Shadows Over Sol

Crash Zone

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Introduction

Crash Zone is a complete action horror scenario for *Shadows Over Sol*. Contained in this adventure enough material to cover between two and four sessions of play, depending on the interests of the players and the pacing set by the GM.

In this scenario, the team will be pitted against rival corporate agents, fight automated drones and unravel a mystery that has laid dormant on Mars for decades.

Author's Forward

In the process of creating *Shadows Over Sol*, the Tab Creations team learned a lot about the solar system as a whole, and Mars in particular. Mars seems to call to humanity, as a rocky planet near our own. Several years ago, a company even started taking applications for colonists.

But Mars has many, many roadblocks between it and permanent human colonization. Its core and mantle are dead. It has no magnetosphere to protect any potential colonists from radiation. And its low gravity, at 0.37 G, is not what human bodies are adapted for, possibly causing developmental complications in children and bone loss in adults. It's not just Earth without water.

What would it take to make Mars a new Earth? Would humanity, as a species, prefer to modify itself to meet the needs of the planet, or would they prefer to alter the planet to meet the needs of humanity?

And since humans are individuals and don't think as a species, what happens when someone disagrees?

Synopsis

In the early days of the Mars Terraforming Project lots of crazy theories were floated on how to make the Red Planet habitable for human life. These ranged from bioengineering lifeforms to digest and break up the Martian regolith, to crashing asteroids into the planet to give it greater mass and reignite Mars' dead planetary core.

One group involved with the earliest terraforming efforts was a privately owned space technology firm called the Mizalcor Initiative. Led by Eun-Seung Mok, an eccentric billionaire known for his extravagant lifestyle and belief in hard AI, the Initiative championed some of the most bizarre terraforming plans proposed in those early days.

Eventually a rift grew between the Mizalcor Initiative and the Terraforming Project's other early participants, leading Eun-Seung Mok to publicly declare that his companies would seek to terraform Mars on their own, without the project's input. A grand unveiling of his vision for Mars was scheduled, but never came to fruition, as the very next week World War IV erupted, putting all terraforming plans on hold and consuming human efforts for the next several years.

While Eun-Seung Mok survived the war, he didn't survive its radioactive fallout.

Eun-Seung died of radiation poisoning just months after the conflict ended. The Mizalcor Initiative filed for bankruptcy shortly afterward.

As far as anyone knows, that was the end of Eun-Seung's, and the Mizalcor Initiative's, involvement with Martian terraforming. Their plans fell by the wayside and more sensible minds prevailed. However, that common wisdom is about to be proven wrong.

The Mars Solution

While World War IV was consuming the attention of humanity, the Mizalcor Initiative was spending extravagantly, hiring new personnel and constructing a series of installations across Mars. This was done in absolute secrecy, so as to not become a target in the war.

Meanwhile, one of Eun-Seung's other companies was involved in processing fissile material for the Corporate Powers. This material was used to manufacture atomic bombs for the war. Carefully skimming material from the war effort, the Mizalcor Initiative transferred it to Mars and there used it into manufacture warheads.

These warheads were placed at regular points under the Martian crust. The plan was to later set them off in unison. This was called Ignition Day. It was part of an effort to create strategic faults in Mars' dead mantle. The hope was that the energy produced by igniting the bombs would cause the outer mantle to liquify and magnetically realign, producing a stronger magnetosphere around the planet, and thus protecting it from the most harmful effects of solar radiation.

Ready-Made Heroes

The nine player characters presented in *Shadows Over Sol: Ready-Made Heroes* are ideal for use with *Crash Zone*. Simply print out the character sheets, give them their listed "Action Horror" loadouts and they are good to go!

Of particular interest are: Aleksander Gugenheim, who is on his home turf in this adventure; Ozan Cevahir, who has experience in the Martian water trade; and Albert Astro, who may have some insight into breaking apart orbital bodies.

But the bombs were just half the plan. Automated drones were also sent out to alter the paths of close to one thousand objects in the solar system, and to have them collide with Mars at roughly the same time. These would produce an abundance of additional energy to heat the already fractured crust.

Thirty secret facilities were completed, but Ignition Day never arrived. Eun-Seung Mok died before his plan could be put into motion.

His corporate successor at the Mizalcor Initiative, never a believer in the project, then quickly evacuated and shuttered the secret facilities, lest the stolen fissile material be traced to the company. The entire effort was swept under the rug and then largely forgotten.

Unfortunately for Mars, someone or something has just discovered the Mizalcor Initiative's old network of secret facilities, and Ignition Day is about to arrive.

Enter the Team

When the bombs are set off, a quake will shake the Martian surface. Hired by Sinoex, the team will then be sent out to investigate the cause of this seismic disturbance. Over the course of the investigation, they will discover one of the secret facilities and then explore a second facility whose warhead failed to ignite.

This leads to the revelation that thousands of orbital objects are about to strike the Red Planet. Can the team deflect the incoming objects before they cause millions of colonists to die?

Modes of Horror

Crash Zone is written with the action horror mode of play in mind (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 164). Throughout the events of this adventure, the team will run up against rival scrappers, mysterious automated drones and a mystery that has laid dormant on Mars for decades.

This scenario is high enough in action that the GM may want to consider running it using the Epic Sci-fi mode of play (see *Fatal Frontier*, page 6). This works especially well if the adventure is being run as a one-shot.

Altering the adventure to suit the Investigative Horror or Survival Horror modes of play is also possible, albeit with a little work. To do this, play up the investigative aspects in the first half of the adventure. It may also be reasonable to have the team accompanied by a few NPC soldiers appointed by Sinoex. In that case, have the soldiers do the bulk of the shooting, but try to have it occur "offscreen," when the team is split up exploring the two secret facilities. They can later come upon the wounded soldiers and hear their harrowing tale. This helps build tension and furthers the sense of dread without slaughtering the scrappers.

Other Adventures

Crash Zone can be used alone or in conjunction with other published *Shadows Over Sol* adventures. Below are some notes on how to combine this scenario with others.

- **Dreams and Dust:** Like *Crash Zone*, this adventure is set on Mars and assumes a competent and well-prepared team. While it starts as Investigative Horror, it is easily adapted to Action Horror, and makes a great follow-up scenario for teams that gain a heroic reputation.
- **Eviction Notice:** Another Action Horror scenario set on Mars, *Eviction Notice* is best set before *Crash Zone*, and is a great way for the team to gain the reputation they will need to be hired by Sinoex.
- **Thirst:** Yet another Martian adventure, *Thirst* is a very different scenario than *Crash Zone*, but makes for a great interlude as the team travels between the two secret facilities, or as a prelude to the events of *Crash Zone*.
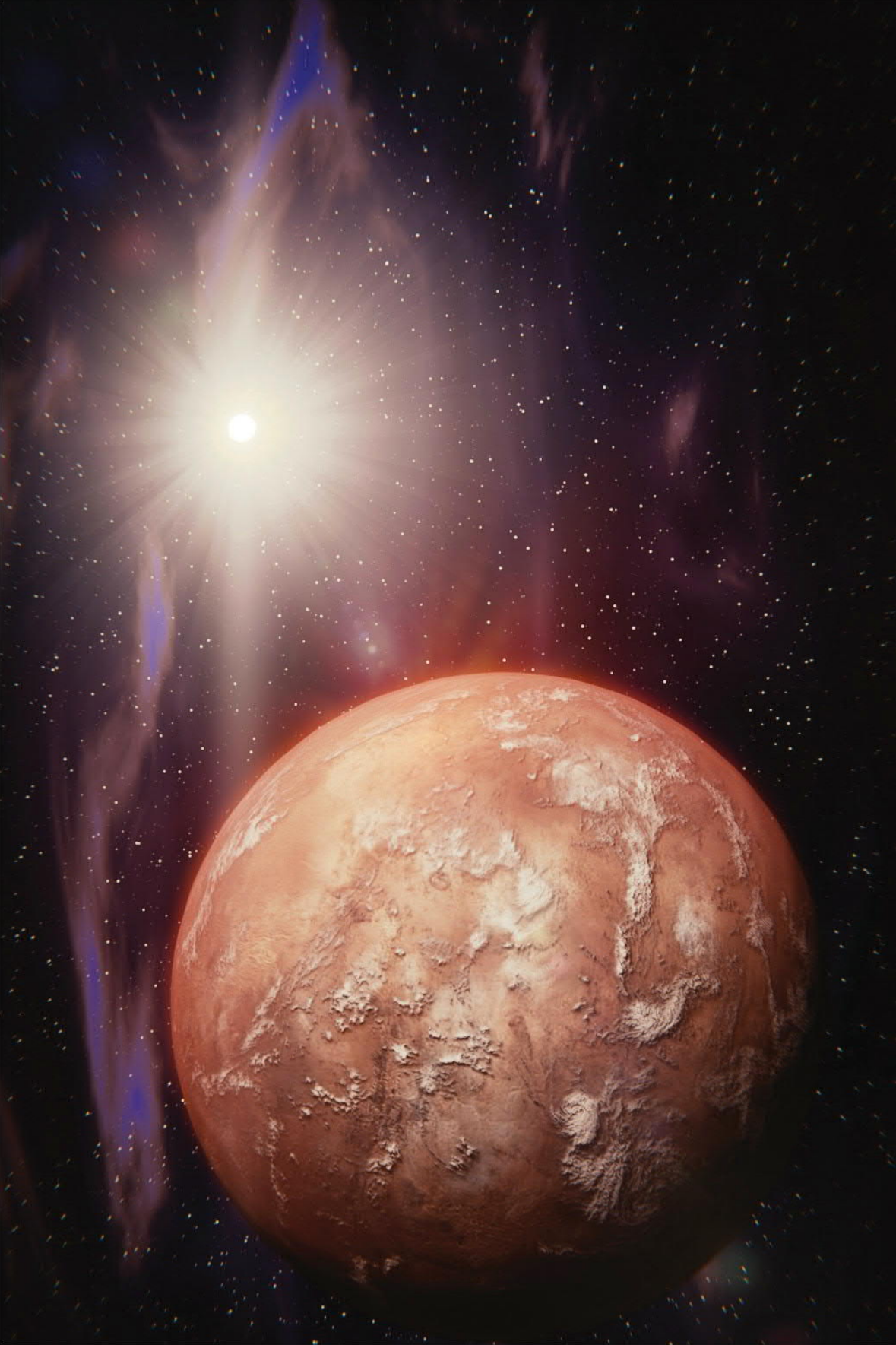
Marsquake

This scenario begins with the team in Oras colony on Mars. Perhaps they are spending some downtime between missions visiting family, or on a drinking binge. Or perhaps they just wrapped up another adventure set on Mars, such as *Thirst* or *Eviction Notice*, and haven't even had time for a breather.

Downtime

However they came by their well-earned downtime, have the team play out a little bit of it. This is also a good opportunity to touch on personal plots or shed a bit on light on the characters. Just what do they do when they're between jobs?

Try to give each of the player characters a short scene. You can adapt each one to that particular character's strengths or interests. A few ideas are given below:

- Teams who just finished their last job likely just got paid. This means that the scrappers may have microcredits burning a hole in their proverbial pockets. Shopping for new gear is a time-honored tradition and something easily accomplished in most colonies on Mars.
- Characters with a violent bent may want to seek out illegal underground bloodsports (see page 33 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook). They could make bets on the outcome or even participate in the games!
- The team may have any number of contacts on Mars. Checking up on old friends, acquaintances or even enemies can make for an interesting scene. This is especially true if using the Contacts rules from page 3 of *Shadows Over Sol: Contacts*.
- Characters of a scientific bent may want to pursue research activities or conduct experiments. This may call for any number of flips, including **Int/bio-sci** or **Int/phy-sci**.

The News

As the team goes about their business, the GM should mention some of the things that are in the news. These tidbits provide important foreshadowing for later in the adventure.

- The net is full of talk about a Heed celebrity, Grand Wizmo Altantsetseg, who was killed when an undetected meteoroid struck his ship as it waited in queue for a shuttle to Oras Topside Station, in orbit at the top of Mars' space elevator.
- There is also news of a new attempt to build a permanent settlement on Mercury—in a pocket in the deep crust, between the mantle and the surface. (This news item is largely unrelated to the adventure, but touches on the ideas of placing facilities next to a planetary mantle.)
- Lastly, one of the team hears some technical babble about current solar system models continuing to be slightly out of alignment with observations, even though astronomers have been refining these models for centuries.

Marsquake

While the team is in the middle of their downtime shenanigans, a major tremor suddenly strikes Mars. All around them is chaos, as everything that was not bolted down has fallen to the floor or toppled over. Screams can be heard and nearby buildings threaten to collapse.

- Have each of the scrappers make a **Dex/athletics-10** flip to avoid falling to the ground and suffering a light wound, as well as embarassment.

Aftermath

Give the team time to react. The colony they are in has suffered at least some damage. People are trapped and need help. People are confused. No one knows the cause of the tremor.

- Locating people that need help is a **Per/awareness-10** flip. Lifting debris to free those trapped underneath is a **Str/athletics-12** flip.
- Gossiping about the quake calls for a **Chr/socialize-8 flip**. "Perhaps it was a terrorist attack? Or maybe some idiot crashed an ice delivery nearby, outside the crash zone?"
- Anyone using their AR glasses or implant will see a flood of messages from people reacting to the quake. An **Int/comp-ops-8** flip will quickly reveal that, whatever caused it, the tremor was felt all across Mars at roughly the same time. It was not a local event.

Moving On

Give the team some time to react and look into the cause of the quake—a few hours to group up, rescue survivors and

This Is Not Normal

Earthquakes are common on Earth; it is a tectonically active world with a molten mantle. Mars, on the other hand, is tectonically dead. Quakes have been unheard of there for a billion years. This Marsquake is not normal. Anyone may make an **Int/phy-sci-8** flip to know that.

search the net should suffice. The mystery should just be beginning to deepen when they receive a contact request.

The Offer

If the team agrees to the contact request, it will open a vid-connection between them and a Ms. Nguyen, who claims to be a representative of Sinoex's Department or Research and Development.

She says that her department is looking into the cause of the Marsquake, as it has already been named in multiple subcultures, and she wants to hire the scrappers to investigate. She will let on that she has some leads they can follow,

but she will not divulge those leads until all of the crew have signed the contract.

- She is offering an Income 7 payment for the job. Success on a **Chr/persuade-10** flip, however, can negotiate her up to an Income 8 payment.
- With a successful **Int/deception-12** flip, the team might be able to trick her into divulging a bit about her lead. She believes that the quake is linked to activity at a series of sites spread across Mars. One of those sites happens to nearby, which is why she's contacting the team: she put out a contract offer based on proximity to that location.

The Details

Once the PCs have accepted the offer, she will reveal the details about her lead willingly. She believes that the quake is linked to activity at a series of

sites spread across Mars. One of those— at coordinates 0°, 0°—is close to the team's current location.

She does not know what to expect at the site, only that the closest tremors seemed to originate from there. She is confident, however, that other corps have processed the same data and are sending their own teams to investigate. She would encourage the scrappers not to waste time if they want to get their payday. Once they have something to report, they can contact her via hand terminal and she will arrange to transfer their payment.

With that, Ms. Nguyen signs off. The team can grab their gear, hop in a rover and head out to the site.

Ms. Bian Nguyen

Geneline Martian Standard*, **Subculture** Ghostman
Str 4, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 6, **Per** 4, **Chr** 6, **Det** 6
Defense 8/16, **DR** 0, **Shock** 12, **Wound** 5, **Wealth** 7, **Lifestyle** 7
Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucrat 3, Comp-Ops 3, Conspiracy 3, Deception 2, Empathy 2, Guns 1, Lib-Arts 2, Persuade 3, Phy-Sci 2, Socialize 3
Light Pistol: +4 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Range 10, Shots 10
Gear: AR Glasses, Biometric Cracker, Hand Terminal, Verazine

Born in Oras colony to a family also in Sinoex's employ, Nguyen was taught by the corp's schools and raised on a steady stream of pro-Sinoex propoganda. Now in her mid-20's, she has worked for Sinoex for several years and been recently promoted. In fact, this is her first time hiring a freelance scrapper team, although she will do her best not to let on. After all, even shady corp recruiters have to start somewhere.

* See page 34 of *Shadows Over Sol: Beyond Human*.

Triacontahedron

In this act, the team will head out to the coordinates given to them by Ms. Nguyen. There they will discover a secret facility seemingly left undisturbed since World War IV. They'll confront a rival Microdyne scrapper team, and they'll even be led to a second secret facility, mysteriously similar to the first.

The events of this act are on a timer. The team is racing against time to discover both secret facilities before their Microdyne rivals. As the GM, you may choose to either keep strict track of time or to handwave the timing for best dramatic effect. If keeping strict track of time, assume each flip takes about 10 minutes, unless common sense dictates otherwise. Whichever method you choose, make sure that the players feel the time pressure.

Times will be measured from the point when their negotiation with Ms. Nguyen concludes: T=0 minutes.

Excursion

It should be easy enough for the team to load up a rover and head out to 0°, 0°. If the team doesn't own a rover, one can be rented in Oras colony.

- Renting a rover is a basic lifestyle expense for anyone with Lifestyle 6 or better. Otherwise, the rental will require a Cost 6 payment. The process takes about half an hour.
- Leaving the colony by rover requires passing through a security checkpoint. This takes another half hour, although the process can be shortened to only 10 minutes with either a successful **Int/bureaucrat-10** flip or a Cost 5 bribe.
- Under normal circumstances, the trip from Oras to 0°, 0° takes about 5 hours. However, the driver may make a **Spd/vehicles-10** flip to maneuver the vehicle more quickly to the destination. This reduces the travel time by 10 minutes per Mag.

The Competition

As Ms. Nguyen warned them, the team is not the only interested party headed to those coordinates. En route is another scrapper team, this one hired by the megacorp Microdyne. It is led by Tang Yun-Seo, a ruthless killer who will be more than happy to leave the characters in an unmarked grave. Under no circumstances will she let the team leave with whatever secrets they discovered.

- The Microdyne team is on schedule to arrive at the coordinates at T=6.5 hours (390 minutes).
- Characters checking the net to look for evidence of competitors can discover Microdyne's interest in the site with a successful **Per/comp-ops-12** flip. This will reveal they they posted a job looking for scrappers to visit a "location of interest" and that the job was filled soon thereafter.

Microdyne

For more on the computing megacorp Microdyne, see page 57 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

Secret Facility

The location of interest—0°, 0°—is a flat and otherwise unremarkable area of regolith a ways north of Noachis Terra ("Land of Noah"), a landmass in Mars' southern hemisphere. The area is dotted by small boulders and the occasional crag, but is otherwise easily traversed.

Teams searching the area for signs of anything out of the ordinary can make either a **Per/investigate-12** or a **Per/naturalist-10** flip. On a success, the scrapper discovers a hidden airlock door a few dozen meters away from the exact location of 0°, 0°. This door is almost perfectly disguised as a small boulder partially embedded in the regolith.

Failure on this flip results in wasted time. The team will still find the door, but it will take at least half an hour. Furthermore, the team will be distracted if Microdyne arrives while they're still searching (see page 16). This gives Yun-Seo's team a chance to park their own rover far away and sneak up, potentially ambushing the characters.

Accessing the Airlock

Before the team can access the airlock, they must first move the boulder that both blocks and hides the airlock door.

- The boulder must be manually lifted out of the way, requiring someone to make a **Str/athletics-12** flip. Failure results in the character increasing her Fatigue consequence a severity. Once lifted out of the hole, an old airlock is visible underneath the boulder's former location.

- The door doesn't have any visible rust or other age marks (Mars' atmosphere doesn't have the necessary oxygen for that), but a successful **Int/engineer-10** flip will reveal that the airlock door is of an older style that hasn't been popular for decades.

- Characters searching the door for a key card slot or number pad may make a **Per/awareness-10** flip to confirm that the airlock has neither. It instead relies solely on its mundane camouflage to avoid discovery.

Opening the Airlock

The airlock does not have any power, but it can be manually operated. Any attempt to short circuit the airlock with hacking or an electronic security override will fail.

- A successful **Per/mechanic-8** flip will reveal that there is no power being routed to the airlock. Whatever supplies it once had are long dead.

- A resourceful character might be able to manually hook up power from her own personal supplies to power the airlock. This requires the right gear and a successful **Dex/mechanic-10** flip.

- Alternatively, the airlock's emergency controls can be manually operated and then the door can be forced open with a **Str/athletics-12** flip. Failure still opens the airlock, but results in the character's Fatigue consequence being increased a severity.

- Cutting through the airlock is also possible with the correct equipment, however, this takes half an hour and compromises the atmosphere inside.

Exploring the Facility

On the other side of the airlock door is a corridor that gradually slops downwards, leading in the direction of true 0°, 0°. The atmospheric readout on the team's environment suits will indicate a breathable atmosphere with no known contaminants. Anyone breathing the air will note that it smells old, but clean; not musty.

- As the team travels down the corridor, anyone checking atmospheric readings may make a **Per/naturalist-10** flip to notice that radiation levels are increasing slightly as they descend, rather than decreasing as would normally be expected.

Central Chamber

The corridor zigzags downwards in a series of switchbacks. After about five minutes of pressing forward, the team will have descended 50 meters, and the corridor will open up into a larger room. This room is dome-shaped, with a circular walkway on the parameter and a ventilation grate in the center. Along the outside of the room are eight doors, most leading to other chambers. They are described in clockwise order, starting from the entryway where the scrappers first emerge.

- The chamber has a very fine layer of dust. Success on a **Per/investigate-10** flip reveals that it looks undisturbed.
- In some places the paint on the walls is peeling or beginning to crumble to dust. It is an odd mauve color that hasn't been popular for decades.
- The doors leading out of this room may have once had labels painted over them, but these have long since peeled away.
- Those standing on the ventilation grate may notice that no air is being pushed through it. This means that either the facility is completely out of power or the ventilation has been shut down entirely.

Habs

The first door leads to what appears to be an old bunking area. It consists of another corridor with several small rooms off to either side. Each room contains a pair of bunks, one stacked on top of the other, with a medium-sized lockbox on either side.

- The scrappers may search the bunks for anything left behind. This requires a successful **Per/investigate-10** flip. However, there isn't much to be found. One lockbox contains a decaying blanket and an empty metal flask. Another contains an old jumpsuit—the same weird mauve color as the walls—stitched with the name "Chuck" on the chest. A lewd postcard is tucked under one of the mattresses. The most interesting find is a crumpled pay stub dated May 10, 2149. The letterhead at the top indicates that it is from the Mizalcor Initiative.
- Either a successful **Int/conspiracy-10** flip or **Int/comp-ops-12** flip will reveal that the Mizalcor Initiative was an old space technology firm that filed for bankruptcy shortly after World War IV. It was involved in some of the earliest terraforming efforts and was one of the founding organizations involved in the

Mars Terraforming Project. For more information, see page 3.

Restrooms

The next door over leads to the facility's restrooms. There are two stalls with toilets and a bidet, as well as a shower. A curtain still hangs in the shower, but the plastic has yellowed and is brittle with age. Two sinks with mirrors line the far wall.

There is little of note to be found in the restrooms. The toilets and other accommodations are dry, as the water in the facility's tanks was either long ago drained or evaporated. A toothbrush lies discarded near the sinks.

Mess Hall

Beyond this door is a small mess hall. It contains two long tables lined with stools, as well as a counter in the back intended to serve food.

- A plastic tub next to the counter is still sealed and can be pried open to reveal what looks like a stack of cream-filled golden sponge cakes. The fact that they are still intact and recognizable after all this time speaks to the large amount of artificial preservatives in them.

Recreational Room

Next to the mess hall is what looks to be an old recreational room. A table sits at its center. A shelf lines one wall with a few board games and a dart board. On the far side of the room are two treadmills and a weightlifting bench.

- The treadmills lack power, but the rod used with the weightlifting bench can be removed and functions

as an improvised crowbar. The weights themselves are almost comically large, given Mars' low gravity.

Storage

This room contains several shelves that are mostly barren, aside from a few empty boxes and a lone can of beans. The beans have an expiration date of January, 2150. They are no longer edible.

Maintenance

This cramped room is little more than a large closet that allows access to the facility's water supply, air recycling, fuse box and other basic infrastructure.

- A successful **Per/mechanic-10** flip will reveal that neither the air recycling or water supply has power, nor does the water supply contain any water.
- It will also reveal that the facility has two power generators, a primary generator as well as a secondary generator powering the room behind the locked door. The fuse for the secondary generator has burnt out.

Locked Door

Next to the maintenance room is a locked door of the type intended to slide open when a button is pressed. Unfortunately, the door is without power and sealed tight. The locked door leads to the control room (see the next page).

- If the team has cutting tools, they might be able to cut through the door with about 15 minutes of work. No flip is required if the scrapper has a plasma torch or similar gear; she just spends the necessary time

and the door is cut open.

- Those without cutting tools may be able to pry the door open with a crowbar and a successful **Str/thievery-10** flip. Improvising a crowbar using furniture or gym equipment imposes the usual -2 penalty for improvised gear.
- Connecting a power supply to the door requires a **Dex/mechanic-10** flip. However, once powered, the door will deny the characters access unless they can hack the door's security: an **Int/program-10** flip.

Control Room

Once the locked door is open, two things happen at once. The team will be face-to-face with a combat drone, and the radiation alarms in their environment suits will begin screeching. If you can test your smoke alarm to make a screeching sound and startle your players, all the better. It should be sudden and jarring.

- So long as the door is open, the team is now in a radiation area; this will quickly apply to the whole complex. See the radiation rules on page 155 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.
- Anyone without proper radiation protection must make an immediate **End-10** flip against damage from the radiation. Another flip must be made every 10 minutes.
- The combat drone is inert and sits on a shelf near a series of control panels. Examining the drone and succeeding on a **Per/mechanic-10** flip will reveal that it seems to have suffered from a power surge—and a very recent power surge at that!

Activating the Controls

Just past the combat drone is what looks to have once been a control station, with a series of control panels and an open gateway to the right, revealing heavy mining equipment, long since abandoned. On the far side of the control panels, the other half of the room seems to have collapsed into some sort of large hole, which is roughly 10 meters in diameter and extends downward as far as the eye can see.

- The computers built into the control panel have recently been fried in a power surge, but can be repaired with half an hour's work and a successful **Dex/mechanic-10** flip.
- Once powered up, the team will need to override the security protocols. Fortunately, the panels' security is decades out of date. Hacking them requires a successful **Int/program-12** flip, which is reduced to **Int/program-8** if someone on the team first searches the net for old security exploits.
- The data on the computers reveals that this facility belongs to an organization called the Mizalcor Initiative. It is subterranean facility #13 out of a set of 30 such facilities, all regularly spaced to form a triacontahedron across the surface of the planet.
- Each facility is equipped with a high-yield uranium-based fission bomb, placed at the bottom of a borehole which extends downward, almost to the mantle of Mars itself.
- There are also references to a plan on the part of Mizalcor to terraform Mars, but much of that data is lost.

We've Got Company!

The team can head back to Oras or report to Ms. Nguyen whenever they finish investigating the secret facility, but it is likely that the rival Microdyne team will arrive at some point before they can finish their search.

The rival team, the Tang Gang, will show up at T=6.5 hours (390 minutes) or whenever the GM deems it dramatically appropriate. As the team is leaving or shortly after they open the locked door both make for good dramatic moments.

Alternatively, if the team makes it into and out of the facility before T=6 hours (360 minutes), they've gotten away before the Microdyne team shows up. They will have avoided the fight for now, but it means the Tang Gang will be at full strength when they show up at the second facility (see page 19).

If the team leaves between T=6 and T=6.5 hours, they'll cross paths with the Tang Gang en route from the site. This will result in a chase by rover, as the Tang Gang turns and starts their pursuit (see "The Chase" below).

Radio Chatter

When the rival team first arrives, anyone with an active hand terminal or comm may pick up radio chatter from them. This chatter is encrypted, but it is distinguishable from the usual background static, alerting the team to the presence of rivals.

- Noticing the radio chatter calls for a **Per/comp-ops-10** flip.

- Breaking the chatter's trivial encryption requires a successful **Spd/program-14** flip. This reveals that the rival team has noticed the player characters' rover. They've also stopped their rover a distance away and are maneuvering the ambush the team.

Microdyne Forces

The Tang Gang consists of Tang Yun-Seo, Komani and a number of subordinate scrappers equal to the number of PCs. (The gang also has a few other members who've remained behind in Oras to investigate reports of the Marsquake on the net. They won't be present during the attack.)

- Komani will remain behind to guard their rover and coordinate his team over comms. His stats are on page 23.
- Tang will lead her team into the secret facility, hoping to ambush her rivals. Her stats are on page 17.
- The rest of the Tang Gang will follow close behind. There are a number equal to the number of PCs. Their stats are on page 17.

The Chase

If the player characters try to flee without first defeating the Tang Gang, the gang will give pursuit in their own rover. On the other hand, if Komani is the last of his team standing, he will drive back to Oras to group up with those left behind.

- The rover chase can be handled as an extended **Spd/vehicles vs. Spd/vehicles (Tally 10, 1 minute)** action. Whichever team scores highest on the flip each round can attack the other.

Tang Yun-Seo

Geneline Earthside Standard, **Subculture** Entro

Str 8, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 7, **Int** 5, **Per** 5, **Chr** 7, **Det** 6

Defense 8/17, **DR** 5, **Shock** 18, **Wound** 7, **Wealth** 6, **Lifestyle** 6

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Bureaucrat 2, Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 3, Deception 2, Empathy 2, Guns 3, Investigate 2, Medic 2, Melee 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, Thievery 2, Vehicles 2

Heavy Pistol: +5 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Autofire 2, Range 10, Shots 10

Knife: +5 (♠21M/♥14M/♦7M/♣3M), Thrown

Stun Grenade: +5 (♠24L/♥16L/♦8L/♣4L), Area 5, Stun, Thrown

Gear: AR Implant, Hand Terminal, Tactical Suit (DR 5, Bulky 1)

Tang Yun-Seo grew up in East Asia, but fled to space in her adolescence when she killed a man who assaulted her in a bar. She did odd jobs on Luna for a while, before falling in with a group of scrappers. Fast forward a decade, and Tang is now the leader of her own scrapper outfit, unofficially called the Tang Gang. She hates the name, but it stuck and Komani, her lover, likes it so she tolerates it for now (see page 23).

Unusually tall and muscular, Tang fights with the ferocity of a cornered tiger when angered—willful, viscous and utterly without mercy. She never forgets a slight and never forgives. She leads through a combination of fear and protectiveness towards those under her command.

Tang Gang

Geneline Earthside Standard, **Subculture** Entro

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 6, **Int** 5, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 8/17, **DR** 2*, **Shock** 13*, **Wound** 6, **Wealth** 4, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 2, Empathy 2, Guns 4, Investigate 2, Mechanic 2, Medic 2, Melee 4, Stealth 2, Thievery 2, Vehicles 2

Heavy Pistol: +7 (♠15M/♥10M/♦5M/♣2M), Autofire 2, Range 10, Shots 10

Knife: +5 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M), Thrown

Stun Grenade: +4 (♠24L/♥16L/♦8L/♣4L), Area 5, Stun, Thrown

Gear: AR Implant, Ballistic Suit (DR 2, Gel 3), Hand Terminal, Medikit

* These values have +3 against ballistic attacks.

Most of the Tang Gang are Entros from Earth who have rallied behind Tang Yun-Seo and Komani as their leaders. Although they operate out of Mars, ostensibly as a team of scrappers, most are little more than violent thugs looking for their next fight. They need to regularly be bullied into line by Tang.

Change of Plans

Once the team reports back to Ms. Nguyen, she'll be concerned with what they have to report—particularly if they discovered that a detonated fission bomb was the source of the radiation they encountered.

While the scrappers have been investigating the secret facility, her team at Sinoex have been continuing to process the data from the Marsquake. According to their calculations, and given all of the info they have, the Marsquake originated from 29 different sites across Mars. These sites would form a rhombic triacontahedron around the planet, except that a single point in the polyhedron is missing.

Ms. Nguyen speculates that something was supposed to happen at that missing point, and it didn't. If the team has brought her evidence of atomic bombs at each site, she'll speculate that the bomb at the missing point probably failed to detonate as intended.

She would like the team to recover that weapon before anyone else gets to it, or before it goes off on its own. No one wants nuclear weapons lying around, and Sinoex could undoubtedly use its material.

Even if she doesn't know of the bombs, she will want the team to investigate the missing point to see if they can discover how it is different.

Renegotiation

Nguyen will try to convince the team to head to the next site without any additional pay. If the scrappers question her, she will state their job is not yet complete. However, if the team presses the issue, she will relent and renegotiate their offer.

- If one of the team members succeeds on a **Det/persuade vs. Det/persuade** flip, Ms. Nguyen will up the offer by Income +1.
- Ms. Nguyen's stats are on page 9.

Destination & Timer

Once the team has agreed to head to the next site, Ms. Nguyen will reveal its location: 0°, 39.916°.

- If the GM is keeping strict track of time, begin a new timer with T=0. At T=28 hours, the remnants of the Tang Gang, led by Komani, will catch up with the team and press the attack.

The Journey

The trek to 0°, 39.916° is a difficult drive by rover with a lot of rough terrain, including some major craters. The distance from Oras is 2,367 km if the team could keep to a straight line, but that is impossible given the terrain. Instead they will need to weave around major obstacles and avoid complications with their vehicle.

- The journey by rover can be handled as an extended action: **Spd/vehicles-12 (Tally 10, 6 hours)**.
- If any single flip of the extended action is failed, the vehicle has some sort issue. The first time a flip is failed, a warning indictor comes on. The second time a flip is failed, the vehicle breaks down and must be repaired with an hour of work and

a **Dex/mechanic-10** flip. Further failures also result in breakdowns, but increase the TN by +2 each time.

- Success on an **Int/phy-sci-12** flip allows a character to chart a more efficient route, reducing the Interval to 5 hours.
- Alternatively, an **Int/phy-sci-12** flip may be made to find a safer route, reducing the Vehicles flips to TN 10. This option, however, is not compatible with the more efficient route.
- During the journey, the team may want to switch drivers between intervals. If they do not, the driver must make an **End-10** flip for every interval after the first. On a failure, she increases her Fatigue consequence a severity. This is in addition to any flips for sleep deprivation (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 160).

Second Facility

Once the team arrives at 0°, 39.916°, they can begin to search for a hidden airlock or anything else out of the ordinary. This time the search will be easier, as the team has an idea of what they are looking for.

- Success on a **Per/naturalist-8** or a **Per/investigate-8** flip locates the an airlock hidden behind a boulder a couple dozen meters away. It looks almost identical to the airlock at the previous site. Failure means the team wastes half an hour searching before locating the airlock.
- As before, the boulder must be lifted out of the way with a **Str/athletics-12** flip. Failure causes the character to

increase her Fatigue consequence a severity, but the boulder is still moved.

- Unlike the previous site, this airlock still has enough power to operate. Once the boulder is moved it may be opened trivially.

Exploration

This facility is laid out as a mirror image to the previous one, but is otherwise almost identical. Any differences between it and the previous facility the team explored are noted below.

Once the team opens the door to the control room, however, events will take a very different turn.

Central Chamber

The fans in this facility are still running, pushing air up through the ventilation grate in the center of the floor. This causes the central chamber to have a slight breeze. If the characters listen carefully, they can also hear the distant hum of the facility's fans.

Habs

The mattresses from all the habs have been piled up in a single room and covered in scattered clothing. Everything here smells musty and is caked in some sort of old rot. A desiccated human corpse lies in one corner of the room, clutching an old ration bar wrapper.

Restrooms

Assorted decades-old toiletries are scattered about the floor in haphazard fashion. The shower curtain has also been torn down and lies in one corner of the room. The words "Don't go" have been written on the wall in what looks like human feces.

Mess Hall

A variety of discarded packaged food containers litter the floor. The tables have been pushed to each side of the room and the chairs have been stacked up in a haphazard pile.

Recreational Room

Board game pieces and broken gym equipment lie scattered about the room.

Storage

The shelves in this room are stacked with boxes. These boxes may have once held prepackaged foodstuffs, but they are now empty.

Maintenance

The maintenance closet hums with a variety of machinery.

- A successful **Per/mechanic-10** flip reveals that this facility is beginning to run low on power, but is otherwise still operational.

Control Room Door

As with the similar door in the first facility, the control room door is locked.

- Hacking the door's security requires a successful **Int/program-10** flip.
- Cutting through the door is automatic with the appripriate tools, such as a plasma torch, but takes 15 minutes.
- A **Str/thievery-10** flip can be made to pry the door open.

Mizalcor Hover Drone

Str 3, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 7, **End** 5, **Int** 3, **Per** 6, **Chr** 1, **Det** 6
Defense 10/21, **DR** 2, **Shock** 11, **Wound** 4
Skills: Awareness 3, Guns 3, Mechanic 3
Laser: +7 (♠9M/♥6M/♦3M/♣1M), Autofire 2, Range 10, Shots 20
Flight: Hover drones can fly at twice normal movement rates.
Machine: As a machine, a drone is immune to metabolic hazards, as well as emotion-based consequences.
Size -2: Hover drones are very small and nimble. This has been factored into the drone's Defense and Shock (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 209).

These hover drones are of an older style and fit a niche halfway between modern scout drones and combat drones. They are held aloft with four small propellers, and are equipped with a low-powered laser weapon.

Mizalcor Tracked Drone

Str 7, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 10, **Int** 5, **Per** 5, **Chr** 1, **Det** 10
Defense 8/17, **DR** 4, **Shock** 22, **Wound** 8
Skills: Awareness 2, Guns 3, Mechanic 1, Melee 3
Laser: +7 (♠12M/♥8M/♦2M/♣2M), Autofire 4, Range 5, Shots 40
Machine: As a machine, a drone is immune to metabolic hazards, as well as emotion-based consequences.
On Treads: The combat drone is on lightweight but durable tracks, allowing it to roll over moderate terrain with little difficulty.
Size -1: Tracked drones are very small and nimble. This has been factored into the drone's Defense and Shock (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 209).

These tracked drones are essentially smaller, more primative versions of modern armored crawlers. They've each been equipped with a laser weapon.

Control Room

The control room may technically have power, but other than a slight glow coming from the control panels, it is currently dark—the ceiling lights having burnt out decades ago.

Its combat drones are also powered up and fully functional. As soon as the team opens the door, begin combat rounds.

Hostile Encounter

The control room is guarded by several drones with longstanding instructions to attack anyone who enters the room.

- There are a number of hover drones equal to the number of PCs. See the stat block above.
- They are backed up by two tracked drones. See the stat block above.

Activating the Controls

Once the combat is over, the team can try to power up the facility, assuming they did not destroy too many of the consoles in the control room.

- If they did harm one of the consoles, it can be repaired with a successful **Dex/mechanic-10** flip and an hour of work.
- Powering up the console and facility requires a successful **Int/comp-ops-8** flip. Failure results in the loss of half an hour as the team tries every possible button.
- An activated console must still be hacked with an **Int/program-12** flip. This is reduced to **Int/program-8** if someone on the team previously found a security exploit on the net.

Retrieving the Warhead

As the team may have theorized, the site contains an undetonated nuclear warhead, which is currently at the bottom of a borehole adjacent to the control room. To retrieve the warhead, the team will need to activate the borehole's lifting mechanism and reel it back up.

- With the control console powered up and access granted, a scrapper can activate the lifting mechanism with a successful **Det/comp-ops-10** flip. This will begin a two hour process of slowly reeling up the line.
- Hurrying the lifting mechanism is possible, but at the risk of destroying the mechanism or even dropping the device down the borehole, rendering it irretrievable. This requires a successful **Int/program-14** flip. Any failure causes a malfunction.
- Repelling down the borehole to manually retrieve the warhead is technically possible, but ill-advised. A team member will need to repel down a 5 km tunnel leading deep into the Martian crust. She'll then need to lift a 200 kg (Big 20) bomb and carry it all the way back up out of the hole.

Critical Data

The data on the console remains largely uncorrupted. Digging through it, the team can discover the Mizalcor Initiative's plans for Martian terraforming.

Atomic bombs were placed at regular points under the Martian crust, part of an effort to create strategic faults through Mars' dead mantle. The hope was that the energy produced by igniting the bombs would cause the outer mantle to liquify and magnetically realign, producing a stronger magnetosphere around the planet, and thus protecting it from the most harmful effects of solar radiation.

But the bombs were just half the plan. Automated drones were also sent out to alter the paths of close to one thousand objects in the solar system, and to have them collide with Mars at roughly the same time. These would produce an abundance of additional energy and theoretically heat the already fractured crust.

Of course, Mars was barely populated then. Today, collisions of that magnitude would result in the destruction of all three colonies and millions of deaths.

- An **Int/comp-ops-10** flip is required to access the information detailed above.
- A successful **Int/phy-sci-10** flip will allow a character to conclude that the plan is absolutely bonkers.

"Papa Bear" Komani

Geneline Budget Upgrade, **Subculture** Entro
Str 7, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 7, **End** 6, **Int** 5, **Per** 5, **Chr** 6, **Det** 8
Defense 9/18, **DR** 2*, **Shock** 17*, **Wound** 6, **Wealth** 5, **Lifestyle** 5
Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Bureaucrat 2, Comp-Ops 2, Conspiracy 3, Empathy 3, Guns 3, Investigate 2, Melee 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, Vehicles 3
Light Rifle: +6 (♠18M/♥12M/♦6M/♣3M), Hands 2, Range 20, Shots 10
Knife: +6 (♠21M/♥14M/♦7M/♣3M), Thrown
Gear: AR Implant, Ballistic Suit (DR 2, Gel 3), Hand Terminal, Radio Comm
* These values have +3 against ballistic attacks.

Komani, or "Papa Bear," as he calls himself, was one of Tang's first recruits and is also her lover. He is the strong, silent type and fiercely loyal.

Microdyne Returns

The remnants of the Tang Gang have been tracking the team ever since their initial defeat at the first secret facility. They've also been informed by their patron, Microdyne, about the one point missing in the rhombic triacontahedron of sites that caused the Marsquake.

Seeing the chance to both cash in on a Mircodyne payday and to get their revenge on the team, they've armed themselves and headed out to 0°, 39.916° to do some killing and salvaging.

- The Microdyne team will arrive at T=28 hours or when the GM deems it dramatically appropriate.
- The player characters will have a chance to detect them when they first arrive. This requires a **Per/comp-ops-12** flip to pick up on their radio chatter.
- As before, the encryption can be hacked with a **Spd/program-14** flip. Doing so will reveal the gang's numbers.

The Fight

If the Tang Gang arrives before the team, they'll try to hide their rover, enter the facility and set up an ambush. If they arrive after the team, they'll go in guns blazing and hope the shock of a sudden attack gives them an advantage.

- If Komani survived, he will lead the assault. See his stat block above.
- He has with him a number of gang members equal to the number of PCs. Their stats can be found on page 17.
- Any gang members that survived the first assault will also be present.

Delivering the Warhead

Once the team has retrieved the warhead from the second facility, they can report to Ms. Nguyen. She tells them that she will meet them at a loading dock in Oras colony. The trip back by rover may take a day or more, but there is no longer any time pressure once the Microdyne team has been defeated.

Rocks Fall; Everyone Dies?

When the team meets up with Ms. Nguyen at Oras colony, she is visibly worried. While she does her best to congratulate them on the job they've done so far, she quickly thereafter turns to the bad news.

The death of Grand Wizmo Altant-setseg got a lot of people looking to the sky for other objects crossing Mars' orbit (see page 7). And when the various orbital scientists and amateur enthusiasts looked around, they found a whole lot of previously-undetected objects on the collision course with the Red Planet. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of meteoroids, asteroids, and other space objects were detected and are on an imminent collision course with Mars. The vast majority are projected to do very little damage on their own, but the sum total paints a grim picture for Mars' future habitability.

Incoming!

If anyone on the team has kept up with astronomy news, she may remember that astronomers have noticed a slight difference in orbital models vs. actual orbits (see page 7). Attempts have been ongoing to correct the issue.

With the discovery of the vast number of objects on a collision course with Mars, however, the reason for this discrepancy is now clear: Someone has done this deliberately. But the worst is yet to come.

Several corps have launched military-grade ships to intercept, destroy or divert the nearest objects to their locations, but all available hands are needed if all of the objects on a collision course are to be dealt with.

The most concerning is an asteroid named Interamnia. It has accelerated, has a significant amount of mass and has no one else nearby to intercept it.
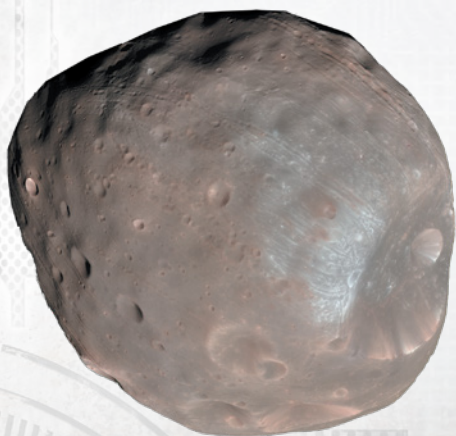
Interamnia

- **Classification:** F-type asteroid
- **Discovered:** October 2, 1910
- **Gravity:** 0.0087 G
- **Solar Year:** 1,953 days (5.35 years)
- **Sidereal Day:** 8.71 hours
- **Distance From Sol:** 3.06 AU
- **Mean Radius:** 172 km

Mission to Interamnia

The team will be given one final task: fly out to Interamnia and divert it so that it doesn't strike Mars.

Ms. Nguyen will ask them to take this new job out of a sense of duty to humanity and for the countless lives it will save. (After all, she is new at hiring scrappers.) If the team insists on monetary compensation, however, she is more than willing to negotiate.

- With a successful **Det/persuade-10** flip, she will up the team's previous offer by Income +1 (to a maximum of Income 9).
- If the team doesn't have a ship, she will also offer them temporary command of a Sinoex vessel for the duration of the mission: an MC-9 "Victory" Corvette named the Saint Jude (see *Shiny New Toys*, page 59).

The Plan

Sinoex scans have discovered a previously undetected installation attached to Interamnia. This installation has now powered up and is using its powerful thrusters to accelerate the asteroid toward Mars.

The team is to take a ship and intercept the asteroid en route. Once there, they should be able to enter the installation, disable the thrusters and set Interamnia on a course away from the Red Planet.

Ms. Nguyen is willing to hear other plans, but unlikely to endorse them. For example, if one of the team suggests using the atomic bomb they just recovered to blow up Interamnia, she will point out that: A) The bomb didn't explode previously like it supposed to and they don't yet know what's wrong with it; B) Even an atomic bomb is unlikely to shatter an object 344 km in diameter; and C) Even if the asteroid did fracture, the momentum at which the asteroid is traveling is likely to carry the fragments forward and continue to pose a threat to Mars.

Intercept Course

Interamnia is incoming and projected to strike Mars in 45 days. The longer the team delays, the closer Interamnia will be to Mars when they arrive and the more difficult it will be to divert. It's imperative that the team sets out quickly.

- Plotting an intercept trajectory with Interamnia requires an **Int/phy-sci-10** flip. On a success, the team will arrive at Interamnia at T=25 days. On a failure, every Mag adds a day to the travel time. Keep track of the number of days the team is delayed.
- This travel time is also just under the threshold for which stasis is typically used. That means unless the team decides otherwise, they'll make this trip without stasis. Not only will they have time to kill on the ship, they'll also have time to heal some of the wounds they've suffered exploring the two secret facilities (see page 118 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook).

Last Goodbyes

After the team sets off, they'll hear about their mission on the news. It's being hailed as a suicide mission by a heroic

and unknown team of scrappers. Sinoex is officially refusing public comment on the matter, all the while hinting that they may be responsible for the mission and thus for Mars' salvation.

This is a good roleplaying opportunity and allows for a bit of a breather between the action scenes. The player characters have time to kill on the ship. How do they spend it? If this is possibly a suicide mission, do they send any heartfelt messages back to loves ones on Earth or Mars? Do they rail against Sinoex's handling of the publicity? Do they keep their heads down and focus on the task at hand?

Welcoming Party

When the team arrives in the vicinity of Interamnia, they will be greeted violently during the final braking procedures. Two automated drone fighters will launch from hidden ports in the asteroid's surface and attack.

- Use the Mizalcor Automated Fighter stats above if playing with the Vehicular Combat system found on page 12 of *Shiny New Toys*.

- If not using the Vehicular Combat system, you can run the fight as an extended **Spd/vehicles-12 (Tally 10, 10 minutes)** action. Each failed flip results in the team's ship increasing its Wound consequence a severity. If this would increase the severity past critical, the team's ship is disabled.

- Regardless of which system is being used, if the team's ship is defeated, the pilot can make a last ditch **Spd/vehicles-12 flip** to crash land it safely on Interamnia's surface. Failure results in everyone on the team taking a moderate wound during the crash.

- Repairing a crashed ship isn't possible unless the team happens to have plenty of spare parts with them. However, a broken ship might be temporarily restored to working order for a few hours with a successful **Per/mechanic-12** flip—working long enough to take off and radio for help, at least.

- Should the fighters be defeated, the team can dock with Interamnia's surface at their leisure. This requires a successful **Dex/vehicles-10** flip, otherwise the ship takes a light wound.

Locating the Control Node

Once the team lands on Interamnia's surface, they can begin to explore, attempting to locate the control node that is in charge of the thrusters that have been installed on the asteroid.

- Running a scan for possible locations requires either making use of personal scanners or relying on the ship's sensors. Both require a **Per/phy-sci-10** flip.
- On a success, the scrapper learns of five likely candidate sites based on various electromagnetic profiles present on Interamnia. These sites are labeled on the sensor's display as sites *A* through *E*, in order of distance.
- Success by Mag 2+ reveals that sites *A*, *B* and *C* are surrounded by turret defense systems.
- Success by Mag 4+ also reveals that sites *D* and *E* are are likely thrusters showing signs of long-term use.

Exploring the Sites

To determine which site contains the control node they are looking for, the team is going to have to do some exploration.

- Approaching sites *A*, *B* or *C* requires either fighting or avoiding the automated turrets guarding them. Each site has a number of turrets equal to half the number of PCs. Use the Interamnia Turret stats below.
- Sneaking past the turrets without being detected requires success on a **Dex/stealth-12 flip**—one to get to the site and one to get back out. Failure means the character is detected and the turrets attack.
- Should combat occur, remember to employ the microgravity rules found on page 158 of the ***Shadows Over Sol*** core rulebook.
- Each site consists of a small structure connected to the others by wires and other hardware. *A* and *C* are sensor arrays used to steer the asteroid.

Interamnia Turret

Str 1, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 6, **End** 8, **Int** 3, **Per** 5, **Chr** 1, **Det** 8

Defense 6/14, **DR** 5, **Shock** 19, **Wound** 4

Skills: Awareness 4, Guns 4, Mechanic 2

Gun: +6 (♠12M/♥8M/♦4M/♣2M), Autofire 3, Range 10, Shots 30.

Fixed Position: A turret is in a fixed position and cannot dodge. This has already been factored into its Defense. It can also fire ballistic rounds without needing to worry about recoil, as it is solidly anchored to Interamnia's surface.

Machine: As a machine, a turret is immune to metabolic hazards, as well as emotion-based consequences.

Size -1: Turrets are small. This has already been factored into the turret's Defense and Shock.

These turrets were clearly salvaged from some other project and retrofitted to hard-points on Interamnia's surface. Despite being decades out of date, they are nevertheless deadly.

- **D** and **E** are thrusters that have already burnt out in the process of accelerating the asteroid at Mars.
- **B** is the location of the control node. It's what the team is looking for.

Fixing the Panel

Once the team has traveled to Site **B** and either defeated or circumvented the turret defense system, they will discover a small shed-sized structure half embedded in the asteroid's regolith. This structure contains the control node that is directing Interamnia at Mars. The team will need to unlock or blast their way in (see previous page). Once they do, they'll need to fix the control panel and defeat the node's encryption.

- Fixing the control panel takes an hour and calls for a **Dex/mechanic-10** flip. Failure results in accidentally activating a previously unnoticed turret, which the team must then defeat. Either way, however, the panel boots up and is active after the flip is made.

Gaining Control

Defeating the node's encryption uses the Encryption rules found on page 139 of the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook.

- The device has Pro encryption, meaning it would take a decade of compute time to gain access through brute force (divided by the Computer rating of the team's best device). Unfortunately, the team doesn't have that kind of time. Interamnia will strike Mars in about 20 days!
- Thankfully, by now the team should have some past experience with the Mizalcor Initiative's computer systems. This past experience may count for Exploits (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 140).

- If the team was able to activate the control panel and access the data at the first secret facility, count that as an exploit (see page 15).
- If the team was able to do the same at the second facility, count that as another exploit (see page 22).
- Finally, if the team managed to look up exploits on the net for these decades old systems, that counts as yet another exploit (see page 15).
- To break the encryption in time, the team will either need all three exploits or will need two exploits and a device rated at least Computer 2.
- If team doesn't have the requisite number of exploits, they may be able to acquire one by exploring the other sites on Interamnia or by capturing a turret intact, carefully disassembling it and decompiling its code—requiring some exploration and then a combat followed by a successful **Dex/engineer-10** flip and then a successful **Int/program-12** flip.

Diverting the Asteroid

Of course, once the team has control of the node, they'll still need to divert the asteroid. This requires an **Int/phy-sci** flip with a TN equal to 10 plus the number of days the team was delayed getting to Interamnia (see page 26). Characters may support this action using the Group Effort rules and calling upon their own expertise (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook,

page 110). Try to get the whole group involved in this climactic effort.

- A character may make an **Int/bio-sci** flip to find a more efficient use of the available fuel sources.
- Yet another character may make an **Int/engineer** flip to find a better way to operate the installed thrusters.
- One character might help coordinate the team's efforts by attempting a **Chr/bureaucrat** flip.
- Success means that Interamnia is deflected, missing Mars in it trajectory and sailing off into the void.
- Failure means the asteroid impacts the Red Planet, followed by the deaths of thousands.

Happily Ever After? Maybe.

If the team managed to gain access to the control node and divert Interamnia by T=45 days, the asteroid's course will be significantly altered and it will miss Mars entirely. It may continue to be of concern periodically when its new orbit again crosses Mars' path, but that's a problem for many years in the future. For now the team just needs to leave Interamnia and go claim their reward.

A substantial payment and minor celebrity awaits them. While they didn't save Mars by themselves, they were a notable part of a well-publicized system-wide effort to save it. Few may remember their names in a decade or so, but for now, journalists, minor politicians and public relations representatives will be lining up to make their acquaintance. Sinoex, at the very least, will want to cash in on the team's newfound fame and the megacorp's part in it. New jobs will be much easier to find and may pay more lucratively.

Fallout

On the other hand, if the team failed to divert Interamnia, Mars will be severely damaged by the asteroid's impact. Without a substantial atmosphere to provide inertia and dampen the blast, the shockwave from the impact will race across the planet, breaching domes and collapsing tunnels.

The force of the collision kills hundreds of thousands on Mars and destroys many facilities. Stillwater's largest hab is breached and the Stillwater Catholic Church's College of Cardinals are all killed, except for three. The space elevator at Oras is heavily damaged and must be shut down for repairs for over a year. This causes prices on Mars to skyrocket, hampering rescue and relief efforts and slowing down reconstruction. Billions of microcredits in supplies will need to be dropped down the gravity well to the stranded and desperate inhabitants of Mars.

Either way, thousands will die and billions of microcredits in damage will be done to Mars' facilities. But Mars survives. Terraforming and settlement efforts have been set back by a century, but the Red Planet endures.

Unanswered Questions

This scenario is likely to conclude with several important questions left unanswered. These are dangling threads that can provide fodder for future sessions, or even spiral out into a full-fledged campaign.

Mysterious Culprit

One unanswered questions is: Who is responsible? The Mizalcor Initiative's facilities have sat undistributed for decades. Why did this happen now? Who set it all off? A few possibilities are given below:

- **Follow the Money:** Perhaps there is a corp out there that has secretly known about the Mizalcor Initiative facilities and the Ignition Day protocols for some time. Sure, setting off Ignition Day causes a massive amount of death and destruction, but it also means lucrative new contracts to rebuild Mars' damaged infrastructure, and it hurts rival corps in the process. A truly cutthroat executive might be able to overlook the ethical implications in order to get ahead. Unitech makes a good candidate, as they already have an ongoing dispute with the various Martian colonies.

- **Insurrection Virus:** One possibility is that a few months ago, an old computer formerly belonging to the Mizalcor Initiative was sold at auction and booted up for the first time in decades. Once it connected to the net, it was quickly infected by the Insurrection Virus (see the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook, page 67). The virus scanned

the machine and there discovered evidence of the secret facilities, as well as their control codes. It shortly thereafter launched the Ignition Day protocol.

- **Eun-Seung Mok:** Perhaps Eun-Seung faked his death. Or maybe some younger member of his family has finally decided to make the deceased patriarch's dream a reality.

- **Accidental:** "Never attribute to malice what you can attribute to stupidity." Perhaps there is no sinister plan. Maybe a gang simply discovered one of the secret facilities, booted up the computers, started pushing buttons and accidentally set off the whole chain of events. They may even have been some of the first causalities.

The Other Sites

This adventure established that there are 30 secret facilities spread across Mars in a regular pattern. The team has explored two of them. What about the other 28?

Future sessions could be spent exploring the other secret facilities. What if one or more of them didn't go undiscovered, but is now the headquarters of a gang or other illegal group? They certainly wouldn't want the team trespassing in "their" secret hideout.

Similarly, the team might want to claim one of the facilities as their own secret base of operations. This could give them the goal of repairing it and restoring it to operation. Unfortunately, a handful of corps and other groups have discovered the pattern behind the Marsquake and may pay the site a visit, most notably Sinoex and Microdyne.

Shadows Over Sol

A strange earthquake rocks tectonically-dead Mars. Unscheduled impacts have been recorded striking outside the normal crash zone, and little of it is ice. The team has been hired to get to the bottom of this mystery. Will they solve it in time, or will the Mars Terraforming Project die in its cradle?

Crash Zone is an action horror adventure supplement for *Shadows Over Sol*. It features a thrilling exploration and assault scenario, and is designed to run from two to four gaming sessions.

Tab Creations

SAGA MACHINE