship that was present. Those who managed to escape were hunted down ruthlessly by the RAM fighter squadrons and subsequently annihilated. They then moved on to Venus and destroyed most of the Venusian fleet in a daring raid.

The Adventure



The Beginning

If the characters are not at the NEO outpost in the rogue asteroid collection known as the Sargasso, introduced in *Sargasso of Space*, they are called to Salvation III for a briefing. If they are at the Sargasso, they are called to the command environmental bubble. Here the commander instructs the characters to capture a small spy vehicle that is currently six hours flight away from the asteroids. The characters are instructed to use the *C-17 Shroud*.

"If these spies want to see this thing up close, let them!" the commander tells the PCs. After stroking his chin briefly to calm down, he continues. "We want these privateers be taken alive, if possible, instead of wasting them into space dust. We can't find out who employed them, if anyone, should they die. Generally, a privateer who is under hire will not risk his own life. Good luck." The commander sends the characters on their way as he returns to his pile of paperwork.

As the characters board the ship, they are given flight instructions. The Rocket Jock character must roll an average *Pilot Rocket* skill check in order to pass safely from the Sargasso into the depths of space. Once the characters are free, they see a blip on their scanners—this is the ship they seek. It is currently stationary and expending a great deal of energy. An Engineer player character can determine that the ship is scanning and using a lot of energy beaming digitized information to communication satellites throughout the system. The contents of these messages are coded and unknown.

Several hours pass before the *C-17*

Shroud nears the spy ship. At that point, the characters hear screams of pain and shrieks of terror coming over the airwaves.

"Help! This is NEO outpost Sargasso-1A calling a general ... static ... aydayl We are being attack ... static ... by a hu ... static ... fleet of RAM Battle ... static ... We nee ... static ... tance ... static ... ri ... static."

The message dies down as quickly as it arose. Over one hundred people were stationed there. As the characters decide what to do next, they see the spy ship veer off and head for deeper space.

RMS Mediabloc XIX: Tonnage 100; Length 200; Width 50; Cargo 50; Hit Points—Hull 400, Sensors/Commo 200, Controls 100, Life Support 200, Fuel 300, Engine 300; AC 6; THAC0 16; Weapons—2 Beamed Lasers, 2 Pumped Lasers, 1 Missile Mount; Crew 30; Speed 3; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +1.

This ship moves away from the Sargasso at a speed of 1. Its destination is Deimos, the outermost moon of Mars. If the characters come after this ship at top speed, they catch up within one hour. Thereafter they are within range of their weapons.

If the characters attack, the *RMS Mediabloc XIX* defends itself. Once the RAM ship realizes that it has trouble targeting the characters' ship, it turns tail, running at full speed. It points its back-facing weapons, the missile mounts and one pumped laser, toward the characters' ship. If the characters fire, the RAM ship fires at that location with a -4 attack roll penalty. Other than watching for laser and missile fire, the *RMS Mediabloc XIX* does not know where the characters' ship is. This spacecraft does not have the sophisticated computerized targeting systems required to triangulate on the characters' ship.

This RAM ship surrenders if the characters knock one system down, or if they cause 50% damage to the Sensors/Commo or the Life Support. Otherwise, it runs away at top speed. If these RAM agents surrender, they tell the characters that they were there to film the Sargasso events until other RAM ships arrived. They also were sent to study the exploitation possibilities of the asteroid cluster. These people did not realize that a RAM battle fleet was en route for the Sargasso. They were there to perform a job for Mediabloc, that's all.

If the characters decide to go back and fight the RAM battle fleet, they receive a message over the airwaves from Salvation III. "NEO calling *C-17 Shroud*. Receive on secure code Omicron-Omicron-Alpha-Delta." (The code that the L-5 space station referred to is the standard coding sequence for securing NEO transmissions from espionage.) Once the characters have done this, the rest of the message comes through.

"*C-17 Shroud*, this is Salvation. Report home immediately. The base at Sargasso-1A has been destroyed by a fleet large enough to destroy everything we have thrice over. Repeat. Come home. Do you copy? You have a mission waiting for you here."

If the characters do not go back, and instead decide to go after the battlers and the rest of the RAM fleet, the ships' statistics are listed below. The *C-17 Shroud* is listed in the *New Ship Catalogue* in the reference section of this book. There are six battlers, eight tankers, six fighter carriers and 36 fighter squadrons of ten fighters. The tankers and the fighter carriers are new classes of ships that are detailed in the *New Ship Catalogue* section as well.

Battlers (6): Tonnage 5,000; Length

10,000; Width 2,500; Cargo 2,500; Hit Points—Hull 20,000, Sensors/Commo 5,000, Controls 5,000, Life Support 10,000, Fuel 15,000, Engine 15,000; AC 0; THAC0 15; Weapons—100 Pumped Lasers, 50 Heavy Missile Mounts, 50 Gyrocannons, 20 Missile Mounts, 20 K-Cannons; Crew 1,700; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +2; AC Defense Bonus +5.

Tankers (8): Tonnage 1,000; Length 2,000; Width 500; Cargo 10; Hit Points—Hull 4,000, Sensors/Commo 2,000, Controls 1,000, Life Support 2,000, Fuel 75,000, Engine 3,000; AC 6; THAC0 17; Weapons—20 Beamed Lasers; Crew 100; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

Fighter Carriers (6): Tonnage 5,500; Length 11,000; Width 2,750; Cargo 18,050; Hit Points—Hull 22,000, Sensors/Commo 5,500, Controls 5,500, Life Support 11,000, Fuel 8,500, Engine 8,500; AC 8; THAC0 18; Weapons—30 Pumped Lasers; Crew 3,000; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

Fighters (360): Tonnage 15; Length 30; Width 7; Cargo 7; Hit Points—Hull 60, Sensors/Commo 15, Controls 15, Life Support 30, Fuel 45, Engine 45; AC 6; THAC0 13; Weapons—1 Light Acceleration Gun or 1 Gyrocannon; Crew 1; Speed 5; Reaction Bonus -2; AC Defense Bonus -4.

If the characters decide to go to the Salvation III space station, they can arrive in less than two days. The characters must depart the ship via the ship's air locks while wearing their environmental suits. They are led to the airlock/elevator at the front of the station as the space station dock workers place the *Shroud* onto an elevator to be lowered into one of the basement levels to hide it. The Salvation III space station is described in full detail in the *Earth in the 25th Century* accessory.

Once the air lock is entered, the double doors close and the sound of rushing air can be heard. Once the characters and their escort are in their clothes, the NEO officer pushes a button and a red light shines in the small room.

While in this light, everyone feels a slight tingling pass slowly from head to toe. After a minute, the white lights come back on and a small sign above another set of double doors lights up, saying "Bacterio-Viral Eradication Complete." This door opens, revealing a long, narrow corridor that curves slightly. Across the hallway, another door stands closed. Their escort takes them to this room and passes a security card over a dark panel. The door silently opens. Seated at a long mahogany table are three gentlemen.

"Welcome. Please have a seat and we shall get right to business." A man the characters recognize as Beowulf is anxious to begin the conference with the characters. Seated with him are Salvation III's commander, Carlton Turabian, and NEO Flight Leader Boyington. (Beowulf and Carlton Turabian are detailed in the NPC Roster in the reference chapter of this book.)

Beowulf pushes a button on a tri-dee monitor, and a three-dimensional computerized simulation of Venus and the Sargasso appears above the table. The simulation shows the Venusian orbit and the cometary orbit of the Sargasso. The picture details a simulation of their orbits until the orbital perihelion is achieved, then it repeats.

"Gravitol is a drug that keeps the body from deteriorating while in the confines of zero gravity. Its production is only possible in the acidic plains of the Venusian Lowlands. Its rare chemical nature and processing make it impossible to produce

elsewhere in the solar system. So we thought.

"The Ishtar Confederation of Venus, however, has created a synthetic gravitol that can be manufactured virtually anywhere in the solar system, for half the usual cost. An Ishtarian chemical scientist named Alexis Hansen currently has the formula; the Ishtarians refuse to publish it for system-wide production until they are satisfied with their battery of tests.

"Currently, the only people tested are Ishtarians. Ishtar has kept the formula secret, and they call the new substance gravitol V12.

"RAM placed an incredibly high bid for the rights to produce this drug on Mars, but Ishtar refuses to allow RAM to acquire the formula. Undoubtedly RAM's corporate spies have failed as well.

"RAM, being what it is, has sent its best man, a Terrine you have previously met, Marcus Wolfe, to capture the formula at any expense. Marcus ordered a fleet of battlers, tankers, fighter carriers, and fighter squadrons to this newly discovered Sargasso when he found that it was quickly approaching Venus.

"When this homicidal madman went to the Sargasso, he discovered our base operating there. The installation was not prepared for RAM encroachment, so the battle fleet completely obliterated every environmental unit, every person and ship present. He even ordered his fastest ships to chase down those who tried to escape or surrender. Every one of the 100 persons stationed there died."

Beowulf shakes his head sadly and continues. "The story doesn't end here, though. As the Sargasso approached its perihelion, the RAM battle fleet left and went into Venusian orbital space. Their surprise attack disabled or destroyed over 75 Venusian ships. No RAM losses were reported.

"All other ships in the area were told to land on Venus immediately or face destruction. RAM now has a complete blockade around Venus, disabling the Venusians' ability to sell gravitol to the rest of the system. We can't get any; nor can the Asteroids or Mercury. In fact, all trade and contact with Venus has been severed, with the exception of sporadic radio and tri-dee communications."

Beowulf turns the holographic simulation off and settles himself into a comfortable chair. Leaning back in his chair, he looks at Boyington.

Boyington looks at the characters and addresses them. "RAM hasn't stopped there. Currently, they are actively seeking the scientist and the microdisc that contains the gravitol V12 formula. If RAM finds it, it never again has to purchase anything from Venus, which effectively puts Venus out of business. Venus knows this, but it does not have a way to get the scientist past the RAM blockade.

"Venus lacks the technology to mask a ship from sensors. They tried a few test runs with their fastest ships, but RAM blew them apart before they reached even a suborbital position. That's where you and the prototype *C-17 Shroud* come in. We would like you to sail through the blockade to Ishtar where you can pick up this scientist and bring her back here. Any questions?"

The two NEO officials and the NEO captain answer any questions that the characters have regarding their mission or the capabilities of the *C-17 Shroud*, especially the fact that changing speed or direction or firing weapons warps the muting shield of the ship slightly, making it detectable by scanner and visible spectrum sight. They keep nothing they know from the characters.

Referee's Note: Turabian, Beowulf, and Boyington do not realize that

there are problems with gravitol V12, so they do not relay this information to the characters until the end of the adventure.

The characters' ship is given a complete tune-up, systems check, and cleaning. The fuel cells are filled to capacity as well. When the characters are ready to leave for Venus, Salvation III's dock workers bring the *Shroud* up from the lower basements to the dock level for immediate departure. As the characters ready to leave the security of the station's air locks, a woman runs to them.

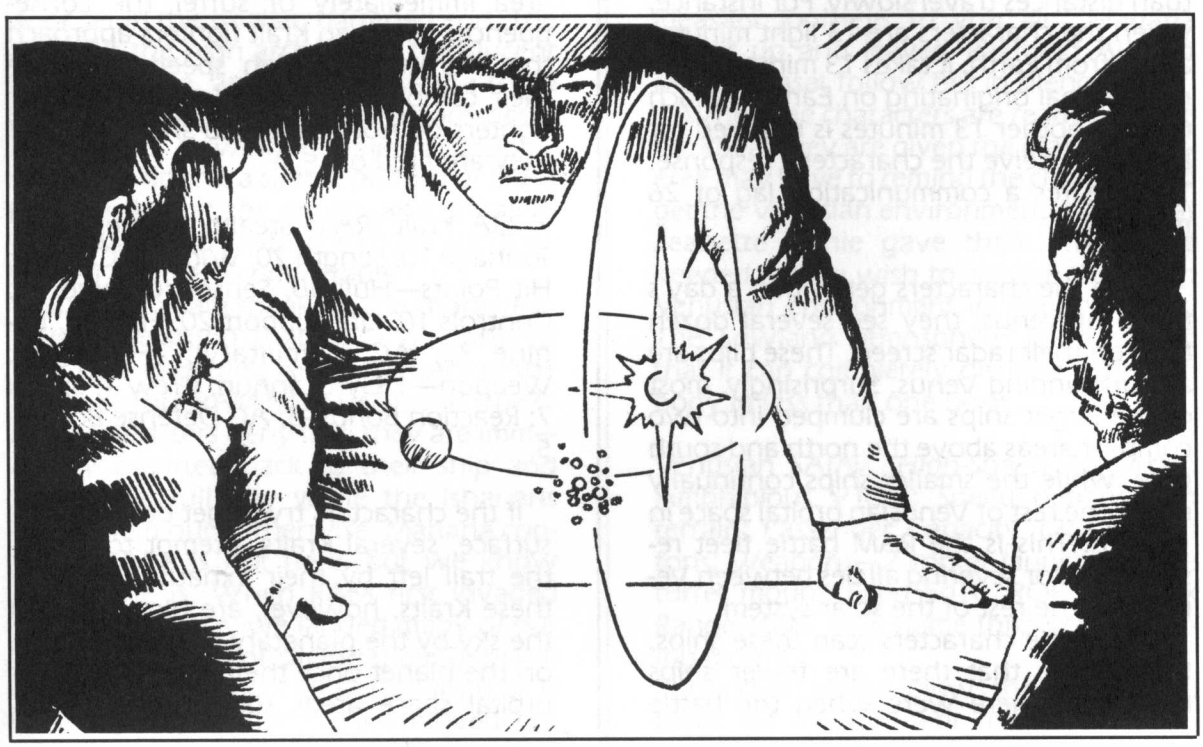
"Hello, I'm Jeanette Richie, a scientist. I have created an experimental environmental suit for you to take on your trip to Venus. This should give you a great deal of protection from the acidic atmosphere. These are prototypes, so be careful with them. When you get back, tell me what you think of them."

The characters notice that there are no air tanks on these suits. In fact, the suits are very thin, with a slot for a small battery under each armpit. Jeanette comments that these batteries are needed to cool the environment within the suit and to filter out all impurities from the outside atmosphere before entering the suit for assimilation.

When the characters enter the *C-17 Shroud*, they find everything in order. They are given flight instructions and coordinates and sent on their way. Have the Rocket Jock roll an easy *Pilot Rocket* skill check to clear the station and another to set course.

In Flight

From Earth, at least in this module, Venus is 13 light minutes away. The chart below determines the amount of fuel and



time required to traverse the distance in a ship.

Fuel	Time Required	Fuel Used
10	6 Days, 8 Hours	63 Hp
20	4 Days, 16 Hours	93 Hp
40	3 Days, 4 hours	127 Hp

Referee's Note: Many people confuse light years, light minutes, and light seconds as being measurements of time. These are merely easy ways to measure the great distances between celestial objects. Light travels 186,232 miles in one second and 11,173,920 miles in one minute.

With huge distances like this, you can see why it is much easier to say 13 light minutes instead of 145,260,960 miles. This, however, is not the only reason this particular measurement of distance is used.

Communications over these gargantuan distances travel slowly. For instance, when the characters are 13 light minutes away from Earth, it takes 13 minutes for a radio signal originating on Earth to reach them. Another 13 minutes is required for Earth to receive the character's response. This creates a communication lag of 26 minutes.

Once the characters get within a day's travel of Venus, they see several dozen blips on their radar screen. These blips are all surrounding Venus. Surprisingly, most of the larger ships are clumped into two compact areas above the north and south pole, while the smaller ships continually patrol the rest of Venusian orbital space in swarms. This is the RAM battle fleet responsible for severing all ties between Venus and the rest of the solar system.

When the characters scan these ships, they notice that there are fewer ships now than there were when the battle fleet first entered the Sargasso. (When the RAM battle fleet entered Venusian orbital space, the resulting battle destroyed a few of the Martian ships along with the large number of Venusian ships.)

There are five battlers, six tankers, six fighter carriers, and 300 fighters left, so they lost one battler, two tankers, and 60 fighters. This equates to a RAM loss of several billion credits, but RAM hopes to gain it all back and more when they capture the formula for gravitol V12. The twisted metallic wrecks were carried off by the RAM scrap dealers a few days ago.

If the characters go into the area with their muting systems on (see page 27), the RAM fighters and battlers do not see them. If their muting systems are on and they change course or fire a weapon, there is a 25% chance that 1d6 Krait fighters see and fire upon them.

If they do not have their muting systems on, they will be ordered to leave the area immediately or suffer the consequences. A dozen Krait fighters approach the characters at high speed to assure their compliance. The pilots in the Krait fighters do not hesitate to shoot to kill if they are fired on.

X-23A Krait (RAM Stealth Fighter) (1-6): Tonnage 10; Length 20; Width 5; Cargo 5; Hit Points—Hull 40, Sensors/Commo 10, Controls 10, Life Support 20, Fuel 30, Engine 30; AC 6 (military); THAC0 16; Weapon—1 Gyrocannon; Crew 1; Speed 7; Reaction Bonus -3; AC Defense Bonus -5.

If the characters try to get down to the surface, several Kraits attempt to follow the trail left by their exhaust. Many of these Kraits, however, are blown out of the sky by the planetary defense systems on the planet once they enter the lower orbital space areas surrounding Venus.

The rest of the Kraits turn tail and run. The characters' ship is spotted and signalled to land at New Elysium in the Ishtar Confederation. The Rocket Jock character must roll a successful Average *Pilot Rocket* skill in order to land the craft safely.

When they land the *Shroud*, they see a translucent, acid-resistant dome slide over the landing bay. Soon several dock workers are seen running over to the characters' ship. They pull hoses and tether lines over to secure the ship and to refuel. When the characters exit the *Shroud*, they are met by three Ishtarians.

"Good afternoon. The Ishtar Confederation welcomes you to New Elysium, NEO citizens. I am Mariana Almisan. At my side are Rakhvad Ali and Milton Wasat." The regal lady who stands before the characters is dressed in a gray robe. Her hair is long and silvery.

She leads the characters to a conference room. This room is pie shaped with the door set in the smaller, flattened end. The ceiling is the high arch of the translucent ceramic dome, and light floods the room in a diffused glow. The walls are decorated with flowing geometric designs, while the floor is a simple pattern of black tiles starting at the center and spiraling out toward the walls. The chairs are overstuffed and very comfortable.

Mariana again speaks to the characters. "We understand that NEO has offered their help in getting Alexis Hansen off the planet before RAM finds her. Is this true?" If the characters deny this, they are immediately escorted back to their ship and held for a full day while the Isharians check them out. Otherwise, Mariana continues. "She is not here, but we know where she is. When RAM first invaded our orbital space, we landed many of our battlers in hopes of saving them until we could finish the fleet of battler II's that is currently in production. We moved her from Ishtar, placing her in the custody of the Lowlanders in the acidic plains. If you wish to remove her from this planet for safety, you need to first go there.

"We are going to supply you with a vehicle to get there. It is a common transportation vehicle called the SATAV. It has the ability to traverse nearly every type of terrain you will come across. What it cannot drive over, you can fly over. Here is the manual on it. The vehicle will be shown to you as soon as you are ready to go." If nobody has *Drive Groundcar* skill, Mariana hands the characters a thick manual. Any character who is going to drive the vehicle gains a +5% on his *Drive Groundcar* skill.

"Alexis Hansen is currently stationed 5,000 miles southwest of here, just outside of Rhea, north of the Sea of Rhea. When you pick her up, please come back here before you leave. We have a gift we would like to give your leader Beowulf. Pleasant journeys to you all." Mariana stands up and leaves; Rakhvad Ali and Milton Wasat follow her in silence.

When the characters are ready to leave for Rhea, they are given the craft. The referee may have to remind the characters to get the Venusian environmental suits that Jeanette Richie gave them. These are needed if they wish to survive the harsh Venusian environment in the Lowlands. The Lowland atmosphere is so caustic that it can completely dissolve a human body in less than one hour.

Venusian SATAV (High-Speed All-Terrain Amphibious VTOL): Speed depends on terrain; Passenger Capacity 12; Cargo 3 tons; Weapons—2 rocket launchers, side turret mount: Dmg 5d10, ROF 1/2, Max Range 1000; One flame thrower, rear firing mount.

The chart below shows the time the trip takes for the different modes of travel

available to the characters.

Terrain	Time needed
Air, Horizontal	2 days, 4 hrs, 30 min
Terrain, Smooth	3 days, 11 hrs, 20 min
Terrain, Rough	6 days, 22 hrs, 40 min
Water, Surface	6 days, 22 hrs, 40 min
Water, Submerged	10 days, 10 hrs

When the characters begin their journey, the driver must roll an average *Drive Groundcar* ability check every time the Venusian terrain changes. This ability check should include the + 5 percent bonus rewarded above for having the SATAV's Operations Manual handy. Luckily for the character, much of the terrain is rough or swamp, and not many checks are necessary. The referee is the final arbitrator on when a check is necessary and the consequences when an ability check is failed.

On The Road to Rhea

As the characters travel along, they meet up with encounters that depend upon their mode of travel. The ground is covered with strange crystalline plants or rock formations that slightly resemble plants. Strange crystalline flying insects that resemble Earth's dragonflies and gladiator beetles are very common. The visibility is always less that 1,000 feet due to the flowing clouds of poisonous sulfuric acid.

• Air: The characters run into a Lowlander craft resembling the RAM Dragonfly. The crew of the vehicle fears that the characters are Ishtarian security. These Lowlanders are under RAM hire. They are

looking for Alexis Hansen's location, so that they can turn her over to the Martian corporation.

Lowlander Dragonfly: Tonnage 1/2; Length 15; Width 5; Cargo 1/4; Hit Points—Hull 10, Sensors/Commo 5, Controls 5, Life Support 0, Fuel 10, Engine 20; AC 7 (military); THAC0 14; Weapon— 1 Gyrocannon; Crew 2; Speed 4; Reaction Bonus -2; AC Defense Bonus -3.

Should the characters inflict heavy damage to the craft, it limps away as fast as it can. If the characters follow it, they find a RAM base of operations. This base includes three RAM white collars, as well as ten Terrine Warriors, and two dozen Lowlanders.

RAM Workers (3): As 5th-level Warriors: hp 45; AC 6; THAC0 16

Terrines (10): As 5th-level Warriors: hp 45; AC 6; THAC0 16

Lowlanders (24): As 2nd-level Warriors: hp 15; AC 9; THAC0 19

The following weapons are distributed evenly among the Terrines and the Lowlanders (the RAM workers are not armed—they are merely low-level executives in charge of keeping the operation going): 4 Plasma Throwers, 3 Shots/each, Dmg 4d10, ROF (1/2, Range 400; 10 Rocket Rifles, 40 Shots/each, Dmg 2d8, ROF 1, Range 2,000; 20 Laser Rifles, 28 Shots/each, Dmg 1d12, ROF 1, Range 3,000.

If the characters decide to come back to the base when their objective is met, they come back to an empty building. If they attack now, they find that these RAM agents are looking for the gravitol V12 formula. They are also responsible for a major pirating operation of illegal gravitol exportation. Inside their building, there is over 1,000 pounds of gravitol waiting to be picked up.

This base distributes over a billion credits in pirated gravitol to major RAM and Mercurian Sun King distributors. If the characters manage to break this operation, the Venusians give the characters 16 ounces of gravitol and a nice bonus of 5,000 cr each. The Ishtarians have been looking for this pirate operation for years.

• Land: The characters come across a plateau that contains 2d10 Lowlanders.

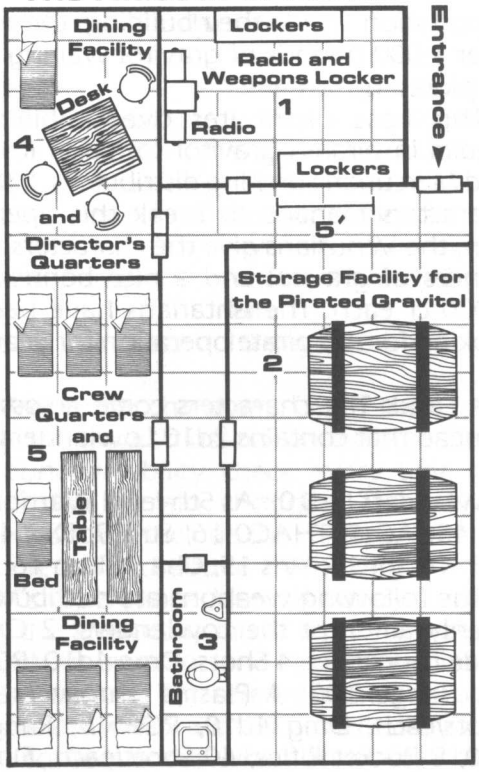
Lowlanders (2d10): As 5th-level Warriors: hp 45; AC 6; THAC0 16; Str 19; Dex 17; Con 14; Int 15; Wis 15; Cha 7; Tech 16

The following weapons are distributed evenly amongst the Lowlanders: 2 Grenade Launchers, 4 Shots, Dmg 4d10, ROF 1/2, Range 200; 4 Plasma Throwers, 3 Shots/each, Dmg 4d10, ROF 1/2, Range 400; 8 Rocket Rifles, 40 Shots/each, Dmg 2d8, ROF 1, Range 2,000; 4 Laser Rifles, 28 Shots/each, Dmg 1d12, ROF 1, Range 3,000.

These Lowlanders are under RAM hire. They are here to protect the base of operations for the pirate gravitol base mentioned above. They do not fight to the death. Instead, they fight until their morale breaks. (When this happens is completely up to the referee.) When their morale does break, they turn tail and run from the characters in random directions.

• During the night, the characters see the flame of a spacecraft come barreling from the skies. It is headed in the characters' general direction. Later that night, they see the same spacecraft leave, and subsequently get blown apart by the Venusian planetary defense systems.

The Hideout of Alexis



Referee's Note: This craft was dropping off some Terrine soldiers to locate and capture the scientist the characters are trying to find.

• The referee is encouraged to make an occasional random, but generally nonlethal, encounter of his choice.

Once the two-to ten-day trip is over, the characters come to a very strange-looking settlement. Off in the distance, they can see the mound of a huge domed city, but between them and this city there is a small village made of the strange foliage that is native to this unnatural terrain. As they make their way to the village, they see a group of over 25 Lowlanders walk up and stand in their way. This is the welcoming committee.

"Welcome, Terrans, to the city of Ghaasshantt. We have expected you for days now. Come with us." One of the Lowlanders, somewhat taller than the rest, waves a taloned hand toward them in greeting.

Once the characters put on their Venusian environmental suits and walk outside the SATAV, they must roll percentile dice. There is an 80% chance that the suits function. If a suit does not function, the character suffers 2d6 points of damage per round, until he gets into a standard Earth atmosphere and removes the suit. It takes one round to put on or take off the suit. If the character drops below 1 hit point, the acidic content in the Venusian atmosphere begins to dissolve his body. Within one hour, the body is fully converted into its basic chemical compounds.

The characters are led to a hut that is much larger than the rest. Once inside, the door closes and the acidic clouds of the Venusian atmosphere quickly disappear. Within a minute, an attractive Terran woman opens a far door and walks toward the characters.

"It's safe to take those environmental suits off now. The air in here has been cleansed." Once the characters have done so, she introduces herself as Alexis Hansen. "I'm glad you finally made it. I have got to get this formula safely home. This is the only copy in existence."

As the characters and Alexis talk, the characters get a beep on the radios in their environmental suits. When they answer the call, a voice answers immediately. "This is Beowulf from Salvation III. Do you read?"

When the characters acknowledge the call, Beowulf continues. "I understand that Alexis Hansen has the only copy of the gravitol V12 formula. Is this correct?" Beowulf waits for the characters to affirm his suspicions. "In that case, with her per-

mission, transmit the formula now, so that it is not lost should you be destroyed if RAM finds out that you are there to pick it up."

Beowulf waits for the characters to transmit the formula. When they have, he addresses them again. "Thank you. Now, hurry home. The Ishtar Confederation cannot afford to lose their greatest chemical scientist. Beowulf out."

Referee's Note: The characters, if they transmit the formula, have just given RAM the formula. Marcus Wolfe used computerized voice enhancement techniques to imitate Beowulf's voice so as to get the formula. The players should realize that a message from Salvation III should take 13 minutes each way. Marcus (disguising himself as Beowulf) answered immediately every time. If they picked up on this and did not deliver the message, give them additional experience points equal to half of what they need to reach their next level.

When the characters are ready to leave the village of Ghaasshantt and they have donned their environmental suits, a group of four Terrines dressed in a different type of environmental suit burst through the door letting the poisonous atmosphere to swirl in. They begin firing on everything in the room, especially the characters and the scientist.

Terrines (4): As 8th-level Warriors: hp 65; AC 4; THAC0 13; Str 19; Dex 18; Con 17; Int 14; Wis 13; Cha 7; Tech 17

The Terrines have these weapons distributed evenly among them: 2 Grenade Launchers, 2 Shots/each, Dmg 4d10, ROF (1/2, Range 200; 1 Plasma Thrower, 3 Shots, Dmg 4d10, ROF 1/2, Range 400; 2 Rocket Rifles, 40 Shots/each, Dmg 2d8, ROF 1, Range 2,000; 1 Laser Rifle, 28 Shots/each, Dmg 1d12, ROF 1, Range 3,000.

If a character gets hit, this constitutes a breach in his environmental suit that exposes the character's flesh to the acidic atmosphere. This also means that the character hit has one round to patch the hole. If the hole is ignored, he starts suffering 2d6 points of acidic damage per round until it is patched. Alexis Hansen immediately ducks behind anything within reach to avoid the fire. She starts putting on an environmental suit of her own as the battle begins.

Once the battle is over, the village's Lowlanders approach the surviving characters and extend their taloned hands. "Thank you for your assistance. You are a rare breed. You show honor and courage, unlike RAM. There definitely is room for friendly negotiations between us. We will be in touch."

If the characters are in need of medical assistance, the Lowlanders and Alexis Hansen seal off the wounds caused in the battle. Each character needing aid receives it in order of severity. The *Treat Critical Wounds* skill heals 3d8+3 points of damage, *Treat Serious Wounds* heals 2d8+1 points, while *Treat Light Wounds* heals 1d8 points of damage. A character can receive only one healing.

When the characters get back to New Elysium, they are asked to tell what happened. When Mariana finds out that the characters effectively saved Alexis's life, she is eternally grateful. "When you get back home, tell your people you have found an ally in your war against RAM. Your deeds shall not go unrewarded. Also, please take this case of gravitol back with you. It is a gift from us to your leader, Beowulf."

"Please, wish us luck. To hide your escape, we are sending our battler fleet out

into orbital space. We hope to regain it so our trade routes will again be open. Meanwhile, our thoughts are with you."

They are immediately escorted to their *C-17 Shroud* for take-off. As the characters begin taking off, they see a large number of Venusian battlers, cruisers, and fighters taking off as well, heading toward orbital space.

In the *RMS Phytus*, the advanced Terrine, Marcus Wolfe, sees the fire from the tail of the characters' ship. He immediately puts the rest of the fleet in a holding pattern, taking the flag ship to hunt down the characters. Putting the fleet on hold means that the fleet does not attack until it is attacked, giving the initiative to the Venusians.

RMS Phytus (Fighter Carrier): Tonnage 5,500; Length 11,000; Width 2,750; Cargo 18,050; Hit Points—Hull 22,000, Sensors/Commo 5,500, Controls 5,500, Life Support 11,000, Fuel 8,500, Engine 8,500; AC 8; THAC0 15; Weapons—30 Pumped Lasers; Crew 3,000; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

The design of the *Phytus* and the size and positioning of the characters' ship mean that no more than five pumped lasers can strike the characters' ship at any one time. Within 1d2 rounds, the character's ship is out of range. Regardless, Marcus Wolfe has his ship pursue the characters until their ship disappears from his radar screen.

Meanwhile, back in Venusian orbital space, the Venusian battle fleet has risen from its dry docks at New Elysium, Rupes, and Freya to engage the RAM fleet. Unfortunately, with the orders Marcus Wolfe gave them, the RAM fleet does not start attacking for a few rounds, which gives the Venusians a distinct advantage.

When he gives up pursuing the characters, Marcus has the *RMS Phytus* turn around and head to a location away from Mars, Earth, and Venus. He knows that RAM is going to kill him should he return. The death screams of the thousands of Martians in the RAM battle fleet still ring in his ears. He is now thinking only of escape.

The characters, with a full tank of gas courtesy of the Ishtar Confederation, can now determine their flight plans according to the fuel consumption ratios that are available to them, just like their flight to Venus. The return flight to Earth is unusually silent and relaxing. Alexis shares her gravitol V12 findings with the characters during the flight.

Fuel	Time Required	Fuel Used
10	6 Days, 8 Hours	63 Hp
20	4 Days, 16 Hours	93 Hp
40	3 Days, 4 hours	127 Hp

Just Another Marcus Christmas

When the characters return to Salvation III, they see a celebration ensuing. They may not realize it, but it is the Christmas season. Synthetic eggnog is the only thing that can be found to drink. The characters, by now revered as heroic figures, are encouraged to join in the fun.

As the characters mill around the place, the scientist Jeanette Richie approach them and asks about the performance of her environmental suits. Suddenly, a loud voice is heard yelling for everyone to be quiet. As the noise dies down, the volume of the tri-dee gets louder. Ceresnews, an independent news source from the asteroid Ceres, is on.

"Now for the story of the day. Earlier this month, a Venusian scientist with the Ishtar Confederation, Alexis Hansen, dis-

covered a new type of gravitol, which she named gravitol V12. She began testing it on the different Venusian races to determine its effectiveness. It worked, apparently.

"When RAM found out that this gravitol V12 could be manufactured on their planet, they demanded to purchase the rights to the formula. Ishtar refused, saying that the tests were not complete. In retaliation to what they call corporate monopolization, RAM sent Corporate Security Director, Marcus Wolfe, and a large battle fleet to Venus to cut off all routes to and from the planet until Ishtar conceded the formula, at no cost at that point, of course.

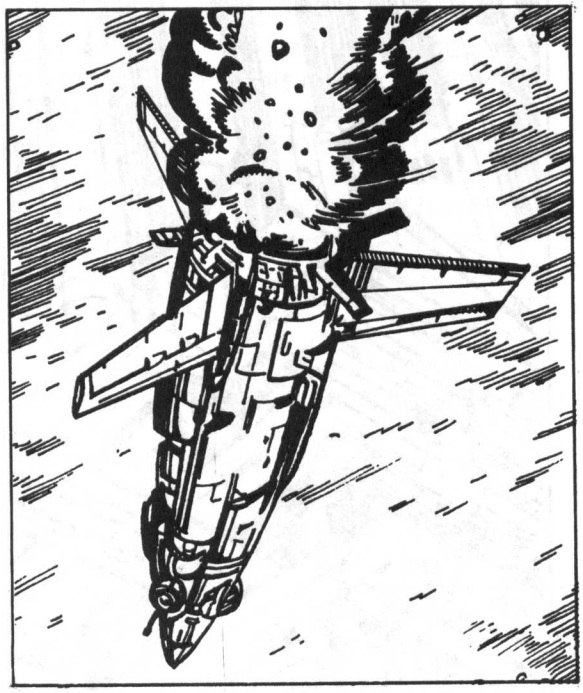
"Unknown to the RAM fleet, NEO agents enter the character's names, working with the Ishtar Confederation, infiltrated the RAM blockade. These NEO agents, who are wanted by RAM, successfully removed the chemical scientist before a RAM Terrine task force could get her.

"In retaliation for the RAM blockade, the Ishtar Confederation unleashed their entire battle fleet into orbit, obliterating every RAM ship, except the *RMS Phytus*, which was the flagship of the RAM blockade fleet and the ship Marcus Wolfe commanded. Due to the losses RAM experienced, they have issued a warrant for Marcus Wolfe's arrest, but they have yet to find him. All attempts at locating the fighter carrier and its 120 fighters have been unsuccessful. A spokesperson for the Corporate Security division of RAM says that Marcus Wolfe will be found when the battler finally docks somewhere to fuel."

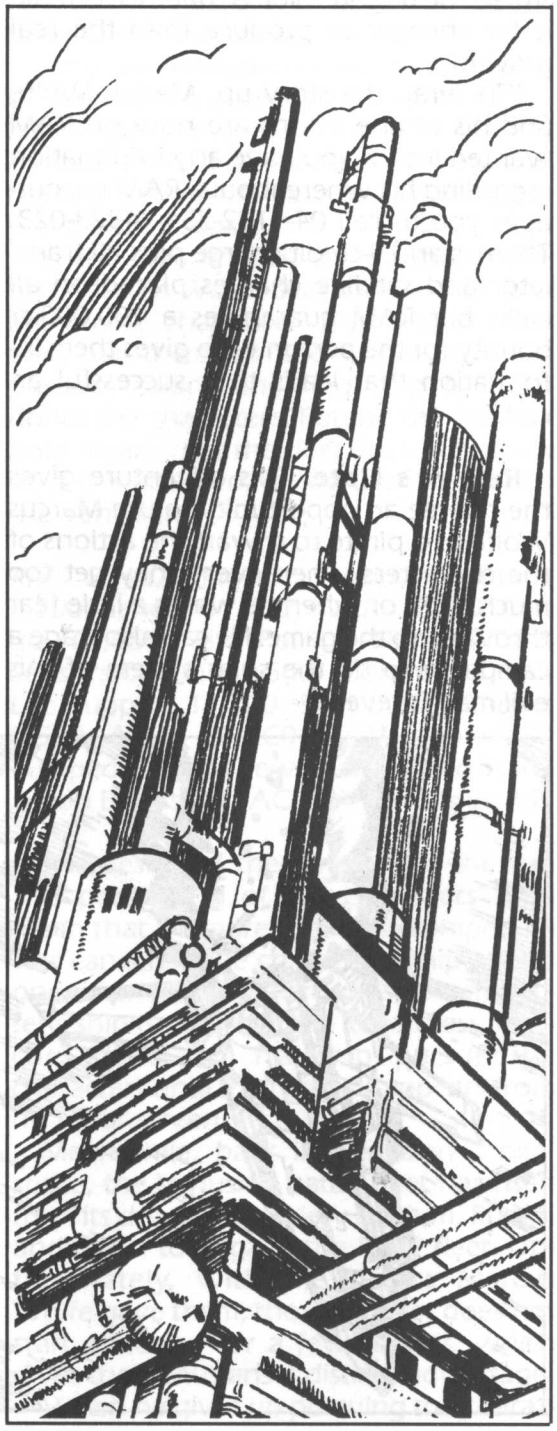
"On the other side of the coin, RAM retrieved a copy of the gravitol V12 formula and created several batches. Unfortunately, the formula has been found to turn the recipient catatonic for up to six days, unless he is of Venusian genetic stock. The brighter side is that this formula is far cheaper to produce than the real gravitol.

"To wrap the story up, Marcus Wolfe and his terrine troops are now on RAM wanted lists. If you have any information regarding his whereabouts, RAM encourages you to call 04-4132-354-14323-023. There is an 18-credit charge plus all translator and satellite charges placed on all calls, but RAM guarantees a 100,000-cr bounty for the person who gives them information that leads to a successful arrest."

Referee's Note: This adventure gives the referee an opportunity to use Marcus Wolfe as a pirate to thwart the actions of the characters when every they get too much stuff, or when he wants a little fear thrown into the game. He can also stage a campaign to rid the solar system of this evil man forever.



The Reference Section



Gravitol

Gravitol is a marvelous drug manufactured from plants growing on the Venusian Lowland plains. In its refined form, the drug is a clear, red-tinted liquid that retards the degeneration process caused by long-term exposure to zero gravity. As long as the drug is used as prescribed, the character suffers no side effects from exposure to zero gravity.

The plant that produces the raw materials for gravitol cannot be successfully cultivated anywhere except the surface of Venus, which is the main reason the genetically altered Lowlanders were developed. They are the caretakers of these plants, and they themselves manufacture nearly 90 percent of the gravitol that leaves Venus. The Ishtar Confederation manufactures the other 10%. The Lowlanders sell most of their manufactured gravitol to Ishtar, while selling smaller amounts to Aphrodite, the third culture that resides on the surface of Venus.

Theoretically, the Ishtar Confederation controls the gravitol trade, but the drug's high value and immense importance makes it a major smuggling item sought by pirates, privateers, traders, RAM executives, and Sun Kings alike.

To get the maximum benefit from its properties, any person spending a long time in a zero-gravity environment must take a one-half ounce dose of gravitol orally every 30 days.

The human body evolved in a one-gravity environment, and most of its internal systems demand one gravity to function properly. Gravitol allows the body to function in an environment that is not subject to the needed gravitational pull.

The altered humans who live on the Moon, Mars, or Mercury have been genetically altered to allow their internal processes to function in the lesser gravity of these bodies. They still need gravitol in zero gravity. The Spacers are the only race that does not need to consume gravitol to stay alive in zero gravity. Their bodies have been fully adapted, through gene splicing and genetic alteration, to live in zero gravity. They have problems when they enter environments with greater than one-sixth gravity for extended periods of time.

The Belters, (on the asteroids), must have the usual dose of gravitol to stay alive, unless they have been genetically altered to live in zero gravity. This is the case with nearly the whole population, because many of them do not wish to be trapped in the asteroid environment their whole lives.

Gravitol consists of many different chemicals. These are labelled with superscripts. Below, the different subparts and their purposes are discussed.

GR^{1}: This is a chemical that keeps the heart from atrophying in the lack of gravity. Even exersuits—suits that allow the body to exercise whenever in zero gravity—do not compensate for the loss of heart muscle tone in zero gravity. This condition eventually disables the heart completely. When this happens, the character dies from heart failure.

GR^{3}: Without this second part of gravitol, the bones demineralize. This chemical assures the bones' ability to maintain their strength, weight, and density. Without it, the bones weaken, effectively turning soft, losing their rigidity.

GR^{4}: Without this chemical, the inner ear cannot maintain an equilibrium of pressure. This is the main reason that some people exhibit chronic motion sickness while in space.

GR^{5}: This chemical maintains the body's ability to metabolize calcium ions and Vitamin D compounds. Without these necessary chemicals, the bones are no longer able to heal or regenerate from the death of older cells. Characters who allow their bones to succumb to this effect develop a form of space rickets.

GR^{7}: In zero gravity, the body's production of red blood cells decreases rapidly. This causes a massive drop in red cell count, thus diminishing the blood's capacity to carry vital oxygen to the rest of the body. This chemical stimulates the marrow's ability to produce healthy red blood cells.

GR^{9}: This chemical maintains a healthy growth of T-helper cells. These cells are the building blocks for the whole immune system. They are responsible for triggering antibody production, viral resistance, and bacterial resistance.

Without T-helper cells, the body's immune system grinds to a halt. Normally in zero gravity, T-helper cell effectiveness drops over 50%. This chemical raises the T-helper cell effectiveness.

GR^{10}: This chemical increases the body's antibody production, which is normally slowed 25-30% on top of the T-helper cell effectiveness loss when in low or zero gravity. In zero gravity, antibody synthesis soon shuts down, and the effects are long term.

Antibodies are proteins that seek out and bind to viruses, bacteria, and blood parasites, effectively inactivating them. Then these deactivated infestations are passed out the body via the spleen.

Antibodies represent the only means of clearing out the billions of viral particulates that infest the bloodstream during an infection. Some classes of antibodies leave the bloodstream and serve to police the nose, mouth, ears, and intestines,

blocking the initial infestation entry points.

GR[12]: The immune system also attacks and clears away cancerous agents. These cancerous infestations are attacked by T-killer cells, but in the absence of the T-helper cells, these cannot function. GR[12] increases the effectiveness and the production of the T-killer cells.

The other type of anti-cancer cell that constantly defends the body is the Nk cell, or the Natural killer cells. The Nk cell is independent from the T-helper cycle, but it is still affected negatively by zero gravity. Its effectiveness drops over 75% when in low gravity, leaving the body open for cancerous attacks. Once a cancerous growth gets a stronghold, reactivation of the Nk cells proves useless.

GR[14]: Virus resistance also decreases significantly in zero gravity. Ordinarily, cells can send out a warning signal in the form of a protein called interferon (also known as INF) when first attacked by a viral infestation. INF seeks out and enters uninfected cells. This INF production allows the healthy cells to set up defensive measures to prevent the virus from entering and destroying the cell. The production of interferon, however, dramatically reduces in zero gravity.

This loss of interferon production, sometimes as high as 85%, happens within the first few days of exposure to zero gee, which makes ingestion of gravitol right after entering zero gravity a necessity.

GR[16]: There is one other way that the body blocks the encroachment of disease. This is accomplished with the production of leukopoiesis. Leukopoiesis is the process by which the immune system's resources are manufactured to replace losses by attrition. Fresh immune cells are

taken from the reserve of immature cells present in the bone marrow and put into use in the blood stream. Any interference with this cycle is eventually fatal.

While in zero gravity without the ingestion of gravitol, the body experiences a dangerous decrease in the blood's lymphocyte count. These lymphocytes are necessary to ward off parasite attacks. A loss of neutrophils is also noted in zero gravity. GR[16] corrects both of these problems effectively.

Zero Gee Without Gravitol

If a human were to live and work in an environment of zero gravity for extended periods of time without consuming gravitol, several things begin to happen.

Every 30 days, the character's Strength reduces by 1 point, while the Constitution is reduced by 2 points. This deficiency is due to the atrophy that settles into the muscles and the internal organs of the body.

One-half of the Strength loss can be avoided if the character constantly uses an exersuit, explained above. (This means that the character would lose only 1 point of Strength every two months.) The Constitution loss, however, cannot be diminished by using the exersuit.

If the Strength of the character drops to 2, the character becomes incapacitated. The character is conscious, but completely unable to perform any strenuous activities. Combat, physical labor, maneuvering a ship; nothing is possible.

Once the Constitution drops to 2, the character has 1d4 weeks to live. This Constitution deprivation is called the break-off point. Once this point is reached, there is no way to recover naturally from it. The body's internal organs have atrophied to the point of no return. The only way this character can survive is to have every organ, including the bone marrow but excluding the brain, replaced before the end of that 1d4-week period. If this medical procedure is not performed, the character dies. There is no saving throw allowed to counteract this effect.

As if the above is not bad enough, the body's saving throws worsen as well. Explosion/Plasma Fireball, Electrical Shock, Paralysis/Stun/Fall, and Extremes of Heat and Cold saving throws are penalized by 1 point every month. The other saving throws—Toxic Atmosphere/Gas/Poison, Suffocation, and Radiation—are penalized 2 points every month.

Another terrifying aspect of zero gravity's effects is disease. If the referee uses disease and disease saving throws in his campaign, penalize the affected character's disease saving throws by 2 points every month.

Luckily, many of these problems can be reversed, unless the Constitution deprivation break-off point (explained above) is reached. These saving throw and attribute score losses are halted once gravitol is consumed.

Gravitol does not under reverse the effects of zero gravity. It just keeps things from getting worse. When the character is returned to the gravitational pull of his home planet, or a gravity well that is plus or minus 25% of that of the character's home world, the healing begins. No other gravitational pull can help the character recover from the effects of zero gravity.

The healing process takes half as long as the degeneration period. Please remember that if the break-off point is reached, there is no hope, except for the removal of all organs and bone marrow, replacing it with healthy tissue from a donor of the same genetic stock. (In other words, a Venusian could not donate to a Martian, or vice versa.)

Gravitol Abuse

Once can abuse gravitol by taking too much. The recommended dosage of gravitol is one-half ounce every 30 days. If the dosage is increased, this is considered an abuse.

Gravitol abuse has the exact opposite effect of zero gravity, with a few exceptions. The effects are listed below.

- With every dose of gravitol over the recommended dosage, the character's Strength increases by 1 point. This may seem like a good thing, but the Dexterity of the character is reduced by 2 points. When rolling for attacks, remember to include the attack penalty for the low Dexterity. Once the Dexterity reaches 2, the character is nothing more than a muscle-bound, clumsy ox with little ability to function.

The character's Constitution does not change; nor do the saving throw bonuses.

- The chemical in GR^1 builds up, increasing the chance for heart attack. Should this happen, the character immediately suffers 3d6 points of damage. If the character rolls a natural 1 for an attack roll, he suffers a heart attack. If the damage taken from the 3d6 roll equals or exceeds the characters's remaining hit points, he effectively dies from heart failure.
- GR^3 increases the bone's ability to mineralize in the case of abuse. The character's Charisma drops 1 point per month, and his Dexterity drops 1 point every two months.
- Gravitol abuse triggers a startling increase in the growth of T-helper cells. These cells are the building blocks for the whole immune system. They are responsible for triggering antibody production, viral resistance, and bacterial resistance.

With these over-abundant T-helper cells, the body's immune system begins to attack healthy, normal antibodies in an attempt to lessen their numbers. This condition is known as Spacer's Leukemia.

- Gravitol abuse also triggers a significant increase in the immune system properties that attack and clear away cancerous agents. These cancerous infestations are attacked by T-killer cells, whose numbers increase dramatically. These T-killer and Nk (Natural killer) cells begin attacking the character's body in an attempt to clear away their unusually high numbers.

Unfortunately, the gravitol continues to stimulate their growth. This is a very lethal form of leukemia that requires the character to roll a successful saving throw vs. Radiation every month or fall comatose for 1d4 weeks. Every day, another saving throw must be rolled in order for the character to stay alive. Medical attention within the first day on hospital care ensures survival.

- The cell's ability to produce interferon increases significantly. There is no known danger in this, however.

As you can see, purposely abusing gravitol is a very lethal proposition. In fact, the referee should consider taking the character and turning him into an NPC once the abuse gets too far out of hand. Often, there is no possible way of correcting the situation without removing the character from play.

Gravitol V12

This elusive multi-chemical drug is very much like the original gravitol. Unfortunately, it works only on Venusians. It is believed that the chemicals within this drug function only upon specific genetically altered life forms, i.e., Venusians.

All others in the solar system who take

gravitol V12 must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison or fall catatonic for 1d4+2 days. When the catatonia is over, these characters must recover for another 1d4+2 days before their systems return to normal (it takes this much time for the poisons to cycle through their bodies). If the saving throw is successful, nothing happens.

The NPC Roster

Colonel Marcus Wolfe
11th-Level Terrine Warrior
The RAM Director of Corporate Security

Attributes:

Strength:	22
Dexterity:	19
Constitution:	20
Intelligence:	17
Wisdom:	10
Charisma:	20
Tech:	15

Combat:

THAC0:	10
Armor Class:	7
Hit Points:	111
Rocket Pistol:	1d10 dam
Mono Knife:	1d6 dam

Weapon Bonuses:

Rocket Pistol:	+3
Mono Knife:	+2

General Skills:

Drive Groundcar:	1
Drive Jetcar:	1
Pilot Fixed-Wing:	20
Pilot Rotor-wing:	55
Bypass Security:	35
First Aid:	10
Repair Mechanical:	1
Sensor Operation:	20
Commo Operation:	1
Cryptography:	15

Career Skills:

Battle Tactics:	65
Demolitions:	10
Leadership:	95
Man. in Zero G:	10
Move Silently:	55
Notice:	80
Repair Weapon:	85
Use Rocket Belt:	40
Law:	10
Climb:	1

Physical Description: Marcus Wolfe is a Terrine. He stands 6'8" tall, with a lean, muscular build. He does not have the typical Terrine features, however. When RAM created his generic stock from the original Terrine samples, they made him look human. In fact, the procedure worked so well that he looks more human than humans. He still possesses the personality traits of his "lesser" brothers, but he has more control over them.

While being manufactured, Marcus was given the ability to become inwardly and selfishly aggressive. This gave him the capacity to desire better pay, a better job. Marcus Wolfe became an object for the RAM executives to fear. His line of gennies was soon discontinued, and the genetic samples destroyed.

Combat: Like all Terrines, Colonel Marcus Wolfe is subject to battle rage. Once in each combat, he must roll an Intelligence check. If he fails, he fights to the death or until unconscious. For this reason, the colonel tends to hang back in combat. He joins the fray only if the battle is going his way, or if he feels his presence will swing the advantage to his side.

Colonel Wolfe wears a smart uniform with an ECM package. He rarely uses armor unless he knows in advance that he is going into a heavy firefight. He carries a rocket pistol with a moon clip in a custom-made holster on his right side. The moon clip is a special, curved ammo clip that holds 12 rounds. He carries two spare clips with him. The damage incurred is still 1d10. A sheath on his left side holds a mono knife. In his boot is a hardened, plastic knife that is undetectable by most scanning equipment. At any given time Marcus Wolfe might have other arma-

ment. As a chief security officer, he has access to almost anything.

Personality: Most Terrines are slaves to their Martian masters. A few, such as Marcus Wolfe, have risen above their conditioning to be free-willed and ambitious creatures. He is clever and ruthless. Most of all, he is persistent. Once he sets his sights on a goal, he never loses sight of it. He is climbing the RAM corporate ladder one body at a time.

Carlton Turabian

15th-Level Warrior
Salvation III's Commander and Owner

Attributes:

Strength:	10
Dexterity:	13
Constitution:	12
Intelligence:	17
Wisdom:	13
Charisma:	16
Tech:	18

Combat:

THAC0:	5
Armor Class:	7
Hit Points:	135
Rocket Pistol:	1d10 dam
Mono Knife:	1d6 dam

Weapon Bonuses:

Rocket Pistol:	+5
Mono Knife:	+1

General Skills:		Career Skills:	
Drive Groundcar:	10	Battle Tactics:	65
Drive Jetcar:	10	Demolitions:	10
Pilot Fixed-Wing:	65	Leadership:	100
Pilot Rotor-wing:	35	Man. in Zero G:	10
Bypass Security:	5	Move Silently:	5
First Aid:	30	Notice:	80
Repair Mechanical:	10	Repair Weapon:	100
Sensor Operation:	20	Use Rocket Belt:	20
Commo Operation:	15		
Pilot Rocket:	100		
Law:	10		
Planetary Survival:	85		

Turabian, as the chief of Operations at Salvation III, is an integral part of NEO and the Planetary Congress. He inherited the station from his father, who passed his hatred for the Martian corporation and the love of freedom to his only son, Carlton.

Once Turabian found out about the fighting force of the Planetary Congress, known as the New Earth Organization, he opened channels, allowing them to use his station as a base, as long as the whole coup remained a secret. This happened several decades ago. Ever since then, Salvation III has been a very important stopping point for NEO.

When NEO's Beowulf and Phoenix's Regal Bacci met while attacking the same RAM target, they made an agreement at Turabian's Salvation III's annex level 4. This is where NEO conducts most of its meetings, except in cases where more room is required.

Turabian has managed to maintain the station's status as a standard dealer in parts and repair. Occasionally, the station sells fuel to RAM ships that fly into the fifth Lagrangian point of Earth, where Salvation III lies. This willingness to serve RAM has made it less of a target for RAM, as well as keeping a lid on the secret NEO base within.

Often, Turabian insists that the NEO ships, once they dock into the station, are placed on the many elevators in the station and hidden on a lower floor. This assures the secrecy of the whole operation. He does this just in case a RAM battler or cruiser happens to fly by to make a quick inspection of the station.

Turabian is a thin man who has a lot of

grey hair. He attributes his greyness to the infiltration of the NEO warriors and Rocket Jocks into his station. "These pilots are some of the most lunatic people I have ever met in my life" is his favorite comment. He does, however, love what they are trying to do, and that is why he is willing to risk his station and his life in their cause. He is reaching his mid-50s, and his bent frame is beginning to show the effects of age and stress.

Beowulf

12th-Level Rocket Jock
NEO's Chief Tactical Officer

Attributes:

Strength:	16
Dexterity:	10
Constitution:	17
Intelligence:	13
Wisdom:	16
Charisma:	14
Tech:	13

Combat:

THAC0:	15
Armor Class:	7
Hit Points:	40
Rocket Rifle:	2d8 dam
Mono Sword:	1d10 dam

Weapon Bonuses:

Rocket Rifle:	+2
Mono Sword:	+2

General Skills:		Career Skills:	
Leadership:	80	Drive Jetcar:	20
Repair Electrical:	10	Drive Groundcar:	40
Battle Tactics:	80	Maneuver Zero-G:	10
Repair Weapon:	20	Notice:	40
Jury Rig:	1	Pilot Fix Wing:	10
Planet Survival:	5	Pilot Rocket:	100
Planetology:	5	Pilot Rotor-wing:	20
Fast Talk:	40	Use Rocket Belt:	1

Beowulf is the legendary leader of the New Earth Organization. He once was one of the best pilots in RAM's fifth fighter squadron. Many years ago, Beowulf and his men were sent to destroy a mining station on the asteroid Thule. When they got there, the miners were defenseless against the fighters and begged for mercy. RAM insisted upon the extermination of the men at any cost. The job was completed, but halfway back to Mars, Beowulf sped away from his squadron, headed for Earth.

When he arrived at Earth, he attempted to join with NEO immediately. Unfortunately at the time, NEO was very suspicious of Beowulf, and rightly so, since RAM let slip information stating that RAM was using Beowulf as a spy to bring NEO down. After several years working freelance attacks against his former employer, NEO finally accepted him into their ranks, giving him the duties of a low-rank pilot, which he accepted gladly.

Eventually, he worked his way up the NEO ladder, until he was the head advisor to the commander, who at that time was a Swede named Daniel Jones. Daniel was captured and put to death on several open televideo channels from the Hauberk station as an example of the end result for joining NEO. Shortly thereafter, Beowulf assumed the position of commander. NEO has never been the same since. They are a more aggressive group, attacking specific targets with phenomenal success. Even with the success NEO has, the ranks still lack the morale to hit important targets. That is why the aspect of a 20th-century rocket jock with charisma appeals to him, although he knows Rogers's motivations somewhat differ from those of the Planetary Congress, the legislative branch of NEO. Since RAM has been notified of Beowulf's involvement with NEO, they have placed a bounty of 150,000 cr on his head.

Beowulf is a proud man in his 40s. Handsome, he has never had a problem meeting women. His problem has always been keeping them. His jealousy and short temper have turned them away from him. He has gained control over his temper over the last few years, and he credits NEO for that.

He is not one to dwell on the darkness of his past with RAM. He claims to gain strength from it. "It is this dark past of mine that gives me the insight and the edge on the affairs of RAM."

Mariana Almisan

Ishtarian Venusian
Ishtar Confederation Delegate

Attributes:

Strength:	12
Dexterity:	14
Constitution:	15
Intelligence:	18
Wisdom:	19
Charisma:	17
Tech:	15

Combat:

THAC0:	20
Armor Class:	10
Hit Points:	10
Mono knife:	1d6 dam

General Skills:

Fast Talk:	40
Law:	95
Leadership:	80
Notice:	55
Paint/Draw:	35

This regal lady prefers to dress in a gray robe that looks like a voluminous drapery. This gives her petite body substance. Her silvery hair is long and well groomed. She is a very knowledgeable and wise woman. This explains her position of importance in the Ishtar Confederation. She is very secretive about her feelings, but this does not diminish the impression of intelligence and wisdom that she exudes.

She prefers to listen rather than talk. She has found that more can be learned in this way. She is well liked and admired by all in Ishtarian society; many of the most important people in this culture come to her for advice and counseling.

Rakhvad Ali

5th-Level Venusian Warrior
Ishtarian Delegate Body Guard

Attributes:

Strength:	18
Dexterity:	14
Constitution:	17
Intelligence:	12
Wisdom:	11
Charisma:	15
Tech:	14

Combat:

THAC0:	16
Armor Class:	7
Hit Points:	45
Rocket Rifle:	2d8 dam
Mono Sword:	1d10 dam

Weapon Bonuses:

Rocket Rifle:	+1
Mono Sword:	+1

General Skills:		Career Skills:	
Drive Groundcar:	15	Battle Tactics:	50
Drive Jetcar:	1	Demolitions:	1
Pilot Fixed-Wing:	30	Leadership:	1
Pilot Rotor-wing:	1	Man. in Zero G:	1
		Move Silently:	1
		Notice:	40
		Repair Weapon:	100
		Use Rocket Belt:	1

Not much is known about this young man. No one doubts Rakhvad Ali's loyal-

ties, however. He has risked his life in the service of the Ishtar Confederation on many occasions. In this service he has received many awards and presentations of honor and selflessness.

Milton Wasat

6th-Level Venusian Warrior Gennie
Delegate Body Guard

Attributes:

Strength:	18
Dexterity:	16
Constitution:	19
Intelligence:	16
Wisdom:	15
Charisma:	13
Tech:	17

Combat:

THAC0:	15
Armor Class:	4
Hit Points:	59
Laser Rifle:	1d12 dam

Weapon Bonuses:

Laser Rifle:	+2

General Skills:		Career Skills:	
Drive Groundcar:	25	Battle Tactics:	65
Drive Jetcar:	10	Demolitions:	10
Pilot Fixed-Wing:	10	Leadership:	5
Pilot Rotor-wing:	35	Man. in Zero G:	10
Bypass Security:	25	Move Silently:	1
First Aid:	20	Notice:	10
Repair Mechanical:	15	Repair Weapon:	55
Sensor Operation:	10	Use Rocket Belt:	10

Milton Wasat has been called half-crazed, suicidal, and unreliable, but never has anyone said that to his face. He is not unreliable, however. He is very dedicated to his work, and he refuses to allow anyone or anything stop him from completing his current duties. He has the ability to fight until he reaches -10 hit points, because of his sheer will.

Alexis Hansen

Ishtarian Scientist
15th-Level Terran Scientist
Ishtarian Medical Society

Attributes:

Strength:	12
Dexterity:	10
Constitution:	14
Intelligence:	19
Wisdom:	16
Charisma:	15
Tech:	18

Combat:

THAC0:	12
Armor Class:	10
Hit Points:	36

General Skills:		Career Skills:	
Leadership:	5	Gadgeteering:	10
Mathematics:	35	General Knowledge:	95
Botany:	20	Library Search:	15
Physics:	10	Memorize:	85
		Notice:	105
		Chemistry:	160
		Metallurgy:	80
		Biology:	20

Alexis Hansen is the highest Ishtarian authority on chemistry. Alexis is responsible for finding a cheaper way of making gravitol, which she calls gravitol V12. This substance can be made anywhere in the solar system. There is a slight problem with it, though: it works only on Venusians. This, however is unknown until the end of the adventure.

She is an attractive woman, but somewhat overbearing. When she meets someone, he must prove himself her equal, otherwise she is convinced he is nothing more than an idiot.

New Technological Items

Venusian SATAV

High-speed All-Terrain Amphibious VTOL

By Hitek Design Corporation, Ishtar, Venus

Maximum Speed:

Air, Horizontal:	40 mph
Air, Vertical:	80 mph
Terrain, Smooth:	60 mph
Terrain, Rough:	Variable
Water, Surface:	30 mph
Water, Submerged:	20 mph

Passenger/Cargo Capacity:

12 passengers, or 8 passengers with sleeping berths for four at a time. Cargo hold has a capacity of three tons.

Armaments:

Two rocket launchers, side turret mount, Dmg 5d10, ROF 1/2, Max Range 1000; One flame thrower, rear firing mount.

The SATAV also has a firing port for two weapons on the rooftop. Characters using this port are treated as being sheltered by 75% cover. Two characters can use this port at one time.

Vehicle Description:

The SATAV is an atomic-powered vehicle that is capable of negotiating virtually any type of terrain. Its wide tracks enable it to traverse near-vertical mountain sides as well as negotiating mud flats and deep ditches. It also has flight capabilities that enable it to fly over areas that are completely impassable.

The SATAV seals tightly, supporting its passengers for an almost indefinite length of time with its built in life support system. It has a kitchen, rest room facilities, and room for up to four persons to sleep in comfort while four others are seated in the cabin. Behind the cabin, there is room for four others to sit in comfort.

The cabin, sleeping quarters, and passenger areas all are on gyroscopic mechanisms that enable them to remain horizontal, no matter what the terrain orientation. However, when this feature is engaged, it is impossible to pass from one section of the SATAV to the other when the SATAV is not close to horizontal.

This optional feature is engaged or disengaged within the cabin. This feature is used to keep the people within the different compartments as comfortable as possible. The cabin's controls are specially made to accommodate this feature.

The armored shell of this vehicle is heavy enough to cancel the first 45 points of damage from any weapon. Once this damage is exceeded, the armor is punctured. The SATAV's shell is also designed to shed the acidic Venusian atmosphere. This makes the SATAV effectively acid proof, impervious to weapons that utilize acidic compounds as a projectile.

The vehicle's flame thrower was originally designed to thwart attacks from individuals chasing after the SATAV. The device carries enough fuel for 20 blasts of flame. Each extends in a fan-shaped area, 45 degrees wide, straight back for a distance of 200 feet. Any living creature caught in this area of effect suffers 3d6 points of damage. Those who succeed with a saving throw vs. heat suffer only 2d6 points of damage.

Venusian Environmental Suit

By Jeanette Richie, Machina, Inc. Earth

Cost: 1,500 cr (basic outfit)
Size: 2' x 2' x 6" (when stowed)
Weight: 25
Armor Class: 5 or 7

This environmental suit strongly resembles smart clothes, but it operates somewhat differently. Like smart clothes, it incorporates integral circuitry and micro computers for climate control, communications, and defense. The VES, however, is not so defensive in nature.

In place of the strong defensive capabilities of smart clothes, this suit has a very tough polymer alloy that deters most acidic compounds. This polymer product cannot be fully integrated with the protective smart wiring that smart clothing incorporate. The VES was found to be 80% acid resistant.

Under the armpits of the VES are small openings that enable the wearer to replace batteries once they have worn out. The battery replacement process takes one hand, and can be done while inside the suit. These batteries have been known to work as long as 48 hours under constant use in a non-hostile environment. Hostile environments can require batteries to be replaced as often as every 12 hours. Venus, considered a very hostile locale, drains the batteries every 16 hours.

This suit has the ability to cleanse the air coming into the suit. This cleansing process incorporates a series of material, electrical, and magnetic filters that remove impurities from the air that is being breathed. Plus, the air passes through another system that regulates the temperature to within a comfort range specified by the wearer. This air process is the most power-hungry utility in the suit.

The suit has integral wiring that enables the wearer to plug various applications into the suit to be powered by the two batteries under the arm pits. This, however, reduces the amount of time the suit protects the wearer from the harsh environment he is in.

In any case, the suit gives a warning light whenever there is one hour or less left to the batteries. This gives the wearer ample time in which to get into a safe location or to replace one of the batteries.

The composition of the suit also makes it resistant to penetration by all forms of atomic radiation. This gives the wearer a +3 on saving throws when encountering radiation hazards while the suit is being worn.

The suit gives limited protection against lasers and kinetic-energy weapons. This explains the relatively high armor class of the suit. This armor class bonus against energy weapons applies even if the integrated circuitry is not connected to a power supply. The wiring in the suit carries away the energy.

The suit, however, does not give the same protection against all other attacks. In these instances, the armor class is only 7.

With an ECM unit attached to the belt, the VES suit creates a strong jamming field that confuses smart bullets. Please see the *Technology* book in the boxed set for more information.

New Ship Catalogue

C-17 Shroud

Class:	Mute Cruiser
Registry:	None
Owner:	NEO rebels

Attributes:

Tonnage:	200
Length:	400 feet
Width:	100 feet
Cargo:	50 tons

Hit Points:

Hull	800
Sensors/Commo	400
Controls	200
Life Support	400
Fuel	600
Engine	600

Weapons:

5 Pumped Lasers
5 Beam Lasers
5 Missile Mounts

Armor Class:	4 (Maximum Military)
Crew:	60
Speed:	2
Reaction Bonus:	0
AC Defense Bonus:	+1, -3 when Muted

The *C-17 Shroud* is an experimental ship built secretly by NEO to fight RAM. It employs a scientific breakthrough called "muting technology." The ship generates a field that absorbs the most common forms of electromagnetic radiation. This renders the ship virtually invisible to scanners and the naked eye.

One drawback to this technology is that it creates a "black hole" effect that can be spotted if the muted ship passes too close to an enemy ship. This range is equal to a two-hex range on the movement map available in the boxed set. This black hole effect is created when the muted ship passes in front of stars and virtually blots them out. This effect is the only way of spotting the ship when it is muted.

Fortunately, RAM has not been able to produce copies of the ship's blueprints, so they do not understand how it works. NEO realizes that this secret is soon to be plundered through RAM's constant corporate espionage tactics, but it is doing all it can to protect the technology.

The ship itself is coated with a special material that prevents the field from interfering with onboard electronic equipment. This allows the ship to scan, fire weapons, target enemy ships, and to use the deep-space radio. Without this special coating, the ship's electronic components would soon burn out due to the heavy interference created by the muting components.

Some of the cargo space aboard the *C-17 Shroud* has been filled by the muting equipment. The muting machinery is included in the Sensors/Commo hit points, giving that area a higher-than-normal hit point value.

When the ship is coasting at a constant velocity, it is virtually undetectable, except by the means given above. When the ship changes direction or speed or uses its weapons, enemy ships can triangulate on its position.

Enemy computers can accurately predict the *Shroud's* approximate position at all times once they get a fix on the ship. However, the muting still gives the *Shroud* a -4 AC bonus. Missiles are completely useless against the *Shroud*, since their tracking systems do not have the advantage of a big shipboard computer.

When the Sensors/Commo hit points are reduced to half, the muting system is no longer functional. For the *C-17 Shroud*, this is at 200 points. The muting equipment is virtually irreplaceable.

RMS Memnonia

Class:	Tanker
Registry:	RAM
Owner:	Corporate Security, RAM

Attributes:

Tonnage:	1,000
Length:	2,000 feet
Width:	600 feet wide
Cargo:	10 tons

Hit Points:

Hull	4,000
Sensors/Commo	2,000
Controls	1,000
Life Support	2,000
Fuel	75,000
Engine	3,000

Weapons:
20 Pumped Lasers

Armor Class:	6 (Military)
Crew:	100
Speed:	1
Reaction Bonus:	+1
AC Defense Bonus:	+2

The *RMS Memnonia* is only one of a series of extremely huge ships that are used to transport great amounts of fuel from one location to another. The ship is designed to extract its own fuel needs from the millions of fuel cells it carries.

This monstrous ship carries 20 pumped lasers. Only ten lasers are fired at any one time. This is because of the great heat that is produced when these weapons are fired. Ten lasers are fired three times, and then the other ten are fired three times. This gives the lasers enough time to cool down before they are used again.

The fuel cells that this ship carries are specially designed to minimize damage from fuel cell breaches due to battle or collisions. These cells all have ports that are computer controlled to allow fuel to pass through them in a controlled manner. In other words, if there should be a hull breach, the cells in that immediate area are sealed off from the rest of the fuel cells. This causes the tankers to suffer only half damage from fuel hits.

The shape of these tankers is not symmetrical. They tend to look like a series of three huge, squat cylinders bolted onto a long, thin body. The engines take up the last 40% of the body. The tankers cannot land upon a planet or moon. RAM builds all its tankers in orbit around Mars.

There are hundreds of ports across the cylinders that enable ships of all sizes to dock alongside. Once there, automatic fueling ports reach out and grab the oncoming ship. Nozzles find the fuel intakes and fill to capacity. The speed in which fueling occurs is 200 hit points of fuel per round. This means that small fighter craft can fuel in less than a round, but battlers may take as long as a hour or more.

The cost of these gargantuan ships has made them a rarity among every major power in the solar system. Most battle fleets tend to use their battlers as fueling stations. This, however, is a very slow process. Since battlers were not designed as fuel tankers, they can only service six to ten ships at one time. The fueling speed is also diminished. Battlers can fuel fighters and cruisers at a speed of 50 hit points of fuel per round.

The ship docking also takes a great deal of time as well. It can take as long as four rounds for the fighter to finally hook up with the battler before the fueling service can begin.

When these tankers are brought back into port, it takes a full 16 hours to completely refuel an empty tanker.

RMS Phytus

Class:	Fighter Carrier
Registry:	RAM
Owner:	Corporate Security, RAM

Attributes:

Tonnage:	5,500
Length:	11,000 feet
Width:	2,750 feet
Cargo:	18,050 tons
Fighter Capacity:	120 fighters

Hit Points:

Hull	22,000
Sensors/Commo	5,500
Controls	5,500
Life Support	11,000
Fuel	8,500
Engine	8,500

Weapons: 30 Pumped Lasers

Armor Class:	8 (Military)
Crew:	3,000
Speed:	1
Reaction Bonus:	+1
AC Defense Bonus:	+2

The *RMS Phytus* is a prime example of the massive fighter carriers that RAM has created to transport large numbers of fighters across great distances. This is Marcus Wolfe's flagship when he attacks the Sargasso and Venus.

The fighter carrier has a multitude of ports throughout its great mass. These openings are where the fighters fly from when they are sent out on a mission. The only drawback to this design is that the fighter pilots must all wear environmental suits to get to their fighter craft.

The fighter carriers do not hold the necessary fuel to power all the fighters they carry, but they are able to perform the task of tanker when the need arises. They are mainly designed as huge storage bins, not tankers.

Since fighter carriers were not designed as fuel tankers, they can service only 12 to 20 ships at one time. The fueling speed is also diminished. Carriers can fuel fighters and cruisers at a speed of 50 hit points of fuel per round.

These craft look similar to elongated hexagons with the tops and bottoms twice as wide as the sides. With this design, these craft are never able to land on the surface of a planet or moon.

When RAM designed these craft, they had to be constructed in Mars's orbital space. Air had to be pumped into the vacuum of the cavernous hallways and rooms. Thereafter, the massive ship was populated, fueled, and sent on many duties. RAM is believed to own over 20 of these large craft.

A favorite tactic of the Planetary Assault and Corporate Security division is to park these huge craft several thousand miles away from the battle, and allow the fighters to swarm the enemy targets. The fighters and battlers of the enemy, usually too concerned with the tiny mosquito fighters, ignore the fighter carriers and the tankers. The fighter carriers then bombard the larger targets from long range, inflicting heavy damage and casualties. These, besides the grandest of RAM battlers, are the most feared vehicles in the solar system.

The engines and fuel cells for the fighter carriers are in the last one-third of the ship. These huge power houses move the carriers very slowly in combat, but they have the ability to gain great speeds when transporting fighters over the vast distances of space. The command center is a large room buried deep within the craft. Sensors spread throughout the craft enable the command center to keep track of every motion around it, even after suffering heavy damage.

RAM Fighters (360): Hit Points—Hull 60, Sensors/Commo 15, Controls 15, Life Support 30, Fuel 45, Engine 45; AC 6; THAC0 14; Weapons—1 Light Acceleration Gun or 1 Gyrocannon; Speed 5; Reaction Bonus -2; AC Defense Bonus -4.

Venusian Battlers (8): Hit Points—Hull 20,000, Sensors/Commo 5,000, Controls 5,000, Life Support 10,000, Fuel 15,000, Engine 15,000; AC 0; THAC0 14; Weapons—100 Pumped Lasers, 50 Heavy Missile Mounts, 40 Gyrocannons, 15 Missile Mounts, 15 K-Cannons; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +2; AC Defense Bonus +5.

Once the Venusian fleet is destroyed or surrenders, the scenario is finished. If the Venusian players wish, they may surrender or remove their battle fleet from the board to be used in the next scenario. Unfortunately, the players must remove the ships off the bottom of the star field map, because that designates the surface of Venus.

Scenario Three

This scenario designates the Venusian retaliation as the character's *C-17 Shroud* tries to make a run for safety. The RAM fleet is positioned between the second and third fold on the star grid poster map, while the Venusian players begin with all their ships off board.

Once the Venusian players start moving their pieces, these immediately show up on the map. The *Shroud* must escape the confines of Venusian orbital space. If the ship is destroyed, the scientist—and the only Venusian copy of the gravitol V12 formula—is lost forever.

Please note that one of the fighter carriers with 120 fighters begins following the characters. This limits RAM's involvement with the orbital space battle over Venus. Marcus Wolfe, an insane RAM director, has only the eradication of the player characters in mind; everything else is inconsequential. This fighter carrier never returns to the battle scene.

The scenario continues until one side surrenders, runs away, or is completely obliterated.

RAM Battlers (5): Hit Points—Hull 20,000, Sensors/Commo 5,000, Controls 5,000, Life Support 10,000, Fuel 15,000, Engine 15,000; AC 0; THAC0 15; Weapons—100 Pumped Lasers, 50 Heavy Missile Mounts, 50 Gyrocannons, 20 Missile Mounts, 20 K-Cannons; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +2; AC Defense Bonus +5.

RAM Tankers (5): Hit Points—Hull 4,000, Sensors/Commo 2,000, Controls 1,000, Life Support 2,000, Fuel 75,000, Engine 3,000; AC 6; THAC0 17; Weapons—20 Beamed Lasers; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

RAM Fighter Carriers (6): Hit Points—Hull 22,000, Sensors/Commo 5,500, Controls 5,500, Life Support 11,000, Fuel 8,500, Engine 8,500; AC 8; THAC0 18; Weapons—30 Pumped Lasers; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +1; AC Defense Bonus +2.

RAM Fighters (300): Hit Points—Hull 60, Sensors/Commo 15, Controls 15, Life Support 30, Fuel 45, Engine 45; AC 6; THAC0 14; Weapons—1 Light Acceleration Gun or 1 Gyrocannon; Speed 5; Reaction Bonus -2; AC Defense Bonus -4.

Venusian Battlers (6): Hit Points—Hull 20,000, Sensors/Commo 5,000, Controls 5,000, Life Support 10,000, Fuel 15,000, Engine 15,000; AC 0; THAC0 14; Weapons—100 Pumped Lasers, 50 Heavy Missile Mounts, 40 Gyrocannons, 15 Missile Mounts, 15 K-Cannons; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +2; AC Defense Bonus +5.

Venusian Battlers II (10): Hit Points—Hull 20,000, Sensors/Commo 5,000, Controls 5,000, Life Support 10,000, Fuel 15,000, Engine 15,000; AC 0; THAC0 13; Weapons—150 Pumped Lasers, 75 Heavy Missile Mounts, 75 Gyrocannons, 50 Missile Mounts, 50 K-Cannons; Speed 1; Reaction Bonus +2; AC Defense Bonus +5.

Venusian Fighters (200): Hit Points—Hull 60, Sensors/Commo 15, Controls 15, Life Support 30, Fuel 45, Engine 45; AC 6; THAC0 14; Weapons—1 Light Acceleration Gun or 1 Gyrocannon; Speed 5; Reaction Bonus -2; AC Defense Bonus -4.

C-17 Shroud: Hit Points—Hull 800, Sensors/Commo 400, Controls 200, Life Support 400, Fuel 600, Engine 600; AC 4; THAC0 corresponds with the characters' THAC0; Weapons—5 Beamed Lasers, 5 Pumped Lasers, 5 Missile Mount; Crew 60; Speed 2; Reaction Bonus +0; AC Defense Bonus +1, -3 when muted.

A Matter of Gravitol

An adventure designed for 3-4 players of 6-8th level.

December 4, 2456; 18:05 GMT. RAM has broken a long-standing treaty with Venus. Ishtar has created a new form of gravitol that can be manufactured anywhere in the solar system, and RAM wants it. RAM launches a battle fleet, successfully capturing Venusian orbital space. The search is on for the scientist responsible for the new gravitol V12. RAM will stop at nothing to gain the knowledge she holds. Can you find her before RAM does, and convince Venus to help NEO in their quest for freedom?

Official Game Adventure

A Matter of Gravitol is the finale in an exciting installment of three adventures detailing the beginning of freedom for Earth. It includes the following:

- Thirty-two pages of chair-gripping action and suspense!
- New equipment and ships you can't do without.
- Three ship-to-ship space combat scenarios to spice up any XXVc™ campaign game!

Important! *A Matter of Gravitol* draws heavily upon the information presented in the XXVc game's boxed set. You must have a copy of it to play!

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