

TALES FROM DEEP SPACE™

A SPACE MASTER™ Adventure Module



PERILS ON THE IMPERIAL FRONTIER

TALES FROM DEEP SPACE

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DEDICATION

This work is hope-fully dedicated to the upcoming decade, to the Cosmic Trigger, and to the Neo-Humans amongst us (you know who you are). Mediate to Liberate — T.F.

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1.0

GUIDELINES

The **Space Master** Adventure Series is designed for Gamesmasters who want to run adventures which can be set up in a few minutes and played in a few hours. The adventures require little or no preparation. Although set on the Kashmerian provincial planet Tara in the Imperial time period Imp. 470-480, with a few modifications these adventures could take place on any space station in the Imperium.

Tales from Deep Space has four parts. Section 1.0 deals with guidelines regarding the use of the module. Section 2.0 provides pregenerated characters for the players (which can also be used as non-player characters if so desired).

The third part contains sections 3.0,—7.0: The Adventures. Each adventure stands on its own. The fourth part of the module (Section 8.0) contains some general information regarding random in-system encounters.

1.1

HANDLING PLAY

The adventures are divided into five standard parts: (1) the tale, which describes the setting and covers the background and plot; (2) the NPCs, a person-by-person description of the prominent non-player characters, including their stats; (3) the settings, a description of the adventure sites, complete with diagrams, floorplans, and illustrations; (4) the task, a discussion of how to start the adventure, along with the aids, clues, obstacles, and rewards awaiting the adventurers, and (5) encounters, which cover typical or probable meetings between the adventurers and the NPCs.

The GM should skim each section of an adventure before beginning play, making a few notes and roughing out the adventure possibilities. Then he can have the players pick pre-designed characters from those provided in Section 2.0, or he can permit the players to design their own PC's. (Of course, this module can serve as a continuation of a campaign, where PC's who have already adventured in Space Master find themselves on Tara.

1.2

ADAPTING THE MODULE TO YOUR GAME

Like the rest of the series, this module is designed for use with the **Space Master** (SM) Role Playing System, but is adaptable to most other major SFRP games. Statistics are expressed on a closed or open-ended scale, using a 1-100 base and percentile dice (D100). No other dice are required.

1.21 CONVERTING HITS AND BONUSES

Bonuses: When converting percentile values to a 1-20 system a simple rule is: for every +5 on a D100 scale you get a +1 on a D20.

Hits: The concussion hit numbers found in this module only represent general pain and system shock. They

1-100 STAT	d100 BONUS	3-18 STAT	d20 BONUS	1-12 STAT	2d6 BONUS
102+	+35	20+	+7	17+	+4
101	+30	19	+6	15-16	+4
100	+25	18	+5	13-14	+3
98-99	+20	17	+4	12	+3
95-97	+15	16	+3	11	+2
90-94	+10	15	+2	11	+1
85-89	+5	14	+1	10	+1
75-84	+5	13	+1	9	+1
60-74	0	12	0	8	0
40-59	0	10-11	0	7	0
25-39	0	9	0	6	0
15-24	-5	8	-1	5	-1
10-14	-5	7	-1	4	-1
5-9	-10	6	-2	3	-1
3-4	-15	5	-3	3	-2
2	-20	4	-4	2	-3
1	-25	3	-5	2	-3

1.3

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

A number of important game terms are here defined for easy reference.

1.31 ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are listed alphabetically:

GAME SYSTEMS:

RM Rolemaster
SM Space Master

PROFESSIONS/CHARACTER CLASSES:

Adm Administrator
Arm Armsman
ArT Arms Technician
Cri Criminologist
EIT Electrical Technician
Eng Engineer
Ent Entertainer
Exp Explorer
Med Medic
Pil Pilot
Phy Physician
Pla Planetologist
Res Researcher
SyT Systems Technician

cover bruises, general pain, and small cuts rather than 'wounds'. Critical strike damage is used to describe serious wounds and fatal blows. The hit figures shown here are less important than those used in game systems where death occurs as a result of exceeding one's available hits. Should you use a game system that employs no specific critical strike results (e.g., TSR Inc.'s *Star Frontiers*® or GDW's *Traveller*®), simply double the number of hits your characters take or halve the hit values found in this module.

1.22 CONVERSION CHART

If you use something other than **SPACE MASTER** and do not normally use a percentile scale, use the following chart to convert the 1-100 numbers to figures suitable for your game:

Tel True Telepath
Thl Theologist
T Semi-Telepath of Class
GAME AND TECHNOLOGICAL TERMS:
AT Armor Type (a range of 1-30; see "CAT")
AT(DB) Armor Type with Defensive Bonus given
CAT Construction Armor Type (AT 21-30)
cumet cubic meter
d10 A die randomizer for a range of 1-10
d100 A die randomizer for a range of 1-100
DB Defensive Bonus
EI Elmonits (Cost in Electric Monits)
FTL Faster Than Light
GCH The Galactic Court of Humanity
GEM Ground Effect Movement; Hovercraft or Turbofan Type
Grav Gravitic movement or control
GM Gamesmaster (game referee)
K 1000 (a quantity of one thousand)

km	kilometers
LS	Light Second (300,000km)
Lvl	Level (experience, attack, or Psion level)
LY	Light Year (the distance light travels in one year)
m	meters
M	Monits (hard currency denomination)
MA	Martial Arts
M/A	Matter/Antimatter
MERLOGH	MERCantile League of Greater Houses
Mk.#	Mark number (measures an item's size, strength or power)
Mod	Modifier or Modification
NPC	Non-Player Character
OB	Offensive Bonus
PC	Player Character
PP	Power Points (for Psions)
Rd	Round (10 seconds of game time)
RR	Resistance Roll
SFRP	Science Fiction Role Playing
Stat	Statistic or characteristic
TBD	Tachyon Beam Dictor

WEAPONS:

ABIs	Autoblaster
ASG	20mm Autoshotgun
7API	7mm Automatic Pistol
11API	11mm Automatic Pistol
AsBlis	Assault Blaster
BdyPI	5mm Body Pistol
BlisPI	Blast Pistol
BlisRI	Blast Rifle
FKnf	Force Knife
LsrPI	Laser Pistol
LsrRI	Laser Rifle
MLAPI	Magnetic Linear Accelerator Pistol
NdlPI	Needle Pistol
PLsr	Pulse Laser
PSwd	Power Sword
SHG	15mm Shotgun
SnStn	Sonic Stunner
StnPI	Stun Pistol
Taser	(Modern Imperial Version)
XClaw	Extender Claws

PRIMARY SKILLS:

AdrDf	Adrenal Defense
AdrSp	Adrenal Moves (speed)
AdrSt	Adrenal Moves (strength)
AE:UW	Alien Environments/Underwater
AE:ZG	Alien Environments/Zero Gravity
AFV	AFV Crewmember
Ambsh	Ambush
Anthr	Anthropology
ASrv	Arctic Survival
Astrn	Astronomy
AtmPt	Atmospheric Pilot
CbtPt	Combat Pilot
CompE	Computer Engineering
CompT	Computer Technics
CrimT	Crime Technics
Cyber	Cybernetics
CybT	Cybernetic Technics
DSrv	Desert Survival
ElecT	Electronics Technics

EW/C	Electronic Warfare/Communications
FAid	First Aid
Genet	Genetics
HAstr	H-Space Astrogation
HEP	Heavy Energy Projectors
Hist	History
HPt	H-Space Pilot
JSrv	Jungle Survival
Locks	Pick Locks
MA1St	Martial Arts Striking (Rank 1)
MA2Sw	Martial Arts Sweeps/Throws (Rank 2)
Math	Advanced Math
MdDia	Medical Diagnosis
MdPrc	Medical Practice
MdScn	Meds scanner
MechE	Mechanical Engineering
MechT	Mechanical Technics
MedT	Medical Technics
MIScn	Multiscanner
MsArt	Missile Artillery
MWAmb	Mounted Weapons Ambush
NAstr	N-Space Astrogation
NPt	N-Space Pilot
OrbPt	Orbital Pilot
Percp	Perception
Phys	General Physics
Pltgy	Planetology
PowT	Power Systems Technics
Psych	Psychology
RpScn	Repair Scanner
Sensr	Sensor Analysis
Traps	Disarm Traps
USrv	Urban Survival*
WpnD	Weapons Design
WpnT	Weapons Technics
Zoo	Zoology

* Governs attempts to scrounge for food, shelter or protection (while staying out of trouble) in a metropolitan environment. Usually rolled once per game day.

SECONDARY SKILLS:

Acrob	Acrobatics
Act	Acting
Admin	Administration
Diplo	Diplomacy
DsArm	Disarming
Forag	Foraging
Frnzy	Frenzy
Gmblg	Gambling
Intrg	Interrogation
Medit	Meditation
Propg	Propaganda
PbSpk	Public Speaking
QDraw	Quick-draw
Seduc	Seduction
Signl	Signalling
Subd	Subduing
Track	Tracking
Trade	Trading
Trick	Trickery
VArt	Visual Art
WthrW	Weatherwatch

1.32 DEFINITIONS

A few crucial concepts of the module are detailed below:

Colos: An Inner Provincial Major House (or "Royal Family"), the Colosians control

several star systems near Devon Province, and the two families are frequently at odds. As of Imp.471 the ruler of House Colos is Lord Alexander Telax Colos IV; their Homeworld is Gamma Vulpeculae IV ("Orpheus").

Construct: Anything artificially produced. Most larger constructs have an Armor Type of 21-30 in the **SPACE MASTER** system.

Devon: A powerful Major Family, one of the Inner Provinces. Currently Lord Yama Pythagor III Devon rules the Province from Delta Cassiopeiae VI ("Karoline").

Dia Khovaria: (or "The Church") That vast and immensely powerful quasi-religious organization which controls the majority of the Empire's TBD network through its component corporation, *Access Tachyon Technology*. Officially sanctioned by the Emperor, The Church wields a great deal of influence as well as the largens data archives in the Empire. Church Diocese Chapterhouses can be found on most Provincial Homeworlds, much to the consternation of many Planetary Governors.

Empire: An astropolitical jurisdiction encompassing every stellar system known to be inhabited or claimed by Terran Humans as well as those systems harboring indigenous sentients who have come into the Terran fold. The Empire consists of a central territory, known as the Imperium, and a multitude of Provincial territories governed by Families who pledge fealty to the Emperor, who keeps his seat of power on Terra (also known as Old Earth).

Family: Political connotation. An almost intangible representative cultural essence which denotes a society of people, practically separating them from the rest of humanity as a specific race. In practice, the administrators of a given Province take on the Family name, behind which the citizens of the Province can rally. Synonymous with "House", "Major Family", "Royal Family", "Greater Clan", etc.

Frontier: The vast region of unconquered space which surrounds the sphere of the Empire. There are over 100 Frontier Provinces (territorial possessions of Minor Clans or Inner Provincial colonies) within TBD range of the Imperium. Beyond that range lies the "Backnet"; the infinite sea of unexplored space. The Frontier is divided into twenty-four zones.

Galactic Court of Humanity: (or "GCH") Technically independent of Imperial control, it is the function of the GCH to hear all cases of diplomatic, economic and criminal dispute amongst the Imperial territories, as well as all Imperial Crimes (crimes against the Emperor). The Court's use of the impeccable female Telepaths called the Order of the Truthsibyls insures valid testimony - the Truthsibyls have never been found to have been wrong. The GCH is located on Vega IV ("Val-halla").

Hypershunt: The act of crossing the speed-of-light barrier and propelling one's craft into Hyperspace, protected by a Relative Inertial Field. Controlled Hypershunts have allowed Humans to colonize known space at a rate far exceeding predictions based on the limitations of "N-Space".

Hyperspace: (or "H-Space") The vernacular term for the Tachyon Universe, where (it has been determined) the speed of light is the lower boundary of a radiative propagation spectrum quite unlike our own. Human technological achievements have allowed travel through H-Space, but as of this time actual occupation, and action within, the Tachyon Universe is an impossibility.

Hyperspace Sickness: Despite the effects of the Relative Inertial Field generator, some hominoids react quite strongly when in H-Space, experiencing a diverse array of somatic symptoms such as nausea, shakiness, vertigo, hysteria or even (in very rare cases) hallucinations. Although "Hyperspace Sickness" affects one out of twenty Humans to some degree (usually minor disorientation), the physiological explanations for these reactions remain unknown. Most cases will quickly subside if Hyravol is administered.

Imperial Fleet of Starmadas: The largest fleet of starships in the known galaxy, armed and accoutremented with the most advanced hardware available in the Empire. The Imperial Marines are the Planetary Assault and General Defense Division of the Fleet, and set the standard which all Provincial Marine Corps struggle to approach. They are the largest, most well-equipped body of soldiers ever assembled.

Imperial Intelligence Directorate: Quite simply the most feared agency in the entire galaxy. The IID is the field arm of the Imperial Intelligence Ministry, whose job it is to spy on virtually everyone else in the Empire (including the other Ministries).

Imperial Science Institute: Officially in charge of monitoring and maintaining a smooth, steady rate of technological progress throughout the Empire, the ISI is not as harmless an agency as it may seem. A branch of the Imperial Technology Ministry, their primary objectives seem more along the lines of acquisition than dispensation. They are rumored to have arranged "accidents" for those who refused to permit their developments to be "managed" by ISI personnel (ever wonder why N. Carlyle is hiding out on Hyperion IX?)

Imperial Senate: Imperial Senators are the Noble or Upper class representatives of their Provinces in the Legislative branch of the Empire. They (with the Emperor's cooperation) make the laws that the GCH and VegaPol enforce, and supervise the operation of these agencies (as well as MERLOGH). Each Greater House has a

number of votes based on its size and power within the Imperium, and the Senate meets yearly for a twenty-day session on Sol II ("Venus").

Imperium: The Imperium is that area of space which encompasses every stellar system colonized or claimed by humans, which is not governed by a Province or a Minor Clan. The leader/figurehead of the Imperium is the Emperor himself, who defers many of his responsibilities to Planetary Governors or lesser Nobles. These Governors are prevented from taking too many liberties with their assigned systems due to the omnipresent Imperial Fleet. Cosmographically, the Imperium is situated centrally in the Terran Empire with Old Earth maintained as the territorial Homeworld of all Humankind.

Inner Province: A major cosmographic territory, often containing upwards of ten stellar systems. The Inner Provinces are all located within, or border on, Imperial space, and are ruled by Royal Families (each of which can trace its roots back to the original leaders of the Province). As such, Inner Provinces maintain their own military forces and mint their own hard Monits.

Instation: Akin to Orbital stations, Instations are much larger, and are set into "planetary" orbits around stellar primaries. They function as military fleet bases and communications backup for the inhabited planets in the system.

Jade-London: A Royal Family, one of the Inner Provinces. The Jadists, who have a reputation for devious and underhanded schemes, are generally on good terms with the Devonians and poor ones with the Colosians. They are quite clever, however, and usually manage to set some other party up to take the fall for their subterfuge. Count Matthew Daniel Jade-London VI rules his far-flung territory from Alpha Volantis III ("Lamaraine").

Kashmere: Formerly a coalition of Minor Clans, the Kashmere Families have formed a commonwealth directly under Imperial supervision.

League of Merchants: A loose, Empire-spanning association of "Free Traders", pirates, crimelords and independent merchantmen. A few of The League's reputed activities include drug smuggling, gunrunning and interProvincial espionage, and they supply a number of Greater Houses with vital intelligence findings (this last in exchange for the Province's "looking the other way" as regards League business).

MERLOGH: (MERcantile League Of Greater Houses) The economic monitor, central board of trade and stock exchange of the Empire, MERLOGH sets the value of the Imperial and Provincial Monits. Local offices oversee all aspects of personal and corporate banking, including Provincial tax assessment and Imperial subsidies. MERLOGH's headquarters is located in the Vega system.

Minor Clan: An extended familial society designated by the Emperor as Minor Royalty. Minor Clans often rule their own stellar systems (under Imperial and/or Provincial supervision), and may even possess colony systems (although this usually only occurs in the Frontier Zones). They are forbidden to mint their own currency or keep their own soldiery, and must rely on the Empire for both of these.

N-Space: (Normal space) The normal universe of human occupation; the Einsteinian space-time continuum.

Orbital Station: Large environmentally controlled constructs set into "lunar" orbits around most major planets in the Empire. Above Homeworlds, Orbital stations are used for the handling of communications and personnel, while above resource worlds, they usually serve as heavy cargo transport terminals. Depending on their function, they can often sustain 20 to 200 people. Their Orbital maneuverability is severely limited.

Outstation: (or Deep Space Outstation, as they are more properly called) The interstellar counterpart of the Instation, these massive structures are set into "stellar" orbit around the galactic core (that is, they do not move relative to the Star Map). Outstations serve as supply bases for the fleets of the political entities which constructed and staffed them, and often contain TBD relays which tie them into the Imperial communications net. Some Outstations are operated as joint ventures by two or more concerns.

Sianetic Harbingers: That legendary spacefaring race which purportedly spread Hominids from Earth to many other worlds in this area of the Milky Way, giving rise to many of the known Humanoid and Xenohuman races. They are known by many other titles (the Forerunners, the Ancients, Old Ones, The Klattu, etc), and created many beautiful and powerful artifacts (which fetch quite a price in the scientific, telepathic, and collectors communities).

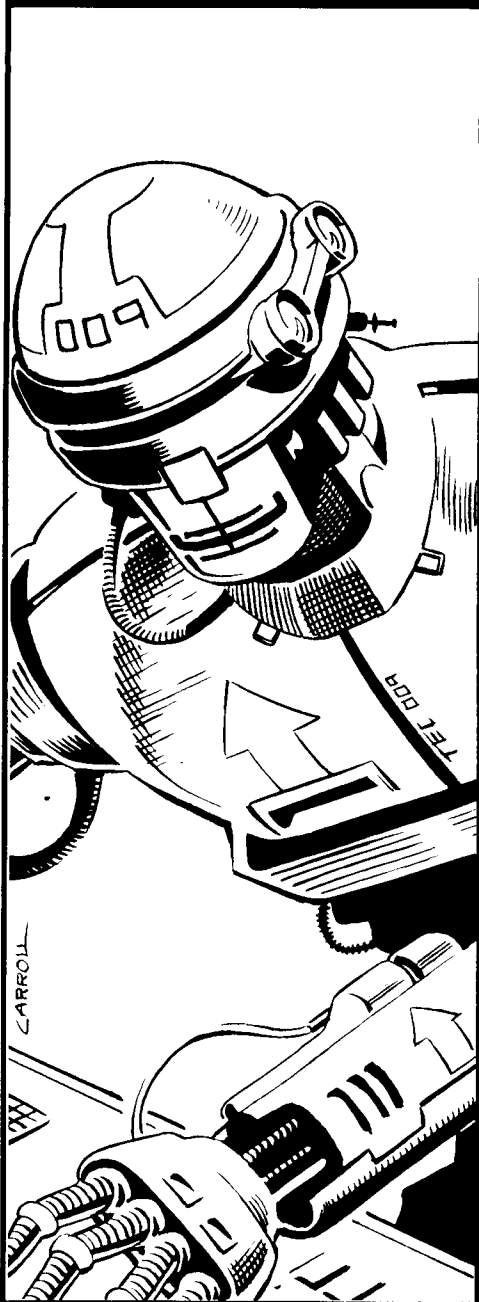
Snee: Large, powerful creatures of insectoid/reptilian appearance, the Snee are simply the most frightening and hostile race yet to be encountered. Little is known of their background and origin, but their Homeworld is thought to be located in Frontier Zone 15, and they are slowly moving closer to Imperial borders. Snee starships are small and powerful, and seem to possess a "cloaking" technique superior to any yet developed by Humans.

Spacefaring Port: (aka "Starport" or "Downport") Planetside installations containing maintenance and repair facilities for military and/or civilian starships, Spacefaring Ports are staffed by customs officers and garrison troops who try to uphold the laws of the system. Larger Ports boast all varieties of secondary facilities, such as traders' co-ops, recreational areas, shopping malls, living accommodations, hospitals, Dia Khovaria chapterhouses, etc.

Tachyon Beam Dictor: (TBD) A nearly instantaneous communications system, crucial to the unity of the Empire. Data is transmitted in the form of pulsed tachyon streams, and often must be relayed through a number of stations (the maximum effective range for one transmit is about 50 light years). Although there is no "TBD monopoly", the Dia Khovaria controls the largest and most complete network.

VegaPol: An interstellar police force which operates independently of Imperial or Provincial jurisdiction, and is linked to the GCH. Known to be terrifyingly efficient and sometimes brutal, VegaPol investigates cases of Elmonit fraud, interProvincial smuggling, and conspiracy. In addition, all evidence used in the GCH must be authenticated independently by VegaPol officers.

Herbert 009, Human Relations



1.4 TASK ABBREVIATIONS

For the purposes of this explanation, a "Task" is any game situation which requires that the Player (or the GM, depending on circumstances) make a modified die roll to determine the degree of success/maneuver result. There are six types of Tasks (barring combat and "Special" bonuses). These types, and their respective charts, are as follows:

CN = Construction Project (CONSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH CHART)

MM = Moving Maneuver (PERSONAL MANEUVER CHART)

RP = Repair Project (MALFUNCTION/REPAIR CHART)

RS = Research Project (CONSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH CHART)

SM = Static Maneuver (STATIC MANEUVER TABLE or modified 101+)

VM = Vehicular Maneuver (VEHICULAR MANEUVER AND ASTROGATION TABLE)

The exact nature of any given Task can be recorded in a convenient, abbreviated fashion. These abbreviations consist of three parts:

- 1) The first two letters indicate the Task Type, as above. They are followed by a slash (/).
- 2) After the slash comes the abbreviated name of the skill or stat(s) which will modify the die roll. This is followed by a colon (:).
- 3) The last letter indicates the Difficulty Level of the Task. It is always the initial letter of the Difficulty Level "name", except that "X" is used for "Extremely Hard", MMs, SMs, and VMs (for which "E" means "Easy"). Some examples:

SM/Hist:H = a HARD (-10) Static Maneuver modified by History skill

RS/ASTRN:E = an EASY Research Project modified by Astronomy skill

VM/AtmPt:X = an EXTREMELY HARD (-30) Vehicular Maneuver on the Atmospheric Pilot column; etc.

The Basic DL's are:

ROUTINE (+30)

EASY (+20)

LIGHT (+10)

MEDIUM (+0)

HARD (-10)

VERY HARD (-20)

EXTREMELY HARD (-30)

SHEER FOLLY (-50)

ABSURD (-70)

INSANE (-100)

2.0 PRE-DESIGNED CHARACTERS

The following chart provides the GM with twelve characters of varying race, profession and experience level. Their stats and mods have all been calculated, and all they need now is a little personalization. The GM may wish to assign PCs to the Players, or simply allow them to select their own PC from the chart (of course, these characters might also be used as NPCs). Regardless of how the Players acquire their PCs, it should be remembered that each Adventure in this module is geared toward characters of specified professions and experience level ranges.

If these characters are to be used as PCs, a few steps should be taken to complete and personalize them. Such details as origin, languages known, physical appearance and personality/motivations should be decided upon, and the player should be allowed to make Background Picks (the number depends upon the PCs race). Finally, the GM should allow the Players to "go shopping" before beginning play (after all, these characters are assumed to have been doing SOMETHING before you came along...) In addition to the equipment noted on the chart, each character will possess an Ident Disc and an Elmonit Card, and will have 10-1000 (1d100 X 10) Elmonits on account.

NOTE: Characters with Psionic abilities have had their Prime Field of Telepathy selected, but not their Psion lists. The number which accompanies the abbreviated Psion Field (in the "Psi/L#" row) is the number of "Pick Sets" that the PC possesses. These Pick Sets should be allotted as the Player desires, before beginning play.

Race:	Repl	Ghedian	Trill	Lopter	Human	Android	Human	Rep IV	Tr-VIII	HindIII	Neo-Hmn	Altha
Prof	Arm 6	Art 5	Res/T 4	Exp 5	Cri/T 7	Pil 1	Eng 5	Ent 4	Arm/T 4	Med 4	Pla 2	Tel 5
Hits	105	44	20	53	63	200	27	31	32	40	28	30
AT/DB/*	12/40/D	10/35/D	5/15/-	15/20/A	10/15/V	4/55/-	5/15/-	1/10/-	15/20/A	15/10/A	1/25/A	15/20/-
PP	—	—	4	—	7	—	—	—	8	—	—	5
CO	97/+25	32/+10	40/-5	56/+5	82/+5	100/+35	76/+5	81/-10	78/+5	98/+115	83/+10	27/+20
AG	81/+25	98/+30	72/0	90/+20	92/+10	100/+55	88/+5	91/+15	66/+10	90/+10	56/+5	74/+15
SD	95/+5	70/-30	86/0	96/+10	38/+5	90/+20	91/+10	36/-20	98/+35	50/-5	90/+15	90/+30
ME	90/+10	43/+25	90/+25	45/0	60/0	90/+40	72/0	42/-20	47/+5	99/+25	58/+5	67/+15
RE	49/0	65/0	79/+20	76/+10	71/0	90/+15	98/+20	50/-20	58/+10	59/+10	90/+15	88/+20
ST	90/+30	89/+15	26/-5	90/+30	29/+5	100/+35	40/+5	76/+5	79/+15	80/-5	94/+15	69/+15
QU	90/+20	97/+25	64/0	90/+20	76/+5	100/+55	52/0	80/+10	90/+15	42/0	98/+25	80/+20
PR	86/0	96/+15	30/0	79/-10	90/+110	100/+35	77/+5	97/+35	31/+5	84/+5	78/+10	90/+30
IN	91/0	90/+15	90/+15	75/-5	95/+15	90/+20	90/+10	86/-5	61/+10	21/+5	90/+15	58/+5
EM	97/0	49/0	25/0	73/+10	86/+5	90/-10	63/0	95/+25	93/+25	99/+30	83/+10	95/+25
1st OB	AsBIs 96	MA1Sw65	MA1Sw28	MA1St 97	BisPl 70	LsRl 77	FKnf 35	MA1Sw 32	MLAPl 63	SnStn 49	NdPl 42	MA1Sw 60
2nd OB	LsrPl 91	BisPl 55	MA1St 12	SnStn 75	BdyPl 48	MA1St 59	NdPl 15	MA2 Sw32	MA1St 63	SnPl 44	LsrPl 27	MA2Sw45
3rd OB	MA1St76	BisRl 40	—	PSwd 53	MA1Sw 28	MA1Sw 25	—	—	Taser38	—	—	—
Climb	45	50	5	35	30	60	10	20	20	25	15	30
Traps	18	28	-17	13	18	13	-17	-15	-15	-17	-15	15
Locks	13	20	-13	13	13	5	-13	-28	-15	-17	-13	18
Stalk	35	10	-25	35	18	43	13	7	28	8	15	28
Hide	15	-20	-25	30	15	25	15	-47	40	0	25	40
Percp	30	40	27	40	30	33	23	15	20	27	40	25
Drive	Grav48	GEM43	Grav20	Any-5	Grav18	Grav62	Grav18	Wheel23	Grav28	Grav15	GEM25	Wheel38
AtmPt	28	38	-25	60	18	67	13	-12	-12	20	15	-7
Surviv	Jungl28	Urban10	Arct13	Jungl43	Urban13	Arct30	Jungl18	Any-5	Arct13	Jungl18	Desrt20	Arct25
Aid	15	10	20	25	18	8	20	7	23	58	23	33
Scannr	Mult15	Rpr20	Mult27	Mult30	Mult 22	Mult13	Rpr30	Any-25	Mult20	Med43	Mult37	Mult27
	AFV55	AFV50	Sensr27	AFV40	CrimT45	AFV72	CompT23	Psych40	AFV25	MedT43	AFV 15	Psych35
	HEP61	OrbPt40	EW/C33	AE:ZG35	Psych50	CotPr66	Wpnt 18	Anth20	AE:ZG33	CompT32	Sensr23	Hist30
	AE:ZG45	MechT40	CompT32	OrbPt60	Diplo23	NPt40	PowT23	AdtSp27	AE:UW53	MdDia33	Ptlyg52	Medit50
	Snr 15	Wpnt55	CybT32	Sens35	Intrg20	HPt40	Phys55	Act70	Frnz43	MdPr30	Anth32	Diplo28
	Wpnt18	PowT40	Ptlyg35	NPt28		Phys33	Math55	Dance25	Signl 30	Admin38	Psych32	
	Hist20	Hist40	Anth43	HPt28		Diplo48	Hist50	Seduc82		WthrW28	PbSpk20	
	Ambsh4	Phys33	Hist55	NAsr25		Trade 13	CompEE60	Signl 10				
	DsArm33	WpntD43	VArt 18	HAsr20			WpntD60	Trick62				
		QDraw45		Ptlyg25			Medit28					
		Trade 10		Astrm25								
Equip	EXO I	KVLR ST	KVLR VT	ABS I	KVLR ST	LsrRI	KVLR VT	ABS II	ABS I	EnvSuit	ABS I	
Ps/L/#	AsBIs	BisPl	MdSch	SnStn	BisPl	Toolkit	FKnf	XClaaws	SnStn	MdSch	MdSch	Cntrl/6
	—	—	Vsns/3	—	Cntrl/5	—	—	—	Alter/3	—	—	

* = Shield
D = Deflection
A = Absorption
V = Velocity

ADVENTURE: BUG HUNT

The PCs are involved in a military Rescue & Extermination mission on an orbital Autolab Drone. A tactical scale combat-oriented adventure for characters of experience levels 4-8, primarily Armsmen, Pilots, Explorers, Arms Techs and Med Techs. If you want blood...

3.1 BACKGROUND DATA

While the PCs are resting up from their last mission on a Minor clan world somewhere in the "Southwest" quarter of the Empire (that's Spin/Coreward for you hardcores), the Insystem TBD relay station is attacked by a group claiming to be affiliated with the Andromedan Freedom Fighters. Official TBD reception capability drops to zero. The Imperial Gunship Squadron assigned to defend the system is alerted and mobilized, and takes off after the fleeing band of rebels, leaving only a token contingent (and two Viceroy class Light Gunships) behind. The Planetary Baron or clan Leader will address the public via laserfreq channels, proclaiming a state of planetary emergency and ordering all citizens to remain indoors, all personal atmospheric and orbital transportation to cease until system defenses are once again at full operation levels.

While all this is going on, a Commtorp (Communications Torpedo) arrives, sent from an orbital Autolab Drone in the outer part of the stellar system. The distress message, sent by a Lab Technician on-board the Drone: the lab has been attacked by a hostile alien force, and immediate military aid is requested. Given the state of system defense at the moment, this message would probably have been ignored as a matter of priorities — except that the crew of the Drone includes Professor Vlatin Mir, Chief of the Planetary Resource Analysis division, and an extremely valuable individual. After thinking it over for awhile, the Planetary Government decides upon a plan of action. Local mercenary groups and freelance armsmen are contacted, and the word is spread — the Planetary Baron is looking to hire a squad of Free-Lance Troopers. (This is only one of the slang terms used to denote a mercenary Armsman who is granted near-full military status for a limited duration — usually the extent of a Planetary emergency, etc.) This Free-Lance squad will be hooked up with a squad of Imperial Marine regulars for a little "bug hunt". The pay is good — in fact, better than the regulars receive — and the jobs are generally over pretty quick (one way or the other). This is just the kind of work that some people can really go for...

3.2 THE NPCs

3.21 CAPTAIN CHALL STURM

An efficient Team Leader and crack-shot with an MLA Rifle, Captain Sturm has quite a reputation in this system. In the bars and gambling houses he's known as "The Eye" (this MAY be a reference to his marksmanship, but several explanations for the moniker exist). The Captain does answer to the nickname, but none of his closer friends call him by it (and none of his squad dare). Sturm is a simple but honest man, deeply committed to his duty as a Planetary Garrison officer — a rarity in his branch of the service, he is actually one of the Good Guys. Sturm is usually accompanied by Lio "Skinny" Zidnel (see below), who is rather like a little brother to him.

3.22 FIELD SURGEON LIO ZIDNEL

Another of the Imperial regulars, Zidnel is a small-framed youth with a somewhat awkward manner. He is quite good at his job, however — and has been known to charge across enemy lines-of-sight to get to wounded personnel. (A trait which the Captain has tried to break him of to no avail). A very intelligent boy, Lio has been teased about his physique for so long that he actually answers to the nickname "Skinny", though this has in no way engendered feelings of antipathy for other people. In fact, part of Lio's medical skill lies in his deeply-ingrained need to prove his value as a human being, and as a man. Unfortunately, this same drive is the source of his foolhardy behavior in the face of the enemy — he knows that he hasn't the build to be an Armsman, but this doesn't stop him from risking his skinny neck trying to be a hero. Skinny carries a MedScanner, Dermal Closer, Arterial Sealer & tabs.

3.23 THE FOUR ACES (IMPERIAL SQUAD)

The remainder of the Imperial Squad is made up of four men who have been pulled into duty under Captain Sturm only for the duration of the state of emergency. They know of Sturm's reputation and nickname, but have never served with him before and will not show him the respect his position as Mission Leader entitles him to. Their attitudes toward the PCs will be relatively uniform — they consider themselves a group aside from everyone else on this mission. Unless the PCs make a really good impression on them, not one of these guys would go out of his way to help anyone but another Ace. One good thing



can be said for them — they are an excellent assault team, capable of moving quickly, and backing each other up well. The Aces keep in near-constant touch with each other in combat, doing their own recon and describing terrain features, etc. This is reflected by giving them (and anyone else listening) a +10 on all applicable Orientation and Initiative rolls (i.e., in situations where an Ace moves into an area another has already described, etc.) The Aces are:

Sal "Diamonds" Thema (Team Leader/Thumper and cardshark extraordinaire)

Tiko "Spades" Larell (Arms technician and con-man)

Goentur "Clubs" Kachar (Ketian Transhuman I; master of martial arts)

Zane "Hearts" Schill (Expert sniper and notorious gigolo)

3.24 VLAMIN MIR, PROFESSOR OF PLANETOLOGY

Professor Mir is a Humanoid III from the planet Pyra (a rediscovered "cryo- colony" in the Gienar system). Mir is short even for his race, and his frail limbs are perpetually in motion. He has an intuitive genius for diagnosing geological patterns which saves hundreds of hours of research time for the Imperial Science Institute (his employers). As of late, Mir has been working on a long-range profits analysis for a proposed mining installation on the outermost planet in the system (a project which may be of pivotal importance to the Clan). Mir's work is at a critical point right now, and the Players may have some difficulty tearing him away from his SENSr console. In fact, he will refuse to leave the Autolab until he has transferred his data onto memdiscs so he can take it with him.

3.3 THE SETTINGS

Although the introductory segment of the adventure takes place on planetside, no Planetary readouts are included anywhere in the Module. This is to allow the GM to place these adventures just about anywhere (i.e., wherever the PCs are!!) Specific, significant locations or vehicles are detailed herein.

3.31 "THE ARTEMUS" IMPERIAL LIGHT GUNSHIP

The Artemus is a new ship, just on its first tour of duty. the Viceroy class, to which the Artemus belongs, is a relatively new line manufactured by Imperial Transtar, and one of its most noteworthy features is its renowned Hull Separation capability. Unless some of the Players feel like doing it (and convince the team of their ability), the Artemus will be piloted by Captain Sturm, "Spades" Larell, and three SONHAP bots.

SHIP NAME: The Artemus
PRODUCER: Imperial Transtar
CLASS: Viceroy Light Gunship
TONNAGE/HITS: 2500
COMPUTER Mk: 30 & 20 (aux)
SENSORS: 5 LY range
LASER COMM: 10,000 km range
TBD COMM: 10 LY range
ARMOR TYPE: 24 (-15 ENC)
CREW: Astro 5, Tech 10
MAX SUBLIGHT ACCEL: Rtg 16 = 130 km/sec²
TRANSLIGHT DISPLACEMENT: Rtg 8 = 8 LY/day
SCREENS: +40
EW: +30
ARMAMENT:
Mk.30 Ion Cannon (6 shots/turn, HUD +10)
2 Mk.20 Disruptor Cannons (3 shots/turn, HUD +5)
2 Mk.10 Explosive Missile Launchers (10 missiles each)
TER: 1050
AUXILIARY SYSTEMS: Bridge, Life Support (for 25), Reactor
OPERATING RANGE: 83 LY
OPERATING DURATION: Unlim. (Ramscoop); 25 days if not moving in N-Space
OTHER FEATURES: Landing capable, Sickbay for 25, 2.5 "Military" Berths (for 10), Shuttle Bay (cap. 125 tons), Full Gravity, Hull Separation (see below), Security Stations for 10 (including Exoskeleton type II).

HULL SEPARATION PROCEDURE:

If the gunship is badly damaged or it seems certain that this will soon occur, and the Professor is onboard, the Mission Leader may order Hull Separation. All non (starship) combat personnel will be moved to the lower deck, which will become the Escape Module — see below. As soon as they are in, the pilot of each Module (if no PC takes the job, there are two SONHAPS in the Escape Module) must roll a MM/OrbPt:L (base time = 20 seconds) to actually separate the ship(s). Any piloting maneuver performed by the pilot of the Escape Module is considered to be two Difficulty Levels harder than it really is, due to the fact that the Escape Module's bridge is an Auxiliary model. Note that (as detailed below) some ship's functions are split between the Modules, while others are functions of one or the other.

THE ESCAPE MODULE:
TONNAGE/HITS: 500
COMPUTER: Mk.20
SENSORS: 1 LY range
LASER COMM: 10,000 km range
TBD COMM: Nil
ARMOR TYPE: 24 (-15 ENC)
CREW: Astro 2 (SONHAPS), Tech 4
MAX SUBLIGHT ACCEL: Nil
TRANSLIGHT DISPLACEMENT: Rtg 40 = 18.75 LY/day
SCREENS: Nil
EW: Nil
ARMAMENT:
Mk.30 Ion Cannon (6 shots/turn, HUD +10)
TER: 231
AUXILIARY SYSTEMS: Life Support (for 10), Reactor
OPERATING RANGE: 80 LY
OPERATING DURATION: 300 days
OTHER FEATURES: Landing capable, Sickbay for 5, 2.5 "Military" berths (for 10), Full Gravity, Hull Interface with Combat Module.

THE COMBAT MODULE:
TONNAGE/HITS: 2000
COMPUTER: Mk.30
SENSORS: 5 LY range
LASER COMM: Nil
TBD COMM: 10 LY range
ARMOR TYPE: 24 (-15 ENC)
CREW: Astro 4, Tech 8
MAX SUBLIGHT ACCEL: Rtg 20 = 150 km/sec²
TRANSLIGHT DISPLACEMENT: Nil
SCREENS: +58
EW: +35
ARMAMENT:
2 Mk.20 Disruptors (3 shots/turn, HUD +5)
2 Mk.10 Explosive Missile Launchers (10 missiles ea)
TER: 576
AUXILIARY SYSTEMS: Life Support (for 15), Reactor
OPERATING DURATION: Ramscoop; 1818 days if not moving in N-space
OTHER FEATURES: Landing capable, Security Stations (for 10, including Exoskeleton type II & gear listed in AIDS section), Shuttle Bay (cap. 125 tons), Full Gravity, Hull interface with Escape Module.

3.32 THE AUTOLAB

A Drone is an Artificially Intelligent construct — a mixture of robot and vehicle. Drones are used for various reasons throughout the Empire, and Autolab Drones are one relatively common type. Most Autolabs are simply that; small totally automated constructs. This particular Drone has a few custom features built in, due to the amount of clout held by Professor Mir (the professor does not own the lab, but it was pretty much constructed for him by the Clan), including full life support capability for up to ten people. The Drone

can speak to anyone anywhere within it (it can also communicate via laserfreq & TBD), but it has no general visual capabilities except for externally directed SENSRs and small, laboratory input devices. There are terminals, microphones and speakers located in every major compartment. Beside each terminal is an Input/Output port capable of interfacing with most common I/O devices (cameras, scanners, memdisc recorders, holocams, printers, etc). Hooking up such a device would require a successful SM/ElecT:L (this would be much harder if using non-Imperial or customized devices).

The Drone is currently in a bad state — its computer banks have suffered some

major damage in an exchange of shots with the alien ship which still hangs at long range (apparently the alien vessel was badly damaged, as well). Lab (the Drone will answer to "Lab", "Drone", or any other term which obviously refers to it) has sent all onboard personnel to Deck A and locked down all bulkheads, and has initiated a full Security/Defense sequence. Lab's Barrier Shields are up, EW/Defense is operating, all Decks but Deck A have been depressurized as a precaution against explosion, and all other systems are either shut down or operating at minimum required levels (i.e., the dim, red emergency lights are on, etc). NOTE: Lab's microphones won't pick up anything

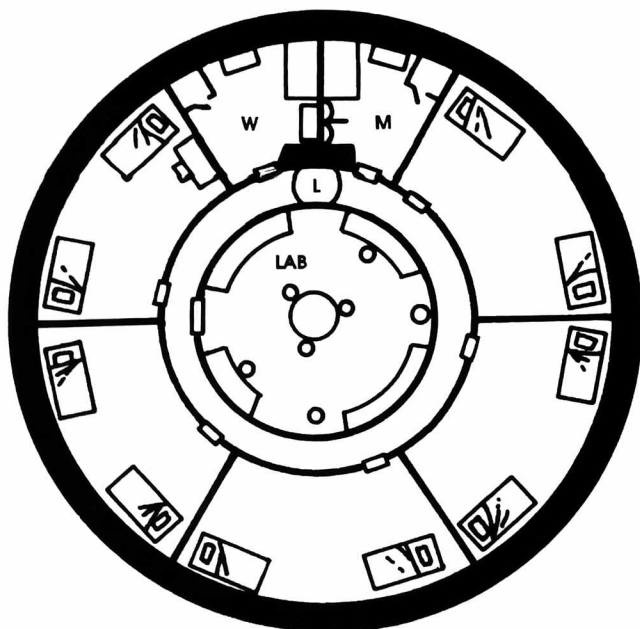
in a depressurized compartment, as no medium for the sound's travel exists. Personal communicators will work as long as they are inside the character's armor.

The Autolab has a hull displacement of 50 tons, and retains 38 of its original 80 hits. Its SENSRs have a range of 1 LY, laser communications range is 40,000 km, and TBD range is 5 LY. All outer hull walls are CAT 24, and interior walls are CAT 22. All bulkheads/doors are locked down. Unless otherwise stated, all hallways and compartments have a ceiling height of 3 meters.

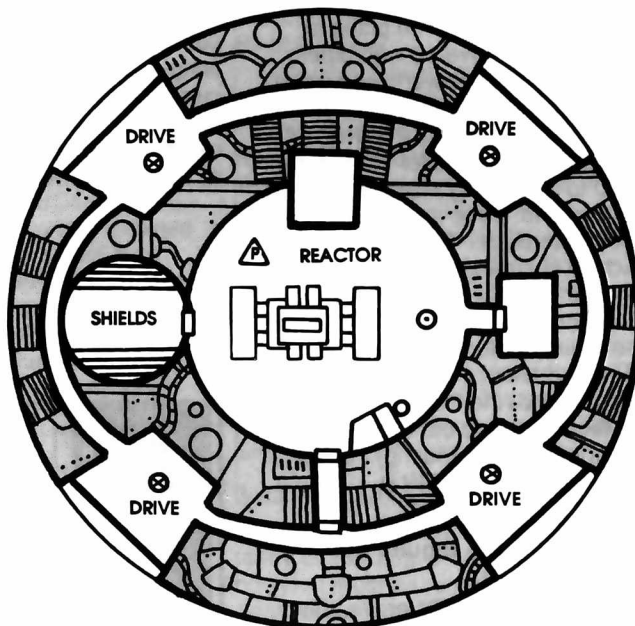
The PCs will first have to get onboard the Drone — this may not be as easy as it seems (see OBSTACLES).

THE AUTOLAB

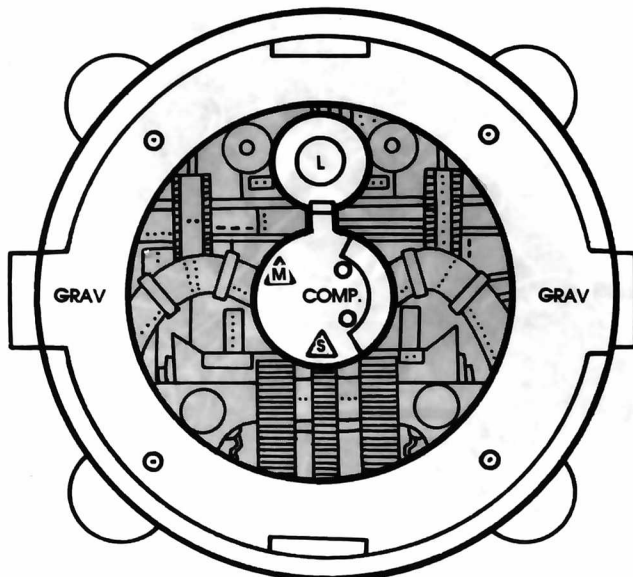
1/8" = 1 meter



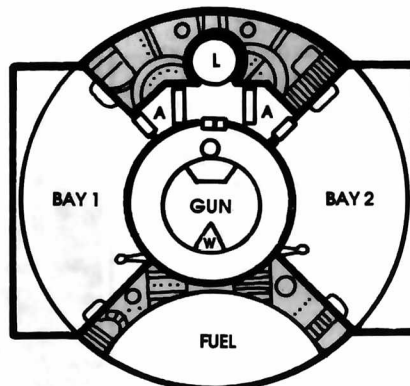
Deck A: Personnel



Interdeck: Systems/Support



Deck B: Computer/Operations



Deck C: Docking/Gunnery

- KEY:
- = Mech Interface (Power, Maneuvering, Sensors and Weaponry)
 - = Hatch (leading up)
 - = Hatch (leading down)
 - = Airlock
 - = Lift Tube
 - = Engineering/Machinery

DECK A: PERSONNEL (All locks require SM/CrimT:V or passkey)

This deck includes five high-quality staterooms (each designed to hold two people, and possessing all manner of "creature comforts"), bathrooms for both (hominoid) sexes, and the planetology laboratory (+50). Most probably, the Professor will still be in the laboratory when the PCs arrive (in fact, he was effectively locked in there by the Drone when the hatches were sealed down). Only one of the Professor's two lab assistants made it to this deck — she will be found in a random stateroom, in nearly comatose condition. The lift is locked on this deck.

INTERDECK: SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT (Locks require SM/CrimT:S or passkey)

Sandwiched between Decks A and B, the Interdeck is not actually a deck at all but a maintenance level. The place is small, cramped and covered with pipes, nozzles, wiring trunks, power-routing panels, etc. This level is in vacuum when the PCs arrive. the ceiling height is only 1.4 meters. Any characters taller than that will suffer a -10 to all Moving Maneuvers and firearms OBs, and -20 to any melee OBs while on the Interdeck. The narrow hallway which circulates around this level allows access to Lab's fusion drives, and connects to the central "generators" area, where the main reactor, shield and EW generators, and Mech Interface for Power systems are found (the Power Interface allows a Mech Interface bot to control Lab's power output and routing). Lab's Shield Bonus is +40, and EW is +20.

DECK B: COMPUTER AND OPERATIONS (Locks require SM/CrimT:X or passkey)

In vacuum when the PCs arrive, this deck contains the Drone's "brain" — a Mk.100 computer (currently suffering a -70 to any activities beyond minimum systems/support). This -70 would apply, for instance, if the Drone were ordered to turn off the Defense Screens, repressurize a deck, etc. Also located here are the Mech Interface ports for Maneuvering and Sensors operations. When the PCs enter the central compartment they will witness a sickening scene: the Professor's other lab assistant (the one who fired off the Commtorp) didn't manage to make it out of this area before it was plunged into vacuum — his exploded remains are strewn about the room. Characters who view this scene for the first time must succeed in a SM/SD:V to avoid vomiting (modify the roll by the character's "level OB" bonus, i.e., Armsmen receive a +3/1v1, etc). A character who fails this roll will be considered Stunned (at -50) for all intents and purposes for the next 1d10 rounds. It is assumed that the characters' armor has systems capable of dealing with this situation without further endangering the characters. A gangway circulates around the

perimeter of the deck, allowing access to both Grav generators and the intricate molec-board panels which correlate the data received from the four SENSUR units (these banks cover the outer wall of the gangway). This section cannot be reached via the lift tube; the only points of access/egress are the hatches leading up to the Interdeck.

DECK C: DOCKING AND GUNNERY (Locks require SM/CrimT:V or passkey)

The PCs will most likely enter the Autolab on this level, which is in vacuum when they arrive. This deck contains the Docking bays (both of which are empty), airlocks, and (at a console on the central column) the Gunnery controls (on the opposite side of the central column there is a Mech Interface port which would allow a bot to operate the weapon — a Mk.25 Laser Cannon on a Universal Turret, extended down about 6 meters below the floor of this deck). This gun is capable of firing only once every 60 seconds at its current power routing level. A fuel compartment is also present, with "snakes" reaching into both bays. there is currently 12 cumets of fusion fuel in storage.

3.33 THE ALIEN SHIP

The vessel which attacked the Autolab is manned by Snee, who entered the system without warning and simply opened fire (in future adventures the GM may wish to put something on the planet below which the Snee are interested in obtaining or protecting — diligent PCs could discover what it is and put an end to it). In the initial exchange of shots with the Autolab the Snee ship suffered a serious critical effect, and none of its energy weapons are operating. The Snee are preparing to send a squad or two over to the lab to see what they can find/kill/destroy/eat inside. Once the Mission Team arrives on the scene, they will have 15 minutes before the dreaded Snee Plasma Cannons are working again (they won't know this, of course). It is unlikely that the Players will get onto the Snee vessel (the Snee will send out waves of soldiers swarming all over the hull to defend their ship), and if it is seriously threatened they will shunt out of the system without waiting for their boarding parties to return. Until its guns are fixed, the Snee craft will hang motionless about 2000 km from the Drone, using its EW/Cloaking capability (the Snee craft receives an additional +20 to Cloaking). If the Gunship Artemus moves toward the vessel, it will begin maneuvering evasively (the Snee pilot has a Combat Pilot skill Bonus of +60). Other functions and options are at +30 (i.e., crew AFV Bonuses). Ship parameters are described below:



CLASS: Snee Light Scout
 TONNAGE/HITS: 4000
 COMPUTER: Mk.80
 SENSORS: 10 AU range (50 LY scan)
 LASER COMM: 10 AU range
 TBD COMM: 30 AU range
 ARMOR TYPE: 24 (-0 ENC)
 CREW: Astr 6, Tech 14, Military 30
 MAX SUBLIGHT ACCEL: Rtg 12 = 110 km/sec²
 TRANSLIGHT DISPLACEMENT: Rtg 14 = 12 LY/day
 SCREENS: +50
 EW: 40 (+20 to Cloaking)
 ARMAMENT:
 Mk.20 Blast Cannon (3 shots/turn*)
 2 Plasma Cannons Mk.25 (3 shots/turn*, linked)
 TER: 512
 OTHER FEATURES: Shuttle Bay (cap. 120 tons), 2 small Lifeboats
 * (currently inoperative — see above)

3.4 THE TASK

Once hired (a bit of an annoyance consisting of red tape and back-covering contractual agreements), the PCs will be ready to meet the rest of the Mission Team and go do it. The Mission Priorities (as will be explained in the pre-mission briefing session) are as follows, in descending order:

1. Rescue Professor Mir
2. Save the Planetary Data
3. Terminate or disable the enemy
4. Protect the Autolab from damage/destruction
5. Rescue the Lab Assistants (that's life in the Empire!)

NOTE: These Priorities are handed down from the Planetary Baron's/Clan Leader's office, and reflect the "Official" stance. Captain Sturm and Skinny will not adhere to this structure; for them, the human lives onboard are the primary priority. The Four Aces WILL adhere to this structure (orders is orders).

Unless the Team moves astonishingly quickly, the Snee boarding Parties will begin entering the Autolab some time before the PCs are finished with their business there. The Snee will quickly spread throughout the construct, dividing into groups of one or two, and take up ambush positions wherever possible. Their bodies will be incredibly cold (due to their "fall" through N-space — see ENCOUNTERS). This will make them SHEER FOLLY (-50) to scan on all decks except Deck A, where they will be LIGHT (+10) to locate via scanner. The Mission Team will have to get through this set-up with whatever data and personnel they have managed to get together, and (hopefully) do it before the Snee vessel outside begins firing Plasma bolts at the *Artemus*. If things get really bad out there, Captain Sturm will call for Hull Separation (see above). The Escape

Module would then be able to shunt to the other side of the stellar system (wiser than shunting into the Gravity Well, and every bit as effective). The eventual goal is, of course, to return the Mission Objectives to the Homeworld safely.

3.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

If in their own ship and manning their EW/Comm console, the PCs may pick up the original Comm-torp distress transmission (as will any other ship in the area with TBD capability). In a few minutes time, the Planetary Baron/Clan Leader will send out the call for Free-Lancers, which will be circulated down the grapevine until it reaches the PCs. It is conceivable (though not advisable) for a party of well-equipped PCs to tackle this mission without going through official channels, but they should be aware of two good reasons not to do this: first, should they fail, they will be in deep slog if they have no official authorization to have attempted the rescue; and second, the official Mission Team will be issued all manner of useful equipment and drugtabs (not to mention their own MedTech) — and these things could prove very nice to have around. To get the job, the PCs will have to hurry down to the local System Defense Headquarters to sit through a brief but uncomfortable series of questions and sign dockets of back-covering contractual agreements. Here they will receive a rough description of the situation (remember that no one knows the alien invaders are Snee yet), and be told what sort of pay to expect (see REWARDS). They will then be ready to meet the rest of the Mission Team, be issued their equipment, and pack it onto the *Artemus* to prepare for the dangerous first leg of the mission. Dangerous because the Team does not have time to maneuver the *Artemus* through N-space to a safe jump point, and will be forced instead to jump from inside the Gravity Well, taking five random malfunctions and one "A" pierce critical in the process (the GOOD news is that the shunt out to the Autolab will require only about twelve seconds in Hyperspace).

As an alternate method of running the adventure, the GM may wish to have the PCs play the Imperial Marine squad. In this case, assume them to be in the remaining contingent, and the Four Aces should be used as the Free-Lance squad.

3.42 AIDS

The Mission Team will be issued some equipment before taking off in the *Artemus*. Each Team Member will receive:

- The highest Mk.# personal weapon character can use (no Plasma Reps)
- Laser Targeting Mount
- Barrier Shield
- Tactical Scanner or Multiscanner
- Headset Communicator
- Autotab Applicator containing five doses of Fir-Quelene
- Boarding Dissipater (described under OBSTACLES, below)

The Autotab Applicators are preset to administer ONE tab at the end of any round in which the wearer has taken greater than 3 concussion hits. If for any reason someone wishes to alter this setting, it requires a SM/FAid:R to do so.

Another possible aid has been mentioned previously: the Input/Output ports which are found all over the Autolab. Clever use of these ports (in conjunction with scanners and other devices) will allow the PCs to enjoy a variety of tactical advantages (for example, a PC could set his TacScanner into motion-detection mode and connect it to an I/O port. He could then leave it behind to monitor the area while he kept abreast of its findings by asking the Drone). Mention the I/O ports (describe what they are if necessary), but let the Players come up with such ideas as this one on their own (and reward the originators with experience points for Pivotal Ideas).

Fixing the Drone Computer's damage in the short time available is ABSURD. If the Team can make it past that -70 modifier, however, they can use Lab's sensors to detect the location and number of Snee Outside (the Drone contains Planetary and Bio Analysis programs). No analysis of the Snee ship or weaponry (etc) is possible. Lab's other built-in functions (drive, gravitic control, EW, etc) could all be used in whatever ways the Team comes up with, but the -70 Mod applies unless the Drone's control of the device is bypassed completely (anywhere from a MEDIUM to a SHEER FOLLY Elect maneuver).

3.43 OBSTACLES

Obstacles abound in this adventure; many of them have been dealt with previously. It must be remembered that the Team has a time limit they don't know about — there are only 15 minutes until the Snee weapons are repaired.

The Drone's condition (damaged, at -70, and locked in defense sequence) makes it unlikely that getting onboard will be easy. Therefore, several methods are described here. The simplest way (if it worked) would be to contact the Drone (Static Maneuver at -70) and ask it to lower the shields (Static Maneuver at -70), so that the Gunship could dock (Static Maneuver at -70). Get the picture?

Boarding parties run into this kind of problem all the time — even the weakest Defense Screens are far more powerful than a personal Barrier Shield — and therefore the following device was designed by an Imperially subsidized corporation called TerraTech:

BOARDING DISSIPATOR

A bulky box-shaped device with dozens of complex gauges and tuning controls, the Boarding Dissipator allows the user to "trick" a construct's Defense Screen into enveloping him/her within it, effectively passing the user through the Screen so that hull penetration can be performed.

To use the device, the wielder must be wearing an activated Barrier Shield (which will become part of the ship's Screen for a time, rather like two bubbles melding together). The Dissipator must first be attuned to the ship's Screen (which requires that the user succeed in a SM/WpnT:V or a SM/CrimT:X), and the user's Barrier Shield must be touching the ship's Screen. Once attuned, a small hole appears just where the two fields meet, and this hole quickly expands around the user, "accepting" him/her as part of the ship. This process has a nasty habit of shorting out the personal Shield Generator (10% chance) that the user's Barrier Shield will suffer SEVERE breakage. Boarding Dissipators weigh 5.8 kg and require a Shield Power Pack. They are not available commercially.

Inside the Autolab, things don't get much easier. As noted above, all doors and hatches are locked down (the Difficulty Levels for each Deck are noted in the Deck descriptions). These portals can also be opened by passkey — the only one on the lab is in the Professor's possession. Doors and hatches are CAT 22, 25 hits per man-sized section. The Snee are capable of ripping through these barriers with their bare claws (treat this as a MM/ST:V) — but they can't perform any other actions while attempting to do so.

The Snee themselves are the primary obstacles. The will come over to the Lab in parties of six, equipped with tech gear to allow them access (much like the equipment the PCs have). Once inside, they will use their cunning predators' logic to take full tactical advantage: laying in ambush on the vacuum decks (where the cold screens them from the Human's scanners) or just under hatchways, hiding in the shadows, etc). The exact reason for their attack is unclear, but their is the same as always — unceasingly malevolent and terrifyingly brutal.

3.44 REWARDS

For Free-Lance Troopers, Base Pay for the Mission is 1500 Elmonits, plus an additional amount depending upon the outcome of the mission: +500 if Mir is rescued; +500 if Planetary Data is retrieved; +250 if the Snee vessel is destroyed or captured, +50 if a dead Snee is brought



back, +500 for a live one (good luck!) Enlisted characters will receive half as much as Free-Lancers, also a short leave at the base of their choice (and may be a raise in pay). In addition, both military and civilian decorations may be in order.

3.5 ENCOUNTERS

SNEE BOARDING PARTY #1: Regardless of the method used by the Mission Team to gain entry to the Autolab, as soon as they get inside the Snee Boarding Parties (which have been preparing since before the Artemus arrived) will make their move. If the Mission Team is scanning or watching the Snee vessel, they may witness the following scene: First, a small Snee Lifeboat leaves the mother ship and courses over toward the Lab, seemingly flickering and semi-transparent due to its EW field. When the small craft comes within a kilometer of the Drone (which fires at it, at -70), it disgorges the first Boarding Party and continues maneuvering evasively. The six Snee just released proceed to "fall" toward the Autolab (any PCs who are watching this will realize that the monstrous aliens are wearing no armor) and prepare their equipment. They are falling toward the Drone at ~100 m/Rd, and

have their Plasma Rifles ready (should the Humans try to blast them while falling in).

Try to force the Players to take the initiative — perhaps the Aces have already gone for the Lift Tube, and don't know the Snee are coming in.

SNEE BOARDING PARTY #2: When half of the first boarding party are dead the second squad will make its move, piloting the lifeboat close to the Drone and leaping from it at a distance of about 200 meters. This team is more heavily armed than the first one, and carries no "Crime Tech" equipment. the PCs should then realize that the FIRST six Snee weren't even Armsmen, but Technicians! (it's true — THESE are the Armsmen). Have fun.

THE PROFESSOR: On Deck A, the Mission Team will find Professor Mir hunched over his terminal, cursing violently and banging on the monitor with his small fists. As mentioned above, he will refuse to leave until "this noosed and twisted piece of Carmonized slog" gives him his data (which, as you may have guessed, should be routine but is at -70). If the PCs think of using an I/O port elsewhere on the Drone to retrieve the Professor's data, he will listen to reason. Otherwise, he'll kick and scream if they try to remove him from the lab before he's got what he wants.

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Weapon:OB	Skill:Add	Skill:Add	Notes
CAPTAIN STURM	7	71	12/30B	110MLAP1	30NPt	20CbtPt	Human Armsman and Mission Team Leader
"SKINNY" ZIDNEL	7	50	12/5B	40StnPI	45MdDia	40MdPrc	Human Med Technician; has Medscanner, Dermal Closer, Arterial Sealer and assorted MedTabs
"DIAMONDS" THEMA6	6	64	12/15B	93RPGL	50Percp	62GMBLG	Human Armsman, Ldr of Four Aces; Blast Pistol (OB 68)
"SPADES" LARELL	5	46	12/20B	40LsrRI	55WpnT	45CrimT	Humanoid II Arms Tech; N-Space Pilot +25
"CLUBS" KACHAR	5	90	12/20B	55MA3St	10Ambsh	40Percp	Ketian Transl Armsman; Extender Claws
"HEARTS" SCHILL	4	60	12/15B	70LsrRI	55Percp	40Seduc	Human Armsman; has a Gyro Laser Rifle +15
PROFESSOR MIR	9	28	2/10	15MA1St	75Pltgy	60Percp	Humanoid III Researcher; recording devices
SNEE (1st Party)	5	60	12/30	40PlasR	50CrimT	30Hide	6 Techs; have boarding equipment
SNEE (2nd Party)	7	80	12/40	100PlasR	10Ambsh	50Stalk	6 Armsmen; Plsma Rptr Rfl +10; ST Mods +40
* "B" indicates a Barrier Shield							

4.0

ADVENTURE: GHOST SHIP

In which the Players encounter a singular and most dangerous being, adrift amongst the stars. This adventure is intended for a party of mixed professions, levels 3-7.

4.1

BACKGROUND DATA

Somewhere out there, in a distant and Unsurveyed sector, there lurks a cold and mysterious presence...hiding in the frozen hold of a derelict vessel — amongst the icy remains of his last, helpless victims... he waits, and he is hungry. Time passes, and eventually something comes along... more of the frail beings have arrived. The Ghost stirs from his dormant state into alertness — soon food will be here...

The thing referred to as The Ghost is in actuality an energy-based alien being which imitates the visage of (what once was) a human astronaut (from the days of the Terran Federated Democracy, but there are none living who remember this now). The Ghost may be referred to as an Energy vampire; what it seeks — its food — is raw energy. Few organisms in this area of the galaxy, however, possess the amounts of energy necessary to keep The Ghost fed. Instead, he is seeking stored energy in any form he can find it — from pistol power packs to fusion reactors. The Ghost has a limited understanding of Humans (having encountered scores of them over the past 500 years), and has developed a standard routine for seizing their precious food from them. You see, it realized long ago that amongst all possible appearances it could cause itself to take on, none seemed to effect Humans more than the sight of one of their own — dead — coming after them.

4.2

THE NPC: THE GHOST

An alien being which has existed for over 1000 years, The Ghost hails from a part of the galaxy thousands of light-years distant. It is motivated almost entirely by its hunger for stored energy, which it can sense at considerable distances (comparable to a sensor with 1 LY range and some sort of "Power Analysis" function). For all of its lack of a corporeal form, it has a serious effect on its surroundings: the air within three meters of The Ghost is very cold (this gets more intense the closer one gets to The Ghost), because his presence drains it of heat, and his touch (or what WOULD be touch if he was totally corporeal) causes Cold crits. In addition, he possesses powers equivalent to the Psion lists Telekinesis (to level 10)

and Mind Into Energy (to level 20, but not including any of those which expel energy FROM the caster), and 36 Psion Points. these last powers (the Mind Into Energy Psions) require no Psion Point expenditure. (The Ghost is referred to as a "He", although it is not, because of the appearance it can take. It isn't a "ghost", either). He is capable of moving through any inanimate objects (and can even enter N-Space without harm), but cannot pass through stored or standing energy fields (such as those possessed by any organism, or any battery) — these are basically SOLID to him. In fact, two specific sorts of energy-affecting fields — Absorption and Barrier Shields — will do extreme damage to him if touched. The Ghost "eats" by "touching" the energy he wishes to consume. Small items (en cells, etc) are handled as though the Psion Drain Energy Cell was being cast (of course, The Ghost does not radiate the energy away, but absorbs it) — but these are only appetizers as far as The Ghost is concerned. Larger devices (such as ship's systems) are handled in a different manner: The Ghost must touch the energy (reaching through the casing of the machine), and may perform no other actions. For each Round spend, The Ghost drains the equivalent of one day's operating duration from the ship's fuel storage compartment (any type of fuel will do), and regains/receives 10 hit points (up to a maximum of 500) and 1 Psion Point (up to a maximum of 72).

Making an appearance as The Ghost costs 2 Psion Points per Round (if desired, other manifestations may be performed — the PP cost depends primarily on the size of the illusory "body"). The Ghost's typical form looks to be a man of about thirty years of age, with dark hair and a horrible laser burn across his twisted face. The visage is not completely opaque, and is really rather hazy about the edges.

The Ghost's mode of operation is to let the Humans dock and enter his vessel (this requires that they lower any Barrier Shields their ship might have), then put in an appearance as The Ghost, to scare them back to their own ship. (This is so that they can get it moving before he kills its engines). Before the Screens go back up, The Ghost enters the new vessel and begins feeding. If he has his way, the ship eventually runs out of fuel, the Human crew is frozen to death, and the new ship is drifting along, ready for the next one.

4.3

SETTING: A DERELICT SHIP

This 200 ton vessel will be found drifting along at about 20 km/second (having gradually decelerated to this speed over months of coasting). Due to the lack of power, all doors and hatches onboard the derelict ship are shut tight, and will require that some sort of power source be rigged up (a SM/ElecT:E) before they can be opened (requiring a SM/CrimT:H). Important areas (in which clues or salvage may be found) are noted below:

THE AIRLOCK: If the PCs open the airlock from the outside, they will receive quite a surprise as a glowing human body (one of the original crew who tried to hide here) comes hurtling out past them, the dead man's personal effects scattering into space around and behind him. If the body is somehow retrieved and searched, the PCs will find that it wears an Absorption Shield unit on its chest (this accounts for the glowing).

THE MAIN HALLWAY: Here The PCs will find a plastic crate about 30 cm on each side. The crate contains one gross (144) en cells. If the cells are tested (a SM/PowT:R), they will all be found to be completely dead. A laser pistol lies in the far corner of the hallway as if thrown there, its en cell dead.

THE BRIDGE: The pilot of the craft died here — his body will be found still sitting at the Comm. A SM/MdDia:L will reveal the cause of death: cardiac arrest. The man's cold hand still grips the thruster control, as if trying to push it past the FULL position. An examination of the bridge consoles will show that all non-vital ship's systems have been shut down, and all computer programs have been lost due to power failure, the molecutronic brain dead.

THE REACTOR ROOM: A peculiar scene awaits the PCs in this room: the body of one man lies dead in the open doorway, his head smashed in by a powerful blow from a wrench (which is on the floor beside him — it was hurled by The Ghost, using his Telekinetic ability). Over in the far corner of the room, near the control panels for the fusion reactor, two more bodies can be seen — huddled together for warmth, these Systems Technicians froze to death while still trying to restore the ship to operating status. Their toolkits (one small and one large) are scattered about their knees (and all en cells are dead).

FUEL STORAGE COMPARTMENT: A scan or SENSR check of this area will reveal that all the derelict's fuel has been rendered inert — powerless.

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Weapon:OB	Skill:Add	Skill:Add	Skill:Add	Notes
THE GHOST	12	100*	—/70	50MA1st†	—	—	—	Energy-based alien;

Telekinesis(10), Mind Into Energy(20),36PP.

* at the beginning of adventure. Hits raise after "feeding". † Does no concussion hits but Crits are rolled on "Cold" table.

CARGO HOLD: This is where The Ghost has been resting since its last meal. When the PCs enter the area, the temperature within their suits will fall dramatically and The Ghost will appear (see **Encounters**).

4.4 THE TASK

Simply put, the task is to defeat The Ghost. This entails piecing together the clues the PCs manage to obtain (both on the Derelict Ship and later on, when it materializes on their ship), discovering means of protecting themselves (and their ship) from The Ghost's attacks and finding some means of attacking The Ghost, and eventually destroying it or otherwise getting rid of it. Simple, huh?

4.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

Having just completed their last mission and prepared to make the next hypershunt, the PCs notice a small vessel drifting far out past the stellar system. If hailed, the ship does not respond and SENSR scans indicate no life-forms onboard (the GM should secretly roll a SM/SENSR:S for the SENSR operator. If it succeeds, the character has noticed what appears to be a bizarre antimatter flux in the lower section of the Derelict Ship). A closer look at the vessel proves it to be a Eutrencha class miniscout. If it is indeed Derelict, the PCs would be able to claim salvage rights to it (of course, they'd have to bring it in first). Depending upon the condition of the interior and works, such a ship should be worth somewhere around 40,000 Elmonits at the shipyards. At the rate it's cruising along, the Derelict will probably be found by someone else within a few weeks — if they want to give it a shot, they'd better jump at it.

4.42 AIDS

Several pieces of useful information can be obtained by examination of the Derelict Ship — the clues available have been mentioned above. Alone, any of these clues may not mean much, but once the PCs start putting it all together they may be able to discern just what fate befell the Derelict's crew — and threatens to do the same to our heroes. The pertinent pieces of data are listed below:

THE ABSORPTION SHIELD: Perceptive Players may notice that the body wearing the (still active) Absorption Shield possessed the only functioning energy cell on the vessel. Whether they figure out WHY is another question...

THE DRAINED CRATE: It was placed in the hallway (by the crewmember who wound up in the airlock) as a distraction, giving the man time to activate his Shield and enter the Lock.

THE LASER PISTOL: Was thrown into the corner because (as the PCs will soon find out) energy weapons do not harm The Ghost.

There are a few aspects of The Ghost's makeup which will actually be of some help to the PCs. These are detailed below:

MULTISCANNERS will go wild when in his vicinity, their gauges registering impossible readings or fluctuating rapidly, and there is a 25% chance that the Scanner suffers a MODERATE malfunction.

HE CAN BE EASILY LOCATED VIA INFRARED (because of the effect he has on the surrounding air — see above)

HE WON'T GO NEAR ABSORPTION OR BARRIER SHIELDS, as contact with these fields will cause points of damage to him equal to the Shield's DB vs Energy attacks (this occurs instantaneously. It is the only way to destroy The Ghost). He can be effectively trapped within such a field.

HE WON'T ENTER OR LEAVE A SHIP WITH ITS SHIELDS UP for the same reason (contact with a shield this powerful would destroy him instantly).

HE WILL USUALLY MOVE TOWARD THE GREATEST ENERGY SOURCE. If the PCs jettison more than half of the energy/fuel on board (and lower their ship's Shields), The Ghost will leave their vessel of its own accord. The PCs could then shunt the hell away from here...

4.43 OBSTACLES

The Ghost presents a number of problems to the PCs, primarily because it is so different than anything they have dealt with before, and they will have to learn (fast!) what affects it. As mentioned above, energy weapons do no damage to The Ghost (he simply absorbs the beam). In fact, no conventional weapons attacks will do any damage to him (except, oddly enough, Martial Arts — but this will also impart an "A" Cold Critical to the attacker). The Ghost can make life very hard for the poor Players — draining the energy out of whatever equipment they try to use against him. He COULD drain the energy out of an unactivated Absorption or Barrier Shield unit, but won't risk it unless REALLY starving. This is unlikely, because the PCs probably won't even be aware that The Ghost is on their ship until he's begun feeding off their fuel supply. The ship's pilot will then have a chance to make a LIGHT static Maneuver (modified by highest "Pilot" skill) to notice the needle on the Fuel Gauge dropping slowly.

Another obstacle is one that the PCs will most likely bring upon themselves. It seems to be standard practice amongst Player Characters to fly around with their full Shields and EW operating at all times. This is one instance where having that Shield up will work to their detriment — as long as it is up, The Ghost couldn't leave the ship even if he wanted to.

4.44 REWARDS

If the PCs manage to get rid of The Ghost by implementing some plan devised by one or more members of the party (for some suggestions, see **RESOLUTION**

below), be certain to award Experience Points for the Pivotal Idea — you may even wish to add a little bonus EP if the plan was picture-perfect. If the Players decide to salvage the Ghost Ship they will first have to power it up to fly it (they could tow it, but this would prove to be a SHEER FOLLY maneuver without a tractor beam). The 40,000 Elmonit figure mentioned above is only a base value for the Eutrencha, and will be modified to suit the circumstances of salvage (ie: Admin or Trade skill rolls, etc). In addition, the PCs may keep anything they took off the Derelict before they brought it in (the GM may wish to place a few more valuable or useful items on the Derelict for this reason). Lastly, if the Players actually manage to capture The Ghost and bring it in, they will be able to turn it over to any one of several xenological research organizations for a base value of 50,000 Elmonits (mod. by Admin/Trade skill roll).

4.5 ENCOUNTERS

1. ON THE DERELICT SHIP

Once they enter the Derelict Ship, The Players are in for a few surprises. The Ghost will let them explore the vessel a while before making his appearance. This will most likely happen in the cargo bay, but if the PCs don't go down there he will come up to them (NOTE: The Ghost cannot be located via infrared scanning onboard the Derelict Ship — the atmosphere in there is every bit as cold as he is). The first thing the PCs will notice is that the atmospheric temperature in their suit drops slightly. The Ghost will start off by toying with the PCs a bit — using his Telekinesis powers to move small things around in a spooky fashion. The PC's Multiscanners will be behaving very oddly by this time. Suddenly, one of the PC's devices (a drawn Scanner or weapon) will apparently attempt to jump out of the PC's hand (this is the result of The Ghost's casting Mind's Hand, which costs him 3 PP). The PC gets to make a RR modified by ST to see who ends up with the item. If the RR fails, the item is ripped from the PC's hand and flies across the room (roll for Breakage). A moment later, a shimmering, hazy figure fades into view, staggering slowly toward them. Its face bears a twisted grimace, boldly bisected by a deep, cauterized gash — obviously the work of a clean laser shot. The PCs will realize that the "man" they're seeing couldn't possibly have survived that shot... and The Ghost will proceed to do whatever is necessary to frighten the PCs out of their wits (and back onto their own vessel).

2. ON THE PLAYER'S SHIP

When he gets the chance, The Ghost will follow the PCs over into their ship and head directly for a major ship's system (probably the reactor itself, but the Shield or EW generators will work as well). There

he will feed for awhile, getting some strength back. If all the ship's systems are shut down, he will head for the Fuel Storage compartment itself. By this time, the Players have probably scrounged all that they could quickly grab off the Derelict, and will be firing up the drives to hightail it out of here. Let them do this, even to the extent of making the "upwards" shunt into Hyperspace, before springing the next one on 'em. As mentioned previously, after a while The Ghost's draining of the ship's power will be noticed by the pilot (make the roll once every 3 rounds, if it isn't noticed the first time). Examination of the ship via infrared will reveal the cold spot that is The Ghost (of course, if the scanner is too close, it won't register anything sensible). When one or more Players heads down to the area where The Ghost is, his next series of attacks will begin (he was only fooling around before).

Bear in mind that, now that he has fed, The Ghost will have more PP to expend (in fact, he may have even more than when the PCs first encountered him — he'll definitely have more hit points). He will be a far more dangerous opponent now, both for this reason and because he now has something to protect — he will do his damndest to let no Human take it away from him. He will attack viciously this time, lashing out with various Telekinetic Psions and even striking PCs who come too close with his freezing "fists" (of course, he won't do this to anyone wearing an Absorbion or Barrier Shield). In between attacks (or whenever his PP reserves are getting low),

he'll spend a round or two feeding some more. The Ghost's tactics are pretty much up to the GM — but it must be remembered that he is fighting for his food, and his life — he'll use every trick he can possibly think of. Simply manifesting as the dead man will probably have lost its "kick" by now, but The Ghost is able to cast a Psion while so manifested; let him appear and disappear periodically, waving his spectral arms as he deflects energy blasts and hurls heavy objects around.

4.6 RESOLUTION

Besides throwing half of their fuel out into space (as mentioned above), there are several other ways to ultimately handle The Ghost. All of these methods deal with his special vulnerability to Absorbion and Barrier Shields, and some are more effective (permanent) than others. It is therefore almost necessary for the PCs to discover this weakness for them to succeed in the adventure (barring real wierd twists of fate). The GM should try to allow the Players to do this on their own, via observation (or possibly even testing, for those scientifically-minded Players).

It is possible for properly Shielded characters to drive The Ghost off their vessel, if the ship's Screens are down; they would have to be raised IMMEDIATELY if The Ghost could come right back in again (ie; the PCs at the Defense console would have to beat The Ghost's Initiative roll AND succeed in a ROUTINE Static Maneuver modified by the PC's best

Piloting or AFV skill). This is the simplest way to deal with him. Once the PCs take off, The Ghost is pretty much stranded (the extent of his "N-space maneuverability" is Telekinetic in nature — if there is nothing left to push against or pull toward within range, he's going nowhere). Of course, it will be a long time before he "dies" — perhaps something else will come along...

If the PCs manage to get The Ghost to touch the ship's Screen, he will be destroyed immediately. This would be extremely difficult, but might happen (for instance, if the PC attempting the above maneuver rolled very high, or if The Ghost blew his Initiative roll).

PCs with a bent toward the technic may come up with all manner of interesting ways to handle their uninvited guest. The most likely of these would be the creation of a sort of "Shield Gun". The GM may allow other devious contraptions to be attempted: A personal Shield of the correct type to project its field over a conical area (requiring the shield unit, the barrel of an energy weapon, and extra Shield Power Pack and a CN/WpnT:M). Any hit with this "weapon" (any total roll of 101+, using one-half the PC's best Energy weapon skill) would do damage to The Ghost equal to the original Shield's "Energy" DB. This would have an unusually high Failure chance (12%).

Another trick would be to rig up some kind of trap: a box with a remote-controlled Shield unit on it. Of course, The Ghost would have to be baited into it... perhaps if the box were very very large, and contained a good amount of Andrium...



ADVENTURE: VOICES OF THE GODS

The Players are sent to the Frontier to perform a Preliminary Xenological Survey, and rediscover a long-forgotten alien race with an incredible and potentially devastating power. For characters of level 1-5, this adventure relies primarily upon creative thinking and Research rolls to advance the plot. A few opportunities for combat do exist, but they are of secondary importance. The PCs chosen may be of any professional background, but should all possess at least one or two of the "Xeno" science skills and/or Scanner Analysis skills. Players (and GMs) should be aware that the timescale of a Research-oriented adventure is vastly different than they might be used to — not all research progresses at the same rate, and a bad roll can cause weeks to fly by before any answers are received. It will be to the Players' advantage to plan their actions carefully.

The outline for the Xenological Survey included herein may be used as a basis for future missions of this type.

5.1 BACKGROUND DATA

In the year Prelmp.1231, an exploration flotilla from the region then known as The Aldebaran March (now part of House Carlisle) discovered an amoeboid xenosentient race living not far into the Frontier. The Lumens, as they were named (in reference to the shifting glow which their bodies emit), were capable of using words (these too they constantly emitted, in a low mumbling manner), but the differences in basic structure made it evident that communication between the races could not occur until some major breakthroughs in metaphysics were made. The explorers departed in search of more lucrative discoveries, but they left behind a highly specialized form of molecutronic processor called "The Translator". This device was programmed to study the Lumens' communicative systems and determine (given sufficient time) the meanings of the aliens' mutterings and shifting colors. The eventual goal was to build up a translatory database which would facilitate inter-racial communication upon the explorers' return. This technique remains in use to this day; a good many Xenological Surveys begin with a "Linguistic Downloading Phase". This mission, however, did not return.

The Lumens went on with their lives, and in the next 100 years their technology advanced to a level roughly equivalent to Terra's Industrial age. The Translator was placed in a sort of museum, where it has remained, silently gathering its data.

By about Prelmp.500, the Lumens had all but forgotten about Man, (and vice-versa), but as the Wars of Integration drew to a close and the rapidly expanding TBD network entered the more active Frontier

Zones, the fates of both races were again intertwined. In that year the D. K. (recognizing the backwards alien race as no possible threat) placed a TBD relay station on the one natural satellite orbiting the Lumens' planet. This station now serves as the main link between this Zone and The Core Worlds, and handles messages from several Inner Provinces. Due to the shared nature of the station, the Houses each use their own ciphers when transmitting, and there are no leaks in security — except for our muttering alien friends...

The Lumens possess (amongst other talents) a sensitivity to Tachyon Beam transmission — in other words, they can "hear" TBD transmissions, and because they have no idea as to the actual source of the patterns, they have come to the only possible conclusion... these must be the Voices of the Gods.

RACIAL DESCRIPTION: LUMENS

BASIC TYPE/Form: Semi-Amoeboid with four manipulative pseudopods

AVERAGE SIZE: 56kg, span 1.73m (body 0.5m)

CHEMICAL STRUCTURE: Hydrocarbon

RESPIRATION: Osmosis of oxygen through body membrane

PERCEPTION: External or Reflected sound and visible radiation

REPRODUCTION: Spontaneous mitosis triggered by bio-survival anxiety

COMMUNICATION: Quasi-psionically induced sound and light patterns

RACIAL STATISTICS:

CO +5	ST +10	SIDp 6	Essence: -10
AG +5	QU -15	StDt +1	Channeling: -30
SD -10	PR -20	Rec x 0.8	Telepathy: +10
ME +5	IN +20	StLng: 1	Poison: +0
RE +10	EM +15	TyHtD: 12	Disease: +5

Background Picks: 3 (Skills, Status or Mentor) Max HP: 100

Gifted with sound/ light patterns (incl langs); receive +30 to figuring such patterns out.

CULTURAL OUTLINE:

RACIAL ORIGINS: Evolved from lower amoebae, developing intelligence and manipulative capability thousands of years ago.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE: Platonic Democracy. Major decisions deferred to elected "God-Hearers", who determine courses of community action.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: Very supportive but fluid. Groups of many types exist (Lumens love to congregate).

MILITARY: None, although "Protectors" circle communities, armed with Force-Nets for use vs natural predators.

LANGUAGE: Open, agglutinative system of sound and color; almost always "emitting" unless shocked/wounded (this is subconscious).

CURRENCY: None; barter is the norm, usually performed at group levels.

HOUSING: Architecturally modified mountain cave complexes, connected by winding paths/roads. Much interior and exterior decoration. Most homes are crowded and constantly noisy.

DIET: Lumens have no sense of taste as we know it (a definite double-meaning); they prefer to consume protein-rich organic matter which is still in a live state.

WORSHIP: "The Gods" who speak to the Lumens theologists are numerous and there is no "chief" deity. All Lumens hear their voices from time to time (on those rare occasions when the TBD beam intercepts the area exactly), but the God-Hearers do this more often (due to level and EM). When a certain course of action is meditated upon by the God-Hearer, the "Divine Reaction" depends upon which god "answers". For example; if the PCs' presence were meditated upon, and the "God of Anger" answered (the God of Anger is a commonly occurring voice — it "speaks" whenever the TBD station receives a message in Colosian Battle Language), it would be believed that the Gods are very displeased, and the Players might be in trouble. The GM should roll a random reaction (with 01 signifying the worst and 00 the best possible "reaction") if "Divine Consultation" becomes necessary.

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Weapon:OB	Skill:Add	Skill:Add	Notes
HERBERT 009	—	10	16/0	—	70Percp	350rate	Xeno-Relations Bot; can interface with EW/Comm and Reference Consoles.
LORD GOD-HEARER	40	100	2/5	70FNet†	70Relig‡	85PbSpk	Lumens Theol.; Force-net; pet Stalker.
TYPICAL LUMENS	1	20	2/-15	10MA1St	30(job)	30PbSpk	Almost always encountered in groups.
TYPICAL GOD-HEARER	5	30	2/-15	10MA1St	45Relig‡	50PbSpk	Lumens' community "Administrators".
"PROTECTORS"	7	45	2/-5	40FNet†	30MA1St	25StnRd†	Lumens' "Rangers"; have Force-Nets and

Contact Stun-Rods; found in groups of 2- 7.

† (Force-Nets attacks as Tangle Rifles but do Elec Criticals) ‡ (Xeno-field = Lumens' culture)

NOTE: The Lumens have absolutely no idea what "The Gods" are actually saying, nor do they claim to (except for a few "holy words" which they hear often — one of these is the station's call letters). All TBD messages are enciphered (rather like Morse Code), but different Provinces use different phonemes and different codes. To understand a TBD message, a Lumens would have to (A) know the language and (B) lock in at least a rand of EW/Comm skill. Of course, the Lumens could try to repeat a message (at +30), but remember that the voices are HOLY. If the Players ridicule them, all further negotiations will be at -50.
 * (treat as Tangle Rifles but deliver Electricity Criticals).

THE LUMENS' TBD-SENSITIVITY is handled as a Static Maneuver, rolled against the PERCEPTION AND SENSOR/SCANNING column. This ability is passive (ie; a Lumens does not have to "try" to perceive a TBD message within a given range — it is either perceived (to a varying degree of completeness) or not). Difficulty Levels are based on range from the Lumens to the nearest TBD relay which is currently transmitting or receiving, and the Modifiers are as usual. The result obtained indicates how much of the message is picked up.

RANGE	DIFF. LEVEL
10m	ROUTINE
100m	EASY
1km	LIGHT
100km	MEDIUM
50,000km	HARD
100,000km (1/3 LS)	VERY HARD
300,000km (1 LS)	EXTREMELY HARD
5LS	SHEER FOLLY
50LS (0.1AU)	ABSURD
1AU	INSANE

MODIFIERS:

Lumens' Empathy Mod

Lumens' Level X2

Beam directly "intercepts" area: +50

NOTES: A result of BLUNDER indicates message garbled or language/"God" mistaken for another.

A result of FAILURE indicates that nothing is heard at all.

A result of SUCCESS (in its varying degrees) does not imply understanding of the actual message — only reception of the code. See below for more details.

5.2 THE NPCS

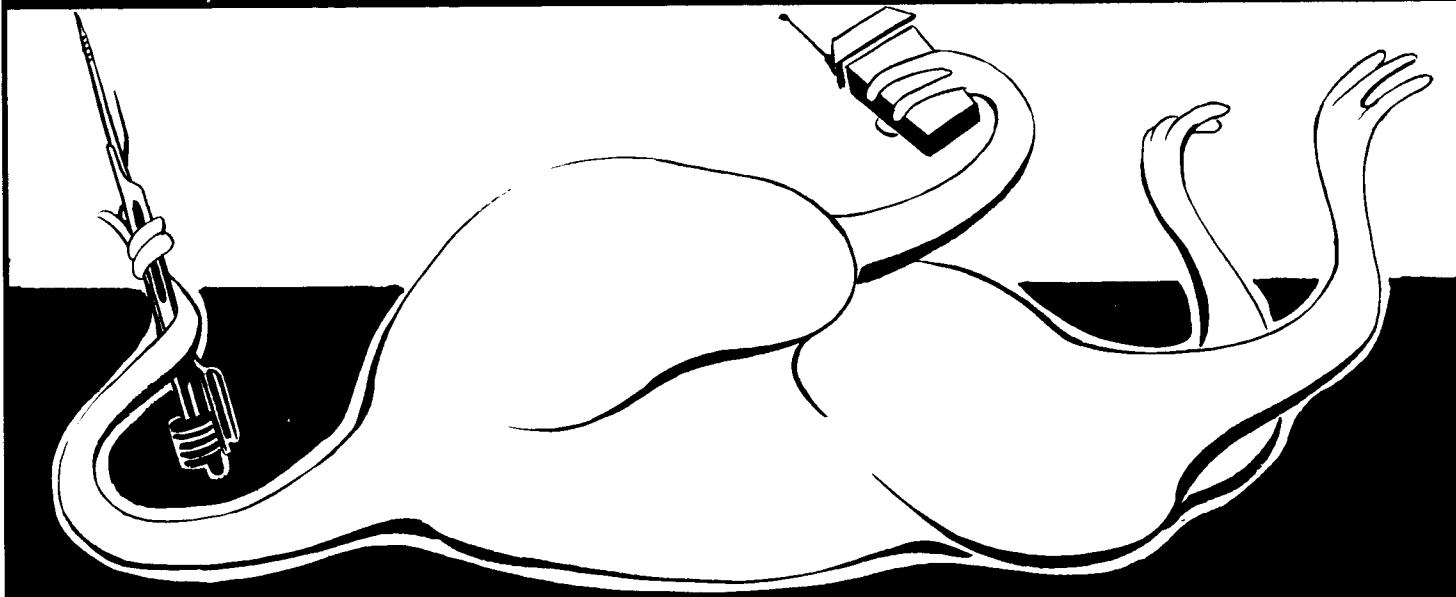
The Players will be spending quite a bit of time on the Lumens' planet, and will interact with hundreds of the aliens on a regular basis. Obviously, all possible personalities and reactions preclude individual description, but suggestions may be found in the ENCOUNTERS section. The individuals noted in this section are those who will most directly influence the storyline.

5.21 HERBERT 009, Human/Exotic Relations Bot

A customized version of the standard Human Relations Robot, Herbert possesses a high Intellect rating and a number of useful skill programs (including Participant Research capabilities which allow him to use his Mk.# as a Mod vs certain Research rolls). This is his primary function (to serve as an aid in field research), but he may serve another important function — Herbert is a very perceptive construct, and just might notice a few things that the Players manage to overlook from time to time.

ROBOT NAME: HERBERT 009
 TYPE: Human/Exotic Relations
 WEIGHT(kg): 184
 COMPUTER Mk.#: 20 (CPU20/MEM40/RSV200)
 PROGRAMS (and sizes depending on "storage level"):
 Data Acquisition (0.1/0.1/0.1)
 Etiquette/3 cultures (0.2/0.2/0.2)
 Drive GEM Car (1/1/1)
 Linguistics/3 Languages (1/1/1)
 General Reference (5+20/20)
 Xeno General Reference (5+30/30)
 Participant Research/Cultural (7+25/25)
 POWER SOURCE: Fusion Reactor; 20 days
 MOTIVE FORM: Walk; 20m per Rd
 MANEUVERING: +30
 ARMOR: Personal AT 16
 HITS: 10
 SHIELD: None
 OB TOTAL: None
 DB TOTAL: 0
 DATA OUTPUT: HoloProjector; 15m range
 AUDIO/VISUAL EQPT: HoloCamera/Microphones; 150m range
 WEAPONRY: None
 SENSOR/RANGE: MedSensor/30m; +50
 EW/STEALTH: None
 INTERFACE W/: Starship EW/Comm Consoles; +15
 Starship (Non-Technical) Reference Computer Consoles; +30
 LANGUAGE: BIVOC
 3 additional languages (chosen by GM)
 OTHER FUNCTIONS:
 Xeno-environments/Light Gravity; +20
 Xeno-environments/Heavy Gravity; +20
 Perception +70
 Oration +35
 Intellect +70
 Manipulation +50
 Diplomacy Cultures as above; +25 ea
 TOTAL COST (CUSTOM BUILT):
 394,170 Elmonits

A Lumens w/ Multiscanner



The GM should decide what languages Herbert can speak (his rank is 7 in these languages). These will determine the cultures he is most familiar with (ie; his Etiquette/Diplomacy cultures). Thanks to his Participant Research and Reference programs, however, Herbert is capable of handling himself amongst a great many other cultures (when dealing with such a commonly-encountered race, he can use Diplomacy at +13). As regards the Lumens, if it happens that Herbert is involved in the communications/linguistics research project (and that project achieves at least 60% success), he will be able to use his FULL Diplomacy Mod when dealing with them (this is because he is capable of storing and retrieving data much more efficiently than his Hominoid "masters", who will only receive HALF their Mods). If Herbert is not involved, no one receives either.

5.22 THE TRANSLATOR

An artificially sentient microprocessor over 1500 years old, The Translator (it answers to that "name") appears to be an oddly-shaped grey metal box, a little narrower at the top end, with several small antennae protruding from a dome on top. These antennae are its sensory apparatus, receiving both visual and auditory input. Its prime function is the collection and definition of local communicative patterns, and its technique has been silent observation (it believes that a researcher should endeavor to avoid exerting any influence upon the subjects of its research). A rather specialized unit, it has little knowledge or concern about matters beyond its prime function (but within its field it possesses an Intellect bonus of +70). The Translator has been performing its function on this planet for most of its existence, possesses the equivalent of rank 12 in the Lumens' language (understanding) more of the archaic terms than the average Lumen does), and has been waiting patiently all this time for a Human to return and download its data. Remember that The Translator was created in Prelmp.1231, and as such knows absolutely nothing about Tachyon communications, hyperspace travel, or the Empire. It is well familiar with the "Voices of the Gods" concept as held by the Lumens, but feels that these are mere "myth patterns", possibly facilitated by intake of hallucinogenic flora (several such plants exist here — their effects on Hominoid physiology would almost certainly be fatal).

For PC interaction with The Translator, see the ENCOUNTERS section.

5.23 THE LORD GOD-HEARER

Not all Lumens possess the TBD-sensitivity to the same degree — it is primarily a function of experience level and Empathy. Usually the highest-level Lumens in any one community is elected "God-Hearer" for that community, and this

individual interprets the divine messages thought to advise or admonish the populace. Every four (local) years, these officials vote amongst themselves for one of their number to serve as the "Lord God-Hearer" (the title means that the interpretations of this individual take precedence over those of other God-Hearers). The job is a demanding one, requiring many hours of meditation and solitude, and the current Lord God-Hearer (whose name is a complex, 40-second long series of colors and whistling noises) spends more time than most in isolation (which even the local God-Hearers will hesitate to interrupt) on a distant mountaintop. This same individual has been holding the position for over 50 (local) years. Although only the Lord God-Hearer can answer many of the PCs' important questions, the PCs will receive no help in finding "him" unless they have performed some impressive deed for one of the local communities.

The Lord God-Hearer is rather impressive himself; he is a level 40 Theologist, is at least as gifted as any other God-hearers in TBD-sensitivity, and is almost 2 meters across (this is immense, for a Lumens). The air around him eddies and grows warm whenever he speaks, and the colored light which he emits can become blindingly bright if he is upset or excited (- 50 on all OB's and MM's while looking in his general direction). He is not at all interested in learning to speak the PCs' language, and therefore the PCs will have to bring along a Lumens (unlikely), or The Translator in order to communicate with him (if Herbert was involved in the Linguistic Research Project, he might be able to handle this job — he will have a much better chance than the PCs would).

If the PCs approach the mountain without a Lumens in the party, they will be stalked by a local lifeform (a pet of the Lord God-Hearer). Details on meeting both are found in the ENCOUNTERS section.

5.3 THE TASK

Initially, the Players' only task is the completion of the Preliminary Survey (see section 5.31). This is not a simple task, but it is a straightforward one. Note that PCs who make good use of ship sensors might be able to obtain much of the required Biological Data from orbit. The problem is that they may not have much time in orbit — for the Priests of the Dia Khovaria don't appreciate people hanging around their relay stations, regardless of who sent them. The PCs may be sensed by the mond/technicians who maintain the TBD base, who will inform the resident Priest that an unannounced Insystem shunt has occurred.

NOTE: *Even if the Dia Khovaria is told to expect the PCs (which would be the case if they represent any Provincial or Imperial concern), the*

Priest who has jurisdiction over the relay station has no obligation to alter his own procedures for them, nor to assist them in any way, and he won't do either (the DK can be funny that way). See the ENCOUNTERS section.

Once the PCs make planetfall (or enter atmosphere), their next tasks are to find some Lumens and start some sort of communication going. The GM should let them fly by/look at/scan a few Lumens communities or mining operations (where Lumens wielding contact stunner-rods drive great, shoveling beasts), to get a view of the aliens. The GM should let the Players decide on a plan for making contact, although if they don't, you can always give them a hand (ie; a badly-placed mine charge sends one of the huge shov-elbeasts into a destructive rampage; a wounded Lumens is found at the base of a cliff; a particularly small Lumens can't get its motorcar out of a ditch; etc). Whatever method is used, the GM should try to give the PCs a chance to be received in a positive manner, at least as friendly strangers, if not heroes. This will set them off on their best foot, so to speak, and make caring about the aliens easier (for the Players). Communications can get started up in many ways (remember, the Lumens are excellent with sound or light patterns, including languages). Some of the skills which might be applied by crafty Players include Music (Lumens would love Bach), Signalling (Pantomime), Visual Arts, and (to some degree) General Physics, Advanced Math, Astronomy, Chemistry, Planetology, etc. (If the Players drew pictures of constellations on the ground to show where they came from, the Lumens would probably get the picture). Try to encourage creative solutions, and let the Players do the planning themselves. In a few short weeks, the Lumens will speak enough Imperial Standard for the Cultural Surveying to begin, and THAT's when things start to get strange...

When the Religion project gets underway, the Lumen's descriptions of The Voices should strike the PCs as peculiar. Lumens show no signs of any other superstitious behavior whatsoever, and yet they all speak as though these Holy Voices were very audible and very real. It is here that the REAL task of the adventure begins: to figure out just what The Voices of the Gods actually are.

Afterwards, the PCs will still be left with what is essentially a moral dilemma: Should the Lumens be told that the Gods they've worshipped for a thousand years are in truth only the words of men?

5.31 OUTLINE FOR PRELIMINARY XENOLOGICAL SURVEY

A Xeno Survey team consists of specialists in several interdependent fields of study. In order for the team to complete a Preliminary Survey, research must be per-

formed in all of the areas noted below (although the methods used — communication, observation or experiment — are up to the team). NOTE: The Difficulty Levels suggested below assume that specimens/interviewees are available and cooperative (Sensor research assumes medium range and a Bio Analysis program must be taken into account as befitting the specific situation).

The situations outlined below refer to study of the Lumens only. By altering the specified Difficulty Levels, the GM can easily use this format to govern Surveys on other races, or in-depth follow-ups on the Lumens (obtaining more detail than in necessary from this Preliminary Survey).

For each field of research required, the Task Abbreviations of any applicable skills are noted below (completion of the project yields data from the RACIAL DESCRIPTION — see section 5.11):

BIOLOGICAL DATA:

BASIC TYPE/FORM: SM/Sensr:M or SM/Percep:E

AVERAGE SIZE: SM/Sensr:M or SM/Percep:L

CHEMICAL STRUCTURE: SM/Sensr:V or SM/MtScn:E (if specify scan for hydrocarbon) or R/BioCh:E or R/MdDia:M

RESPIRATION: SM/Sensr:V or R/MdDia:H

PERCEPTION: SM/Sensr:A or R/MdDia:H

REPRODUCTION: R/MdDia:H or SM/MtScn:L (given Lumens in mitosis stage) or (R/Anthr:M, then R/BioCh:H)

COMMUNICATION: R/MdDia:C, then R/Phys:H

CULTURAL DATA:

NOTE: If any PC does a R/Psych:C that character will add +15 to any subsequent CULTURAL research (this includes group research but two such characters would not add +30).

RACIAL ORIGINS: R/Anthr:C

POLITICAL STRUCTURE: R/Anthr:H

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: R/Anthr:C

MILITARY STRUCTURE: R/Anthr:M

LANGUAGE (first requires at least 40% completion of COMMUNICATIONS project above): R/Anthr:C* (for every 50% completion give involved PCs one free rank in spoken Lumens; the highest rank possible is 4)

CURRENCY: R/Anthr:E

HOUSING: R/Anthr:M

DIET: R/Anthr:M plus R/BioCh:C

WORSHIP: R/Anthr:C (data fragmentary — the Lumens keep referring to the Lord God-Hearer, whom they refuse to bother or help the PCs locate).

On most of the above projects, the PCs will have no idea what the Difficulty Level really is until they've achieved at least 10% success.

* The PCs must get The Translator away from any Lumens to download its linguistic data. This is considered a R/CompT:H, and would make the above mentioned LANGUAGE project less than obsolete, giving involved PCs a chance to make a SM/ME and RE:X to determine the rank they learn:

Partial Success = Rk 1

Near Success = Rk 2

Success = Rk 3

Absolute Success = Rk 4

5.32 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The GM should decide upon a political, corporate or scientific agency for the PCs to be hired or sent out by. Whoever they are, the employers have discovered or otherwise come into possession of a set of ancient Dataspheres (rather like today's Memdiscs in function). These artifacts were in quite damaged condition, and appear to have suffered substantial dataloss, however enough remained to pinpoint the location of a then-current Planetary Survey and its discovery of an amoeboid xenosentient race named the Lumens. Known in the scientific community as "The Aldebaran Spheres", these precious artifacts seem to be the remains of some sort of exploratory record, and are over 1500 years old. They may yet reveal further secrets, as analysis is ongoing (the GM may use The Spheres to introduce all sorts of factors into the campaign, from ancient discoveries long lost to wild goose chases as the result of misinterpreted or manufactured data (ie; lies). One agency which would jump at the chance to rediscover the Lumens is the Devonian Xeno Scouts. One agency the PCs definitely should NOT represent is the Dia Khovaria.

Regardless of who the employer is, they will want the PCs to complete all research projects necessary to fill out a Preliminary Xenological Readout, so the (A) a Sentient Status Rating can be assigned to the Lumens, and (B) later teams can explore these beings in more detail. Now, that couldn't be all that difficult, could it?

5.33 AIDS

The PCs will be provided with a ship for the duration of the mission. It may be of any type applicable to the employer-group, but whatever it is, the GM should make sure it has both TBD and EW/Stealth Capability. Both of these functions may prove quite useful to the Players. If you want to have the Players use their ship's guns in some dramatic and heroic fashion, then make sure the ship has the gunnery to do it. the ship will also have a stocked dispensary, General and Xeno Reference programs, at least a small cargo hold, and Herbert 009. Each Player may requisition equipment of up to 1000 Elmonits value (no weaponry will be granted, though the PCs may be able to bring their own arms along — this is up to the GM). All requisitioned equipment must be returned or paid for at the end of the mission (and the PCs should be held answerable for any damages!).

The Lumens themselves will be very helpful, as long as the PCs don't harm any of them or ridicule their Gods (see above). They will feel indebted to the PCs for any favors done. Their gift with patterns and languages should make most of the research projects go by quickly.

5.34 OBSTACLES

One aspect of the Lumens' nature which will prove bothersome is the reluctance on the part of the community God-Hearers to help the PCs locate the Lord God-Hearer (see above). Even if the PCs have done a favor (and you fully intend to let them go see "him") you should make them argue their case a bit while the Lumens contemplates their "pattern" — these aliens can be weird at times...

The Lumens are not the only life form on their world; in fact the planet sports hundreds of flora and fauna specimens just waiting to be categorized. some of these can be quite dangerous. The GM should feel free to create examples of this alien life. Plants with bizarre properties or drug-like effects, animals with peculiar body forms (or no real body forms to speak of), etc. Two of the more dangerous local critters are described below. One of them, known colloquially as the "Death Runner", may be the subject of a major encounter (see 5.5).

The Priest at the TBD station will prove to be a bit of an obstacle (see THE TASK, above). Not only will he stand in the PCs' way, he will expect them to act respectfully to him while he does it (and if they tick him off, he can bring down a whole Province full of trouble on their heads). Note: Don't simply trick your Players into this. Anyone who's been around at all knows not to mess with the DK.

"Death Runners" may be more aptly named "Death Rollers", because this is their primary form of locomotion. They are large (about 150kg), roundish beasts with twelve strong pseudopods of varying length and thickness — rather like big, fast octopi. They are pack animals (usually 3-12 are encountered) which occasionally run rampage into Lumens communities or worksites, ripping the gelatinous Lumens apart with their sharp beaks. The Force-Net was developed by the Lumens specifically to deal with these predators.

The "Giant Slime" is another commonly-seen local creature. It is a docile enough animal, moving slowly over the ground in search of offal and other tasty things. The beasts have two qualities of note. First, they are capable of digesting almost anything they come across, breaking it slowly down inside their semi-transparent bodies — PCs who leave their equipment laying around may soon learn not to. Second, whenever physically threatened or wounded, they begin emitting a sharp, keening sound which has the same effect on the hearer as a Sonic Stunner. The Lumens, if asked, will advise the PCs to simply stay away from these creatures — they rarely come into the Lumens communities.

SUMMARY OF CREATURES' COMBAT ABILITY

CREATURE NAME	SIZE	HITS	AT(DB)	MS/AQ	LVL	ATTACKS & PROBABILITIES
Death Runner I	M	80C	8(15)	F/VF	8E	20SGr(x1d12)30/50MBt70
Death Runner II	L	130F	8(10)	F/F	12E	25MGr(x1d12)30/60LBt70
Giant Slime	L	150H	1(0)	CR/VS	7D	80SnStn100 & 20LEnv30

5.35 REWARDS

As no mention of The Translator has yet been found in The Aldebaran Spheres, its existence will be known to no one but the PCs. They might return it to their superiors, sell it (it would be worth easily 40,000 Elmonits even without the Lumens' data), or keep it for their own use. Treat it as a Computer Mk.70, ABSURD to figure out or reprogram. It handles all linguistic research (not just Lumens') with a +70 Mod, and treats such research as though it were one Difficulty Level lower than it actually is (HARD research is MEDIUM for it).

Any Lumens artifacts (they create tools and decorative items of all types) brought back from the planet would be worth something as well. Depending upon the specific item, these things might fetch anywhere from 110% to 200% of their actual (material) value in the Imperium. The Force-Nets are especially interesting, and one of these projectile weapons would bring the PCs somewhere around 300 Elmonits.

NOTE: the PCs will not receive any Elmonits for bringing a Lumens back.

The PCs will also receive pay for the mission depending on the amount of research they performed and the Difficulty of that research. Add up the experience points gained by each Player for research, NOT INCLUDING THE "BASIC EXPERIENCE MULTIPLIER", and half this number. The result is the Elmonits pay for the research done.

The final reward depends entirely upon the Players' actions — for the Lumens themselves are beyond price. Their TBD-sensing ability could prove devastating to any agency it is used against (although it would still be necessary to get a Lumens very close to the correct relay). As for the DK, once they find out about the aliens' powers they will either pull to have the Lumens destroyed/quarantined as a security risk or take them under the 'protective wing' of The Church, in an effort to utilize this new-found power themselves (and either course of action is about as likely as the other).

5.4 ENCOUNTERS

Many possibilities for interaction of various sorts exist on and around the Lumens' planet. Of the encounters listed below, some are necessary parts of the

adventure (these have been mentioned previously), and some are totally optional. This world could serve as the background of a small campaign in its own right, so if you want to have PCs return here, drop a few hints and save some encounters for the next time, or make up a few of your own.

1. WHILE SENSOR SCANNING FROM ORBIT, the PCs receive an incoming hailing signal on all open laser frequencies:

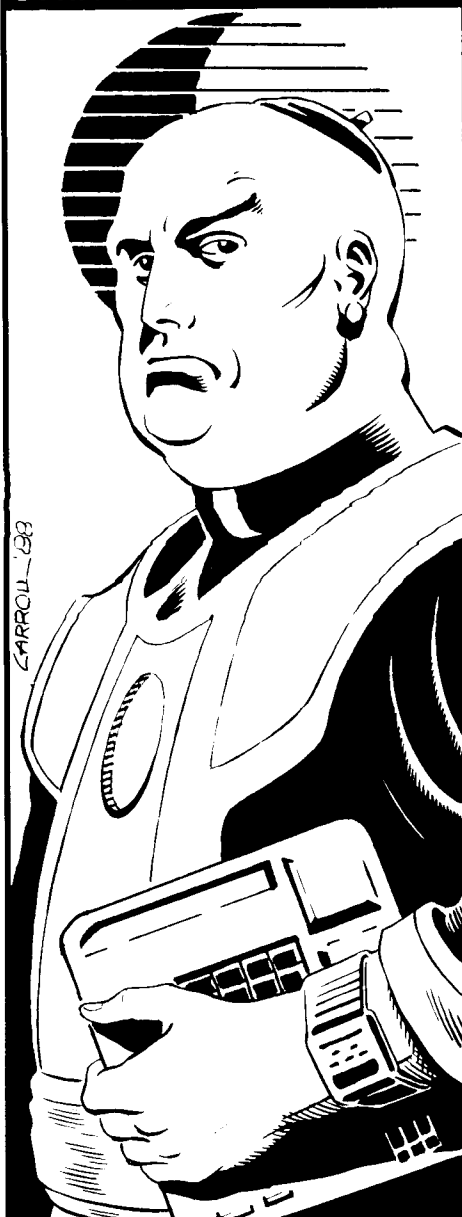
WARNING... You are in Direct Violation of Imperial Directive Epsilon-171123-5... Repeat... You have entered Imperially Restricted space... Do not alter orbit — you are being scanned. Make no maneuvers. Lock on to microfreq 230.5 for Identity Check and Visual Display... That is all... Access Tachyon Technology...

The message ends as abruptly as it began, and leaves an impression of "big trouble". (Everyone knows that ATT is the corporate arm of the Dia Khovaria). Microfreq 230.5 connects the PCs to the Priest, who proceeds to give them the ration of slog described above. If the PCs don't cooperate and leave orbit (Planetfall is fine, the Priest just doesn't want them in orbit), he will call his superiors and have someone sent out here — with an Imperial Light Gunship for support (I told you, these guys don't mess around!) **NOTE:** Before this encounter can occur, the Monks at the TBD station have to notice the PCs' ship. Their chance of doing this is 10 — 50% per minute, depending on how much power the PCs are using. If the PCs are using the ship's Stealth capability, this Mod is subtracted from the Monks' base chance.

2. A LUMENS COMMUNITY Clustered about the high walls of a fertile valley, this community looks at first to be only a collection of caves, but distinct roads can be seen connecting them. Small motions can be seen in many of the caves, and if it is dark outside light will emanate from the wide cave mouths onto the flat dirt porches. If the Lumens are unaware of the PCs presence, they will be out and about; every now and then a bright, rolling, amorphous thing comes out of a cave and travels down a road to another cave. The Lumens are conducting business, as on any other day. Some are craftsmen, making useful tools out of the ores retrieved by the shovelbeasts. Some specialize in electrical power tech, and a

select few of these manufacture the force-Nets and Stunner-Rods. Many are "ranchers", who keep enclosed areas of hillside to graze their animals on. Others are Protectors, who roam the mountains in bands, on the lookout for Death Runners. Occasionally a small, electrically-powered motorcar is seen, moving jerkily along the road at about 10 kph. Most of these locals will greet the PCs with a slightly confused, but not at all hostile, response (the Protectors may get a bit jumpy, if the GM wishes, but defuse the situation before it gets out of hand). If the PCs do some favor for the community, the Lumens will be overly friendly — the PCs will probably have to get them to all stop emanating at once so some communication can be accomplished. The aliens will be interested with Imperial technology, but not extremely so. If the PCs use any communications devices the Lumens will get very excited again, as this is closer to what THEY understand as speech than our speech is.

D. K. Administrative Priest



Finally (and the Players must think of this one themselves); if the PCs ever broadcast or receive via TBD while on or near the planet, the Lumens will react immediately, many of them flocking off to consult the God-Hearers, others simply getting frantic and wringing their pseudopods in worry — they will believe that a new God has spoken, and (judging by the volume of its voice) a strong one. Whatever the God-Hearers interpret this as, it will be extreme. If the PCs try to explain that the TBD is simply a tool created by Humans, the Lumens will be doubtful. It would take many examples of its use to even begin to convince them (old beliefs die hard).

3. THE TRANSLATOR After the PCs have been accepted by Lumens community they have contacted, they will be able to begin learning about the aliens' lifestyle. Communications between the races are still very vague at this point in time, but one of the Lumens will gesture for the PCs to follow it down a road toward a hilltop about 500 meters away. There lies the *Lumens' museum*, in which is stored many old and valuable Lumens artifacts and tools. Of the articles here, one of them seems entirely out of place — The Translator. (Alternately, the PCs may sensor scan the presence of a microfusion reactor within this structure). If there are any Lumens around, The Translator will make no contact, but as soon as they are alone, it will welcome the PCs to the planet (in its stiff, male voice), saying that it had doubted whether they would ever "return". It is anxious to fulfill its purpose and get on with the downloading, but feels that this should be done without the Lumens' awareness (they have no idea what The Translator is, or even that it's been DOING something all this time, thinking it to be an unexplained relic created by their forebearers). This could require a bit of sneaking around.

4. THE STALKER As they approach the Lord God-Hearer's cave, the PCs will have a chance to make a SM/Percep:X to see if they notice a creature which is paralleling their path, about 100 meters off. Any PC who succeeds will notice the thing as it suddenly stops moving and becomes SHEER FOLLY to see. This creature is a pet of the Lord God-Hearer, and it was sent to check the PCs out. It is semi-intelligent, and communicates with its master by making soft growling sounds capable of indicating general emotions. It has no attack capabilities to speak of, but possesses Stalking skill at +60. It is AT 4 and has a DB of 30 (but try not to lead the PCs into attacking it - this would anger the Lord God-Hearer a great deal). Its disappearing trick is a sort of psionic power — it does not really disappear at all. It has enough power points to do this trick 3 times per (standard) day. If the PCs make no hostile moves, it will watch for awhile and then go back to its master, conveying

neutral or uncertain feelings. Otherwise, it will warn him to prepare to defend against possible attack.

5. THE LORD GOD-HEARER On a high mountaintop (from which six Lumens' communities can be seen), sits the Lord God-Hearer's abode. The cave mouth can be made out from the foothills if the spotting character makes a SM/Percep:V - a wide, low opening strung with strange artifacts and emanating the (by now familiar) colored Lumens' lights. As they reach the leveling point near the top, they will be "greeted" by the Theologist they seek (his reaction to the party depends upon their treatment of his Stalker, as detailed above) and the reaction of "The Gods". If they didn't harm his pet (or didn't notice it), they will hear (and see) Lumens' conversation coming from the cave's mouth - the Lord God-Hearer is invoking "Divine Consultation" regarding them. There is a 10% chance per minute that some sort of reply will be received (the GM should roll the reaction as described in section 5.11). When the PCs actually make it to the cave's mouth a few minutes later, the alien will come toward them in a slow and deliberate fashion, and the air will begin to warm as his mumblings and flashings grow in intensity. If the Divine Reaction was good, he is welcoming them as emissaries; if neutral or not received, he is warning them to stay back until the Gods "cast their votes"; and if poor he is wielding a Force-Net and will use it if they make any hasty moves or come within 10 meters of him, and his "Blinding" power will be in full flare (see section 5.23) as he threatens these "beings of evil" to leave him and his people alone. If the PCs DID harm the Stalker, the cave will be dark and quiet when they approach, and just as they enter the cave mouth the Lord God-Hearer will roll into view acting just as if a "poor" reaction had been rolled above (he didn't consult the Gods in this case — this is his own personal reaction).

Hopefully, however, the PCs will be able to avoid this antagonistic event and set up meaningful communications with the alien. If they gain his trust (or at least his cooperation), he will answer several of the PCs' questions, adding +20 to their next "Worship" research roll. If the Gods reacted favorably, he will allow them to stay in his cave, and the Worship project will become MEDIUM in Difficulty. If asked he is able to perfectly imitate the voices of each of the Gods. When he does this, any PC who succeeds in a SM/EW/C:M will recognize the Provincial TBD code he is mimicking. If the PCs try to explain about the true nature of the TBD to him, he will prove to be the most difficult to convince of all the Lumens - one possible way to do this would be to go back and contact him via the ship's TBD, having first told him exactly what to expect and when. Let the Players come up with their own solution to this bizarre twist on the Turing Test.

5.5 AFTERWORD

When the Players return home and submit their findings, they will be judged by their superiors as to the thoroughness and overall quality of their work (this is especially important in an ongoing campaign) for "you're only as good as your last mission", and future work (or the lack of it) will depend on this Survey. Use the pay received for the mission (see REWARDS, above) as a means of comparing the PCs relative effort expended, and base the employer's reaction to each PC upon that PC's ranking in this "hierarchy". Allow some modifications (for Pivotal Ideas/Maneuvers, successful Admin rolls vs the employer, etc).

If the Players' report omits nothing about the Lumens' TBD-sensitivity, things could get very thick - it won't be easy to keep information like this out of the hands of the Imperial Science Institute, which means that the Dia Khovaria will probably find out (each of these agencies has a number of operatives in the other's employ). As mentioned above, this will drastically alter the Lumens' existence, effectively damning them or blessing them, depending on The Church's decision. If the Lumens are pronounced a security risk, the GM might want to set up an adventure the object of which is to rescue at least a few of them from under the DK's blockade (ships provided by the Imperial Fleet).

The GM may wish to allow Lumens PCs after this is all over. There would be a period of several months to a year during which the Lumens would be learning all the basic stuff which the PCs already know about the nature of life in the Empire. In order for the Lumens to put its TBD-sensitivity to real use, it will have to lock in some EW/Comm and Linguistics skills (this last is not at all difficult for them - Lumens pay half the listed DP cost for Linguistics skills). The GM should be aware that this would have serious effects on security procedures; sensor-scanning encountered vessels for Lumens crewmembers would become a standard operation at TBD bases and on military/covert operations vessels, and the Imperial Senate would be forced to legislate regarding use of the Lumens' power (don't hold your breath).

ADVENTURE: A MATTER OF TIME

In which the PCs are introduced to a small but dedicated band of anti-Imperial partisans, and participate in an unexpected evacuation. This Adventure is intended for PCs of any of the Astronaut or Technician sub-professions of experience levels 1-6, who have underworld or rebel contacts (or want to). It's recommended that the PCs used possess some skills useful in vehicular combat as well as technical know-how.

6.1 BACKGROUND DATA

Amongst the various and sundry "rebel bands" in existence, one of the most insidious and elusive (from the standpoint of the Empire) is the scattered army known as the EOE ("Enemies Of the Empire" — an Imperial term which they wear proudly). There are two major reasons for the success of this group: first, EOE is not really an "army" in the usual sense of the word, but rather an interdependent coalition of many smaller bands. Second, these bands follow no one particular creed, doctrine, method, strategy or central figure — instead, they are loosely united and pledged to aid each other in their one common goal: the eventual overthrowing of the Imperial Dynasty Throne (what would take its place is anybody's guess). This lack of any central person or location of headquarters makes the EOE difficult to put down. The EOE has connections with the League of Merchants, as well as several major traffickers in black-market goods, and equipment from various legal and illegal sources is constantly passing back and forth through these channels.

An "Enemy of the Empire" is any individual or group which is known or strongly suspected to have been involved in the perpetration of an "Imperial Crime" — crimes against the Emperor. Simply being so classified (by the Imperial Government and the Vega group) does NOT necessarily imply any affiliation with the group which calls itself "the EOE".

Recently, one of the EOE's most well-hidden affiliate bands (a small group known as SUR, or "Sentients' United Resistance"), ordered a shipment of personal weaponry from one of the major NPCs in the campaign (whoever the PCs are working for). These weapons are to be exchanged for a load of computer parts and programs (stolen by the SUR from an Imperial Fleet Supply Satellite).

While the deal is going on, the SUR receives word that their only large starship has just been captured by the Imps, and several SUR members were taken alive — especially bad news given the awesome reputation of the Imperial Interrogators). Realizing that it's only a matter of time before one of the captured rebels cracks under torture and reveals the location of their base, the SUR decides to pull out immediately, using the PCs' ship...and they will do so with or without the Players' cooperation.

6.2 THE NPCs

6.21 MANTIS II SERVICE BOTS

The PCs would not have been expected to do all the loading and unloading themselves — they have been given three Service Robots designed for that type of work. Produced by MasterMind of Clan Detzeer, the Mantis II bot is fast becoming a popular model due to its sleek look and multiple technics skills. About 60 cm high and 2 m long with four surprisingly strong arms, these bots maneuver solely via antigrav units, hovering about 5 to 50 cm off the ground. They are programmed to speak Anglaman, albeit very poorly.

ROBOT NAME:	MANTIS II
TYPE:	Service
WEIGHT(kg):	324
COMPUTER Mk.#:	10 (CPU10/ MEM20/RSV100)
PROGRAMS (and sizes):	
Data Acquisition (.1)	
Mechanical Technics (.5)	
Power Technics (.5)	
Cybernetic Technics (.5)	
POWER SOURCE:	Capacitors, 50 Hrs
MOTIVE FORM:	Slow Gravitic; 100 kph
MANEUVERING:	+30
ARMOR:	Personal AT 13
HITS:	30
SHIELD:	None
DB TOTAL:	0
DATA OUTPUT:	Standard Memory-Disc Recorder
AUDIO/VISUAL EQPT:	HoloCamera/Microphones; 30m range
WEAPONRY:	None
SENSOR/RANGE:	Multisensor; 15m range
EW/STEALTH:	None
INTERVACE W/:	Gravsled (may be towed) +5
LANGUAGE:	BIVOC
Imperial Standard (Spoken Rank 3)	
OTHER FUNCTIONS:	
Perception	+30
Oration	+15
Intellect	+40
Manipulate (bulky cargo)	+70
Mech Tech	+70
Power Tech	+50
Cyber Tech	+30
TOTAL COST (CUSTOM BUILT):	233,200 Elmonits

6.22 TANGA DOMO, SUR SYSTEMS TECH

A dedicated young member of the SUR technical team, Tangea is (as of this moment) also the leader of that team — as the actual Head Technician was on the rebel starship and won't be returning in the foreseeable future. While the PCs are around, she will be in charge of the other Systems Techs, all of whom are Level One. Tangea is a small woman of 25 years of age, with short, dark hair and a penchant for double-entendres (she is an incurable flirt). In order to impress her, however, a man must at least match her considerable technic proficiency, or (as she puts it), "When it comes to tools, I like a guy who can hold his own..."

6.23 MIRAL DuJEAUX, SUR LEADER

The charismatic force which holds SUR together, DuJeaux is also the very capable administrator who makes certain that the group's funds and equipment are managed properly. She is the self-exiled daughter of the Thain of Castanza III (a relatively insignificant Imperial territory near Sol), but this is not a fact she lets just anyone in on. The truth is, she is truly ashamed of her noble upbringing; having witnessed the inhumane practices of the Ruling Class first-hand, she feels personally responsible for making a difference. She still wears a titanium medallion (under her clothes) — the Imperial Royal Sigil of the House of Castanza, which she stole from the Family vaults before leaving her beloved HomeWorld. She wears this as a silent reminder of her goal. DuJeaux is a strong woman, both physically and emotionally, and acts as a crutch for the entire group when times go bad. She is also an extremely busy person, as she is currently monitoring any TBD transmissions she can pick up, waiting for some word (actually, for the lack of it) regarding the SUR starship and its mission. She will not be expected to enter the flight bay — when she does, all activity will cease (the tech crew will realize what has happened before she even opens her mouth, but she'll tell them anyway). It is she who makes the decision to use the PCs vessel to move the base. She will try to approach this topic tactfully, as though politely requesting aid — but this is not a polite request. If the PCs refuse, they will suddenly find themselves facing a very dangerously determined woman, who would sooner throw them to the Imps than respect their property. Besides, as she will tell the, this is only a temporary necessity brought about due to an emergency situation — the WILL get their ship back.

6.24 OTHER SUR MEMBERS

The group left behind when the SUR starship took off on its ill-fated mission was not the most capable — most of the highly skilled technicians and communications specialists (etc) accompany their strike teams, as the SUR gets much of its equipment by raiding Imperial Supply Satellites (and these satellites are invariably well-defended). There are four Level One Technicians here (besides Tangea), and twelve Level One Armsmen. As the name implies, there are more races represented in the SUR than just Humans — the GM should feel free to include members of just about any other known race. These "Greeners" may not be highly skilled, but they are a close group and will dive right in to help with The Task at hand. If relations between the PCs and DuJeaux are good, the rebels will let the PCs direct the loading operation (it is, after all, their ship), and will do their best to perform as directed in the interest of expediency.

6.3 THE SETTINGS

6.31 "THE UMBER STAR" MINIFREIGHTER

A small but nearly new and very dependable craft, the UMBER Star is owned by (or on loan to) the PCs employer — this is the ship all of the fuss is about. Its on-board computer currently contains a variety of defensive programs to aid the PCs in their gun-running maneuvers.

SHIP NAME: The UMBER Star
PRODUCER: Arc-Gotha/Custom
CLASS: Samson Minifreighter (modified)
TONNAGE/HITS: 400
COMPUTER Mk.#:25
SENSORS: 5 LY range
LASER COMM: 50,000 km range
TBD COMM: 10 LY range
ARMOR TYPE: 24 (-15 ENC)
CREW: Astro 2, Tech 4
MAX SUBL. ACC: Rtg 10 = 100km/secnd²
TRANS. DISP.: Rtg 10 = 10 LY/day
SCREENS: +50
EW: +40
ARMAMENT:
Mk.20 Laser Cn (Front; 6 shots/turn)
Mk.15 Blister Cn (6 shots/turn, 360° turret)
TER: 295
AUXILIARY SYSTEMS: None
OPERATING RANGE: 200 LY (total)
OPERATING DURATION: Unlim.
(Ramscoop)
OTHER FEATURES: Landing capable,
Full Gravity, 2 "Bargain" Berths, 8 Cryo
Berths, Cargo Bay (cap. 137 m³)
SPECIAL PROGRAMS*: Evade +35,
Tactics +20, Central Gunnery Control,
Construct Analysis +30

* (Only programs which yield some Bonus or otherwise unavailable option are listed. All "Required" programs — defense, EW, Life Support, etc — are assumed to be present).

6.32 THE REBEL BASE

Securely nestled in the foothills of a vast arctic mountain range, thousands of kilometers from the nearest built-up area, sits the SUR base. It is concealed by the nature of the terrain as well as SUR-constructed camouflage (tons of rock and tall trees have been moved into positions which make the base difficult to spot unless one knows where it is), and guarded in addition by its own EW/Cloaking generator. Beneath the large flight-bay doors lies a massive open space, used for the landing and loading of small starships. Technicians scurry to and fro, attending to maintenance and defrosting (the ice quickly builds up to a dangerous level on the exposed surfaces of the vehicles). Tanks and drums of fuel, small cargo-transporting vehicles and various pieces of machinery dot the chamber, and little living spaces are found throughout and around the bay (most are simple huts, scavenged together from whatever materials were at hand). Of the items scattered throughout this area, several are of predominant importance:

5 SMAC Hawks (stolen from House Colos)
One Tach 20c Hypershuttle (EW +80;
Cargo Bay 180 cumets)
Fuel Dispensary Tank
Mk.30 Explosive Missile Launcher (23
Missiles)
Crates of food and Living Supplies
Mk.16 EW Generator (+65)
Assorted Flight Bay Machinery (cranes,
dollies, etc)
When the time comes to move the base,
all items on this list must be broken
down (if applicable), and taken along.

6.4 THE TASK

Though they may be pressured into it, the Players' task is to help the SUR get the hell out of here before the inevitable happens and the Imperial Marines arrive. This entails hastily breaking the base down, planning and executing the necessary packing maneuvers, and taking off in an overcrowded ship in terrible weather. They will then have to take the SUR equipment (and members) to a stellar system nearly 70 LY distant (DuJeaux will provide the necessary information), and the Hyper-shuttle (carrying whatever cargo/passengers it can) will meet them there. The GM should determine where the new base is located (or at least get a rough idea as to what the place is like in general), but besides being the final stop, the location is of no importance to this adventure per se — save it for next time, as the PCs will probably have their hands full this time around.

BREAKING DOWN THE BASE:

Although not everything is being taken, the list given above should be more than enough to keep the characters busy for a while (hopefully not TOO long a while!) Each of the items on the list must be handled/broken down/loaded in a certain way and a certain amount of space, and these procedures will take a certain amount of time. With very few exceptions, these maneuvers are resolved as "Construction Projects" of given Difficulty. Some of these projects require the use of the Mantis II bots, while others may be done without their assistance. All of the pertinent facts are given below:

Item	Break	Down	Load	Bot?	Notes
SMAC Hawk (one) (takes 42m ³)	--		CN/AFV:E	Y	Reg Bay Machinery (*)
Fusion Fuel (13m ³)	(Siphon)		SM/PowT:R	N	Base=6 Rds per m ³
Mk30 Missile Launcher	CN/WpnT:E		CN/QU&RE:E	N	takes 3m ³
Crates:Food/Supplies	CN/QU&RE:M		CN/QU&RE:M	Y	much is perishable takes 30m ³
EW Generator/Net Grid	CN/PowT:E		CN/QU&RE:E	Y	takes 45m ³
*Flight Bay Machinery	CN/MechT:M		CN/QU&RE:M	Y	takes 50m ³

Abbreviation key is in the front of the module,
NOTE: The SMAC fighters may be loaded into a Cargo Bay (as opposed to a Fighter Bay); they will not be able to mobilize quickly if necessary. It would be INSANE (-100) to attempt loading them without using the Flight Bay Machinery. The "Construction Projects" noted above are all handled as standard "Single Science/Tech Projects" in that all members of each team average their applicable Bonuses together. The time indicated on the CONSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH CHART is NOT halved for each person past the first, but divided by the number of persons on the team.

6.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The PCs are contacted by one of their underworld associates — perhaps Emerich Rach of Hyperion IX, or the Baburnican Amazons — as mentioned above, many groups may have ties to the EOE (and therefore to the SUR). The job is straightforward; a load of Pulse Lasers is to be

delivered to the SUR base, and in return the rebels will exchange a load of computer supplies. The first part of the mission goes off without a hitch — the PCs make it safely to the SUR's home system, receive a pre-arranged and coded hailing signal from the hidden base, and make planetfall (landing the craft is a VM/AtmPt:V, due to

the inclement weather every 10% short of 100% success does 1d20 points of damage to the craft). Once down, the PCs will be approached by Tangea Domo, who will explain that the rebel leader is indisposed at this moment in time, but she (Tangea) has been given full authority to carry out the deal as pre-arranged. The Mantis Bots will be put to work at exchanging the two shipments (a CN/ Manipulation:M for them). This too goes off without a hitch, and the PCs are treated to a little rebel hospitality as Tangea and the others pass around a flask of Solar Grogh and examine their new weapons.

Into the midst of this revelry walks Miral DuJeaux, her face sullen and pale... all laughter stops as the crew awaits the terrible announcement they sense forthcoming. DuJeaux catches her breath, and explains that the mission team has been captured — many of them alive — by Imperial Marines, and lets this sink in (while she tries to determine the next best course of action). During the row of questions and suggestions which follow, the Players should grasp that which the rebels already know — they have to get out of here, and fast. Try to let the Players suggest helping the rebels break camp on their own (the idea doesn't sound too unreasonable after a few Solar Groghs). If they do, DuJeaux will jump at the opportunity — she fully intends to use their vessel whether or not they like the idea, but she'd much rather do it with their help, and the less she has to explain to their employer, the better.

NOTE: If the PCs do make the offer to help without being threatened into it, they will be treated with the utmost respect and friendship by the SUR in the future.

If the PCs do not make the offer, a few uncomfortable minutes will pass before DuJeaux presents her idea to them. When she next speaks, her voice is an almost emotionless monotone as she lays the situation bare (explaining any ensuing consequences which the PCs haven't figured out yet). "The bottom line is this" she says, "as sure as I'm standing here before you, the Imps are on their way here this very minute, or at least soon will be. This means death for the SUR, unless we can mobilize immediately and transport this entire base to another stellar system. Fortunately, I have considered the possibility of this eventually occurring, and have already selected the location of our next hideout..." While she is speaking, the

rebel Armsmen have been surreptitiously drawing their hand weapons (including the new Pulse Lasers). "And all we need from you," she goes on, "is a little help in getting there." The Players should now realize (with no small amount of discomfort) that they are in an entirely unenviable situation; surrounded and outnumbered by a band of armed Renegades with nothing left to lose... somehow, refusing to help the SUR suddenly has a ring of suicide to it...

NOTE: It is not the point of this Adventure to get the PCs involved in a firefight with the SUR; this is basically a "force" on the part of the GM, to push the PCs in the direction of the adventure as designed. Emphasize the tone of resolution in Miral's voice, and the tense, alert gazes of the rebel Armsmen. If the PCs get nasty, try having Tangea step in to defuse the situation, and have Miral reassure them that the ship will come to no harm, and will be returned to their control as soon as this is all over. If this doesn't work (some Players just don't know when to quit), you've probably got a firefight on your hands (if the PCs fire first, no mercy whatsoever will be shown — the SUR may be a bit idealistic but they're not STUPID).

6.42 AIDS

Assuming that the PCs eventually agree to help with The Task, a number of items (all mentioned previously) and the rebels themselves will be at their disposal.

Obviously, the Mantis Bots are an important part of the loading process, as their strength allows them to lift equipment which would otherwise require many more than four arms. When performing the "Construction Projects" detailed above, use the Bots' "Intellect" Mods where the chart calls for "RE". Similarly, use "Maneuvering" for "QU", and "Manipulate" for "AFV" (loading only). Bear in mind that the Bots understand only simple commands, and may interpret things in a more literal fashion than intended.

The rebels themselves all possess gear of various sorts, having scavenged battlefields and Supply Satellites over a period of years. The GM may wish to throw a few oddities around the rebel base: old uniforms from various armed forces, a peculiar weapon of alien design, mediadiscs from many Provinces, sealed packets of real Terran coffee, etc. Most of the rebels will be wearing Kevlar Suits or Vests. Armsmen will possess a small firearm or melee weapon. Technicians will have re-

pair scanners and tool kits, etc. Details are given in the NPC STATS table.

6.43 OBSTACLES

The major obstacle is time. AS detailed below, the PCs will have about one hour before the first encounter occurs, and the Imperial Search and Destroy Drines are sent in to verify the location of the base. After this, another hour will pass before the second, more deadly encounter: an Imperial Gunship. Even if the characters are off-planet by this time, they will still have to face the Imperial ship holding a defensive position at the perimeter. (some days, it doesn't pay to get out of bed).

Another obstacle at the rebel base is the weather — the average temperature is -10° to 0° celsius, and the winds are often quite fierce (subtract 30 from all rolls on the Ind Table). These and other factors make takeoff or landing VERY HARD at a minimum, and even INSANE at times. Every 15 minutes in the open bay, enough frost will build up on a vessel to cause a (cumulative -5 mod to all piloting maneuvers. It takes one person 5 minutes to remove each 15 minutes' of frost buildup.

6.44 REWARDS

The SUR is by no means a well-to-do bunch — they have no luxuries to speak of, and need what little equipment they have left. Still, they do have connections all over the Empire, both within the EOE and otherwise, and know the locations of many Imperial and Provincial Supply Dumps. If the PCs help the SUR pull this whole scheme off, they will receive the undying gratitude of the rebel band, and the right to ask for a few favors somewhere down the line (and the SUR will be good for it) such as fencing stolen items, procuring Imperial issue equipment and information, or even making a few well-placed contacts. In addition, the PCs will have gained a place to hide out: at the new SUR base.

If the PCs offered their assistance freely, the rebels will be especially indebted. They will grant the PCs all of the possible favors mentioned above, and will even go so far as to make them honorary members of the Sentients United Resistance. If the PCs have really impressed Miral DuJeaux, she will call them away from the rest of the group. "For years now," she will explain, "this has been the symbol of all that I strive for. Now that I owe the continued existence of my goal to

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	WpnOB	SkillAdd	SkillAdd	Notes
Mantis II Bots	—	30	13/0	—	40Intel	70Manip	Service Bots: in cargo handling and tech support.
Tangea Domo	3	30	2/0	30StnP	50PowT	45MchT	Systems Tech, Rep. Scanner and Master Toolkit
Miral DuJeaux	7	40	10/10D	45LsrPI	45Trade	40EW/C	Administrator and Leader of SUR; Bore of Lesser Nobility.
Sur Armsmen	1	22	10/20+	35LsrPI	25AFV	10WpnT	Rebel Fighters; have assorted personal equipment.
Sur Techs	1	15	5/10	20LsrPI	30MechT	15PowT	Rebel Systems Technicians; assorted tools & equipment.
ImpSADDs	—	160	23/70	30HEP@	80Percp	60Stalk	Imperial Search and Destroy Drones (44 tons); have Multisensors with 100 km range.
Imp GnshCrew	3	35	15/10A	50HEP	30Sensr	20EW/C	Armsmen and Technicians; will engage in ship combat.

* (Personal Shields; various types) (Due to Barrier Shields; if RW applies, +80) @ (Internally-mounted Mk.20 Laser Cannon)

you, I would like for you to have it. . .” She will then produce a beautiful medallion: the Titanium Sigil of the House of Castanza; hand it carefully to the PCs, thank them once again, and leave them wondering.

6.5 ENCOUNTERS

Once the PCs get involved in the evacuation process, they will be in for a few close encounters of the Imperial kind.

1. SEARCH AND DESTROY DRONES.

Approximately one hour after Miral DuJeaux delivers the bad news to the PCs and Flight Bay crew, three ImpSADDs (Imperial Search and Destroy Drones) will begin combing the area for the location of the rebel hideout. Rolls will have to be made to determine who discovers who first (perception/sensors/scanners/etc). Regardless, once the ImpSADDs know where the rebels are, two will attack the base while the third turns to report to the Gunship. If the characters manage to destroy the third one, they will have bought themselves a little more time.

2. STRAFING RUN. One hour after the ImpSADDs encounter (or two hours if the third ImpSADD was destroyed), an Imperial Gunship will enter the atmosphere to conduct a full-scale Blaster Cannon barrage on the area (use the stats for the Viceroy Class Gunship in BUG HUNT). The attack is handled at an OB of 50 (80 if the their ImpSADD made it back to report), and the Flight Bay doors (assumed to be closed when not in use) are considered to CAT 25, 50 hits per man-sized section. Single characters may be targeted inside the Bay once the doors have been breached (the combat modifier used would depend on the size of the hole). Whether or not the doors are breached, every ten points of damage done to the doors will cause one point of damage to all personnel below (due to falling debris), unless said characters have some type of protection (any Personal Shield will do). Exposed equipment would have to make a RR vs Breakage. If the doors are breached, all characters directly under the hole will receive a Medium Fall/Crush attack, OB 40. If the characters have not yet broken down/loaded the Missile Launcher and/or the SMAC fighters, now would be a good time to put them to use.

3. IN THE GRAV WELL. Regardless of the time spent moving the base, when the PCs ship leaves atmosphere and starts out toward the edge of the Grav Well (a four hour journey), they will encounter an (other) Imperial Gunship. This vessel's orders: the rebels are under no circumstances to make shunt. Although this is a difficult thing to guarantee, the Gunship will put all of its offensive capabilities to use in a full-bore attempt to cripple the escaping ships. If things get so bad that the Players decide to risk shunting from this point, the ship will take 8 random malfunctions and an "A" Pierce Critical.

7.0

ADVENTURE: WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The PCs take a bit of R & R at a favorite deepspace retreat, and encounter a variety of interesting characters — one of whom is acting a bit oddly. This Adventure might be attempted by PCs of any Experience Level and Professional Class. The skills which will most likely be of use are of the communicative and perceptive variety (i.e., Acting, Administration, Diplomacy, Gambling, Seduction, Trading, Perception and Psychology), making this a more suitable scenario for PCs of the COMMUNICATOR Professions (found in Space Master Companion, or Space Master: the Second Edition) than most. Whatever the size and Level of the party, the PCs should have at least a fairly good chance of beating an android in combat, if it comes down to that.

7.1

BACKGROUND DATA

Some time ago, the privateer Emerich Rach was instrumental in the execution of a plan conceived of by House Jade-London, which had a serious effect upon the solvency of the Colosian Monit. Although they have by now nearly regained the status they possessed prior to the operation, the Royal Family Colos has not forgotten the incidents which caused several of their most fundamental TBD relay stations to be rendered inoperative. *Colosian Releasers* (specially designed Replicant Assassins) assigned to the trail have finally managed to obtain proof of Rach's involvement in the scheme (this is as far as they have been able to trace it, which is exactly the way Jade-London intended things to go they're so sneaky).

To pay Rach back for his insolence, the Colosians have come up with a devious plan of their own (devious, that is, for Colosians): having obtained Rach's vital identifications parameters (i.e., voice patterns, retinal structure), they have modified a Relations/Protocol Android to create an exact look-alike. This imposter possesses a ship (stolen from Rach months ago and put to use only now), false identification and personalized jewelry (also fake), and has been sent to a deepspace recreation spot called Petsi's Pleasure Palace. There, the Android has been busily performing its programmed task — driving Rach's credit rating (and reputation as a businessman) into the ground. It is the Colosian's hope that one or more of the Android's contacts will be so incensed by Rach's apparent attempt to hyke them over (a Kashmerian term meaning "rook" or "rip off", it is also what one does with one's "hykur") as to be provoked into attacking the privateer's stronghold on Hyperion IX.

7.2

THE NPCs

At a spot like Petsi's, colorful NPCs and possible missions for the PCs are regular occurrences — the place may be used as a sort of "jumping off point" for many adventures. The numbers and types of NPCs present vary from time to time, but most have two things in common — loose morals and Monits. The NPCs given special attention below are of primary impor-

tance to this Adventure. Some ideas for additional characters are also given.

7.21 PETSI PENIFOR

A big, brash, busty blonde woman "in her late thirties" (she won't reveal her true age: 46), Petsi is the independently wealthy owner and chief operator/manager of the Pleasure Palace — a (very) small "R & R Outstation" located somewhere between the Frontier and one or more of the Inner Provinces. Petsi is actually a very good-hearted person, though she has no difficulty handling herself amongst the "lower elements" which frequent her establishment. She has a light, almost flip attitude, handling most situations with a brief but effective one-liner (and trusting more dangerous situations to her personally-selected security crew). With the help of these individuals, Petsi manages to keep abreast (no pun intended, anyway) of interactions amongst her clientele, information which is always worth a price to the right people. Petsi is an excellent source of information, but she alone determines what is suitable for whose ears. She may be used as the introduction to many adventures, if the PCs can win her trust. PCs (and others) who do may be extended credit while at the Pleasure Palace, to be taken out in trade at a later date (this keeps Imperial hands out of such transactions). A skilled masseuse, dancer and seductress, Petsi is also a legendary madam. Her selection of (often specially trained) "companions" runs the gamut of sexual preference; from boys to girls to in-betweens, from pleasure replicants to Trilopters (to each its own). Petsi (wisely) advocates no single sexual preference; rumors as to the TRUE nature of her desires abound ad absurdum.

7.22 "EMERICH RACH" (ANDROID)

This is a totally standard Volkskraft Protocol 'Bot in all respects save its appearance, and the "skin job" was a remarkable success — the construct speaks/walks/gesticulates/etc. almost exactly like Emerich Rach. Characters who have had dealings with the real Rach have a small chance of noticing something "a little off" about a certain gesture/phrase, but these observations might as easily be attributed to mood as to anything else. The Android is a fairly young model (Exp. Level 3), which has been trained to understand and

deal with the nuances of several languages (Rank 7) and cultures (although it occasionally throws in a Colosian word when dealing with more abstract concepts — this is a “default” procedure used only when the ‘Bot doesn’t know the correct term in the language being used). It is well-versed in Crime Tech, Trading, Gambling, as well as all of the Piloting skills (these were the last learned, and the ‘Bot has only one rank of each). It has been given information on all of Rach’s contacts (known to House Colos), and has been programmed to seek these people out, striking bargains to obtain expensive goods, favors and services in exchange for promised future repayment (which, of course, will never come). The ‘Bot has completed a few such deals here at Petsi’s, and is just stopping off at the Gambling Rooms to lose much more cash than he has, forcing Petsi to vouch for his credit (and cover his bets, if necessary).

NOTE: *Rach is well-known throughout the Imperial underworld as being an inner member of the League of Merchants. The reputation of this group (and of Rach himself) is such that few people would dare doubt their word in public. Rach has built up an immense network of contracts over the years — he has no reasonable motive for destroying his rep just to weasel some poor schlemazl out of a few K.*

7.23 ALTERN TSUNAM “RUSTY” LIAO

A three-bar Altern in the Devonian Stellar Cartography Bureau, Rusty (everyone calls him “Rusty”) gets his moniker from the color he dyes his long (yet conservative) haircut. Rusty’s duties for the Bureau include distribution of medical supplies to survey personnel in the field; in fact, he was just on his way to deliver several such shipments when he ran into Emerich Rach here at Petsi’s (he only stopped off her for refueling — honest), and struck a little bargain. A few hours ago, Rusty unloaded several gross tabs of Antirad I from his ship’s hold, and delivered them into (what he thinks were) Rach’s hands. In exchange, Rusty has been promised passage and hotel accommodations for two on the planet Idyllis in Frontier Zone Five (for when Rusty takes his yearly vacation in two months). This is the dream of a lifetime for Rusty, who has been saving his Monits for years to take his wife to the Detzeeri resort world — he considers his running into Rach here an incredible stroke of luck (so incredible that he threw in a case of Anacept tabs for Rach’s men — you never know).

7.24 ZEKAEL TIKYOV, BANDIT LORD

Tikyov is one of the many (so-called) “Lords” or “Kings” whose nomadic bands plague the fringes of the Empire. A highly successful borderbandit of some repute, Tikyov is a semi-regular customer here (Petsi’s is one of the few places such men dare show their face). Tikyov is a tall, nordic-looking man with chiseled features and long, braided hair, and he wears a bit too much makeup (though it does lend him a somewhat more dignified air). He and two of his “knights” arrived here four days ago in a stolen light scoutship, and have been spending their ill-gotten Monits like they were going out of style. They were a bit shocked to run into Emerich Rach here, but their fears of some kind of League of Merchants “warning” were soon waylaid. Rach, it seemed, was merely enjoying a little R & R himself, and the two men got to talking. After a few short minutes in a private room (with Petsi as a witness), a deal was struck by which Rach would take off in the luxurious scoutship, fence the vehicle off on one of his many contacts, and return

with the money — and all for a measly 10%. Tikyov would ordinarily be very suspicious of any such bargain, but both Rach and Petsi maintain responsible and honorable reputations (amongst thieves), and the chance to quickly unload the stolen ship was too good to pass up.

7.25 OTHER FOLKS AT PETSİ’S

As mentioned above, Petsi’s Pleasure Palace attracts a diverse and largely decadent crowd. Background areas such as this are ideal locations for the GM to throw in a little “campaign definition” as well as color. In other words, the Players can be introduced to the **SPACE MASTER** milieu (and its included political, technological and racial facets) only by seeing those facets in action, and locations such as this serve as an excellent opportunity to allow the PCs to take in a lot of scenery without having to go very far or (hopefully) get into any trouble. The GM should have fun with the locale, tossing in an occasional “off-stage bit” (like the two fish-faced gentlemen in the corner whose blurring voices are beginning to turn heads). Such

Petsi Penifor



Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Wpn:OB	SkillAdd	SkillAdd	Notes
Petsi Penifor	9	33	1/15A	35MA1Sw	60Percp	60Eval	Neo- Human Administrator/Owner of the Pleasure Palace; also has 55Trade and 75Seduc (Petsi can “Evaluate Wealth” by looking at a person).
“Emerich Rach”	3	200	4/30	30MA3St	50Gmbgl	70Percp	Android “Entertainer” (Imposter); see 7.22
Altern “Rusty” Liao	4	22	5/5A	20MA1St	30MedT	20MdDia	Human Admin.; distributes med supplies
“Lord” Tikyov	10	80	5/20D	50MA2St	55Percp	60CbtPt	Human Pilot; Frontier Bandit Lord.
Palace Security	3	35	5//10A	50MA2Sw	35Percp	30MtScn	
Tikyov’s “Knights”	7	65	5/20D	35MA2St	30Percp	50Stalk	

*“A” = Absorbion Shield, “D” = Deflector Shield

anecdotal incidents lend an air of depth (believe it or not) to the campaign, making the Empire just a bit more "real" at a time, and are an excellent way to introduce new races, Houses, and Professions (as well as to interject a little comic relief or simple wonder). Some of the possible clientele (and staff) might include: military men on leave; mercenaries looking for work (or working); upper-class citizens who are "slumming it"; hypered-out musicians looking for a gig; rich merchants seeking to hire circuit-aces to defend their convoys; rarely seen alien beings and xenohumans; "recreational" replicants from various genetic/racial stock; freetraders (small and big time); exotic dancers/mimes/entertainers; slavers; and whatever else your devious mind can offer.

One more good technique which may easily be used in places like this is the re-introduction of an NPC the Players have met in a previous adventure (you know, it's a small Empire, isn't it?). Campaign gimmicks like these allow the Players to feel a bit more "rooted in reality" (the "reality" of the game, that is), and this makes for better PCs. As Petsi would say: "Realize your dreams at the Pleasure Palace — fun for all and all for a price!".

7.3 THE SETTINGS

7.3.1 PETSI'S PLEASURE PALACE

Owned and operated by the independently wealthy Petsi Penifor (the original source of her wealth is unknown), the Pleasure Palace is basically a small Deepspace Outstation. Landing pads surround a large central shaft, which contains the entry area, service facilities, and "Relinquish Room" (see below). Above this structure is the Palace itself, a great transparent dome looking out into space, under which thrives a 25-hour-a-day festival of indulgence. The multi-tiered architecture of the place separates the various "specialty areas" and private rooms from each other, while the large open area in the center of the dome is used for a variety of purposes.

Construct Name: Petsi's Pleasure Palace
Producer: Unknown (custom/non-regulation)

Class: Mini Deepspace Outstation
Tonnage/Hits: 5000

Main Computer Mk: 50

Sensors: 10 LY range

Laser Comm: 20,000 km range

TBD Comm: Nil

Armor Type: 24 (-15 ENC)

Crew/Staff: Astro 7, Tech 14, Service 25,
Admin 4 = Total 50

Max Sublight Accel: Rtg 1 = 10 km/sec²

Screens: +40

EW: +20

Armament: Mk. 30 disruptor Cannon (6 shots/turn; Universal turret)

Ter: 1005

Auxiliary Systems: Reactor, Life Support

Other Features: Full Grav, 10 High Quality Staterooms, 20 Mid-range Staterooms, Sickbay for 10, Recreation Facilities for 60, Cargo Hold (500 cumets), Fuel Dispensing equipment.

ENTRY AREA: This cylindrical area is the first thing characters will see after getting out of their vessels and coming inside. Large 2D screens along the walls flash Petsi's prices for various available goods and services (roughly comparable to those found at any small Planetary Downport). Information on the Pleasure Palace's upcoming events and ongoing activities may be obtained here.

SERVICE/FUEL OFFICES: This is where characters can make arrangements for refueling their vessels (fusion or M/A), and for obtaining any necessary repairs or construction. It requires a SM/PR:L to get one of the Technicians' attention, as they are constantly kept busy. NOTE: No repairs or construction of greater than MODERATE severity/difficulty may be performed here (due to lack of proper facilities).

RELINQUISH ROOM: This is the last stop on the way to the lift tubes which lead up to the dome, and is always guarded by three bouncers (Armsmen Level 5), whose job it is to make certain that no weaponry is taken past this area. The Relinquish Room looks rather like a walk-in closet, its walls covered with cubbyholes of different shapes and sizes, all tagged and numbered. All weaponry (that includes such items as Force-Knives) must be relinquished to the personnel in this room, where it will be stored until reclaimed (identification is handled via thumbprints). Characters may store their weapons in their ships, but Petsi's will not be responsible for anything taken unless it was from this room. The guards at the lift tube doors will perform a spot-search of everyone passing by; getting a 1-hand weapon past these guys is a SM/RE&IN:V, and any larger weapons require a SM/RE&IN:S. Anyone caught with a weapon upstairs will be quickly removed from the premises and never allowed to return.

CENTRAL AREA: Sort of the "heart" of the Palace, this area is simply a huge round foyer. Most of the time it resembles a grand, high-tech ballroom; large colored glowglobes of differing sizes and floating reflector-spheres hang in the air, rotating and casting psychedelic shadows about the place. Looking up from the floor of this area, one sees the multi-level terraces of the "specialty rooms" with their separate lift tube accessways, and the dark expanse of space stretching off in the distance overhead. Many people like to spend their time right here, socializing amidst the mixed crowd while Garcon model service Bots hover about and provide guests with mixed drinks and recreational drugtabs (drinks cost 3-10 Monits, tabs go for about

1.5 times their base cost). Music from the Dance Room wafts into this area, as well as the smells of exotic food (from the Buffet Room). Several of Petsi's renowned "companions" may always be found here, circulating amongst the guests and enticing them to spend more time and Monits at the Palace (some are quite persuasive. . .) For special occasions, a great, circular state is floated in the center of the area, upon which the Palace's occasional special guest speaker or popular band may perform without getting too close to the audience.

GAMBLING ROOMS: These twin halls are actually adjoined halves of one area; on the one side such gambling-hall standards as card tables, roulette wheels and small battlepens are offered, while the other area is reserved for the more technologically advanced games. Some of these include "WarWorld" (where computer-generated holographic armies battle for control of a floating sphere three meters in diameter, their tactics in turn controlled by the Players), "Interphase" (which translates the alpha-wave patterns of its two players into eerie, phantom-like images which swirl about each other in symbolic conflict until one of them is caught off-guard and "phased"), and "Redoubt" (in which players perform a series of interactive strategies while in an artificially-induced Beta stage, then are released from that stage having no conscious memory of the tactics used. Bets are placed on the likelihood of each player performing the same moves as were played the first time).

The false Rach is in the former of these two areas (Rach being more of a fan of the "Archaic" games), and has almost lost all of the credit Petsi has extended him here. He is doing this carefully, though — he doesn't want it to look like he's throwing the games — so he wins a few every now and again. Players who watch Rach's game closely and succeed in a SM/Gmbgl:X will realize what the freetrader is doing, and will notice that he never seems to lose to the house... (WHY is another question).

OTHER ROOMS: Chambers of all types and sizes ring the outer hallways of the Palace. Here, the GM may add any other "Specialty Rooms" desired, as well as naturally assumed rooms (Staterooms, Bathrooms, Storage, etc.) and Support Areas (Engineering crawlways, Generator Access Gangways, Temperature Control ducts, etc.). In short, the Pleasure Palace may include any type of room which might be found in a small modern airport/hotel complex, as the GM desires.

The Mid-range Staterooms are rather cheap-looking, really — simple affairs with a bed, shelf, mirror and 6-meter diagonal 2D vidscreen (mounted in the ceiling and playing your choice of ten select screen-progs). These rooms are barely large enough for the average four-way orgy, though few of the clientele ever complain.

The Hi-Qual Staterooms (which cost three times as much) are very nice, and each is decorated according to the local (planetary) customs of a different primitive "Contacted" race. These rooms include a plush bed or antigrav net (activation of the net is by Monit-slots in the wall — one Monit buys ten minutes, and the field activates and deactivates gradually. The field will not function if the room's door is open, and vice-versa).

7.32 THE "ACHAD-DAREG" COLOSIAN SCAUTHKRUSSER

This is the scoutship stolen by Lord Tikyov and his men several days ago, and brought here. It has no official papers on it, and its serial numbers (laser engravings on all major ship parts) have been worn off with solvents. Tikyov took the ship from another Bandit King (who was responsible for the serial numbers' "cleansing"), and therefore is not aware that it originally belonged to the Colosian Stelscauthen (House Colos' own "Frontier Exploration" Force), nor what its name was (he doesn't CARE what its name was). The Android Rach, however recognized it right off, and is somewhat pleased with himself for swinging this particular "deal" — imagine his superiors' satisfaction when he returns to them a ship they thought they had lost years ago! (Why, they might even give him that new skeletal system they've been hinting at...)

Ship Name: Achad-Dareg
 Producer: Eqigewerks
 Class: Exploration Cruiser
 Tonnage/Hits: 5800 (currently at 4216)
 Computer Mk: 30
 Sensors: 20 LY range
 Laser Comm: 50,000 km range
 TBD Comm: 20 LY range
 Armor Type: 23 (-10 ENC)
 Crew: Astro 7, Tech 14 (Tech Bots)
 Max Sublight Accel: Rtg 8 = 80 km/sec²
 Translight Displacement: Rtg 5 = 5 LY/day
 Screens: +25
 EW: +15
 Armament: 2 Mk. 10 Laser Cannons
 *, Mk. 20 Disruptor Bank *, Mk. 20
 Explosive Missile Launcher (20 mis-
 siles) +
 Ter: 1129
 Auxiliary Systems: Bridge, Life
 Support, Reactor
 Operating Range: 500 LY
 Operating Duration: 1400 (std) days
 Other Features: landing capable, 2, Hi-
 Qual Staterooms, Workshop (+25
 with 23,000E in raw parts), Sick Bay
 for 10, Planetology Lab (+30),
 Biochemistry Lab (+30), Shuttle Bay
 (cap. 400 tons), Cargo Bay (fvol.
 4979 m3)

* (fires 3 shots/turn)
 + (mounted in 360 degree turret)

7.4 THE TASK

This Adventure lacks the "your mission is" approach of many, and is really rather open-ended as regards resolution. Of course, the initial (key) task is the discovery that Emerich isn't really Emerich, (which they may not succeed in doing) but after that point the Players are pretty much on their own as to what is done with this information. The Players will encounter many people at Petsi's, and only a few of them are directly concerned in this matter. The GM should try to work the PCs into a game with Rach at a time when they feel something is amiss, but don't yet know what. They can then get a closer look at his behavior (word usage, etc.), and perhaps win a few hundred Monits off him at the tables. Once they put the pieces together and realize that they're dealing with an imposter, they might decide to take him out themselves, or to inform the NPCs "Rach" has dealt with here. Petsi will be the hardest to convince, while Lord Tikyov won't need much proof (Rusty won't want to hear such nonsense — he's already planning his vacation on Idyllis). Hopefully, the Players (along with any of these NPCs) will be inclined and able to stop the imposter before he leaves the Palace; and if they haven't managed to figure out that he's an Android by that point, they'll know soon enough. . .

7.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

Petsi's Pleasure Palace has been around for at least a year or two (it may have been around for as long as the GM wishes), and its existence is no big secret — it is very likely that the PCs have heard of this place before. At any rate, they finally have a chance to check it out having just completed a mission, or earned a vacation, accidentally found their way here, etc.

After landing, the PCs will enter the Central Area and pay a visit to the Relinquish Room. While down here, they might hear a rumor that Emerich Rach (the infamous crimelord) is upstairs at the gambling tables. This may pique the curiosity of any PCs who know Rach, for he rarely leaves his estate on Hyperion IX. Word has it that there's a totally spherical high-stakes game going on up there. Let the PCs wander around a bit and get acclimated — throw a few off-the-cuff encounters at them, the Palace is crowded tonight — and eventually work them into the Gambling Rooms (if they need a shove, have Petsi recognize one of the PCs (maybe mistakenly), and give them all a few decaMonit gambling chits).

The Players may decide to split up — this is fine, but despite the No Weaponry rules, Petsi's can still be a dangerous place — advise them to keep in touch with each other occasionally. Perhaps one PC

will encounter Rusty Liao at the bar while another is watching Rach lose his Viber 5 shirt, etc. Regardless of the order that the "clues" are obtained in, the PCs should eventually realize that Rach has overextended his credit flagrantly — and purposefully.

7.42 AIDS

Whether or not she believe the imposter story, Petsi can be a big help to any characters whom she befriends. Her contacts are far-reaching and multifarious, and she collects (and distributes) owed favors in abundance. Through her network of informers, security staff and Garcon Bots, she is aware of most important events which transpire at the Palace. She may be the one who lets the PCs in on the fact that Rach swung some kind of deal with Rusty Liao a few hours ago, or that he'll soon be leaving in Lord Tikyov's ship (possession is 9/10ths of the law).

The Android Rach has a few small shortcomings — his occasional use of a Colosian term isn't so incriminating in and of itself, but if the Players force him to converse on abstract topics nearly every noun he uses will be a Colosian word. Of course, if questioned on the topic of House Colos itself, the Android will simply respond with all the usual anti-Colosian slogans the PCs are no doubt accustomed to hearing. PCs who know the real Rach may be struck by the peculiarity of his mere presence here, without any sign of bodyguards or servants. Another possible clue is Rach's jewelry, some of which he will use to "pay off" gambling debts accrued: although at first it appears to be quite expensive, if taken into a brighter room and closely examined (a SM/Eval.Jewelry:V), its true value (worthless) may be determined.

One last important aid exists, but the PCs have no chance of knowing unless they (A) learn that the Rach imposter is indeed an Android, and (B) inform Lord Tikyov of this fact. If convinced they are telling the truth, Tikyov will take them to the Relinquish Room, where he'll reclaim his "baby": a Mk.10 Molecutronic Scrambler. NOTE: The Scrambler may not be brought upstairs, as it IS classified as a Weapon at the Palace (there are a lot of Molecutronic Brains up there). If the device is to be used, the "final showdown" will have to be held in the Central Area, on the Landing Pads, or in one of the starships.

7.43 OBSTACLES

All of the major obstacles have been detailed above. The Android is just about through at the Gambling Rooms, and will be playing his last few hands at about the time the PCs begin learning something's going on. There will be just enough time to get into a short game with him before he goes to pack up which won't take him long.

The PCs may have some difficulty in getting the NPCs to believe their story — Rach's reputation protects his credibility — and the Android can only be revealed as such by a close-range detailed scan (a SM/MtScn:S).

7.44 REWARDS

Wide open. Depending upon who the PCs help (if anyone), they might be granted all manner of favors. Lord Tikyov has some contacts of use (though he's a hermit compared to Petsi), and both of these people could manage to swing some difficult bargains by pulling the right strings. Rusty might arrange to "lose" a case or two of drugtabs in the Players' direction (why not, right?). Petsi could make certain that the PCs felt right at home whenever they decided to visit the Pleasure Palace, or might offer them jobs as Security personnel. Tikyov will be more likely than Petsi to reward the PCs in straight barter (stolen merchandise from the whole of the Empire), but he might consider asking the PCs to join his band of *space-pirates*, if sufficiently impressed. And then, of course, there's the ship the Android got here in (although not much can be said for its condition). It is a Minifighter (use the stats of the UMBER STAR in the adventure A MATTER OF TIME), and was quite damaged before it ever landed at the Palace (currently suffering 105 points of damage and six random malfunctions). If the Android has been defeated and Lord Tikyov had anything to do with it, he will probably consider this vessel to belong to him now though he might be talked out of it if the Scoutship is still in operating order (it may not be, nor indeed the minifreighter either — see ENCOUNTERS).

7.5 ENCOUNTERS

As stated previously, Petsi's is a crowded and active place. The GM should toss in encounters as often as is desirable (once per room is a good base), but should not let the flow of the PCs actions be completely diverted for no good reason (unless they have no real "flow of action"). Select one or two interesting NPC types, and make an open-ended d100 roll to determine their reaction/approach/mood (with high numbers representing the friendliest and low numbers the most hostile behavior). A few encounters which are integral to this particular plotline (or likely to arise within it) are detailed below:

1. THE GAME. At one of the most interesting tables in the place (judging by the crowd gathered around it) sits the legendary Emerich Rach, of Hyperion IX. Emerich seems to have his hands full at the moment — his concentration can't possibly be aided by gaggle of leggers virtually cooing for his attention (or at least a free drink) — "totally spherical" indeed. Topan, a variant of the ancient game of Poker played with hundreds of cards, is reasonably popular throughout many re-

gions of the Empire. The Topan game at Rach's table is run as follows:

- 1) Ante is 20 Elmonits.
- 2) Hands are dealt. The GM should roll 2d10 to determine the Difficulty of each players' hand:

2	Routine (+30)
3	Easy (+20)
4-5	Light (+10)
6-10	Medium (+/-0)
11-13	Hard (-10)
14-1	Very Hard (-20)
16-17	Extremely Hard (-30)
18	Sheer Folly (-50)
19	Absurd (-70)
20	Insane (-100)

- 3) Each player selects a strategy (i.e., chooses a Difficulty Level representing the odds against pulling one's "strategy" off)

- 4) Bets are placed, and any player may "fold".

- 5) Each remaining player makes a SM/Gmbgl roll on the GENERAL column of the STATIC MANEUVER TABLE. This roll is also modified by (A) the Difficulty of the original hand AND by the Difficulty of the Strategy attempted. It usually takes a play about a minute ("base time").

- 6) The winner is the player who obtains the best result off the table. If more than one such hand exists, the winner (between them) is the hand which required the most difficult Strategy. If more than one of THESE are present, the pot is divided amongst them.

A character (like the Android Rach, for example) may opt to "throw" a game. The game would be run according to normal procedure, but when the Static Maneuver rolls are made the Android would NOT add his Gambling mod to his own roll. Instead, he will add HALF of this mod to SOMEONE ELSE'S roll (whoever he wishes to throw the hand to).

NOTE: *The Android will NOT throw any hands to the house. The chances of a PC realizing what Rach's up to have been described above.*

2. RUSTY LIAO. Currently gloating over his good fortune (and a double shot of White Dwarf Wodka), Rusty is feeling fine, and is in a very talkative mood. If the PCs have ever worked for House Devon (or Emerich Rach) before, Rusty recognizes them and invites himself into their conversation. Otherwise, they will overhear him boastfully telling someone else his story. If the PCs come off in an authoritative manner (succeeding in a SM/Admin:H will do it) or actually possess Devonian authority, Rusty's tune will change as he whines out a full confession of his guilt and begs for merciful punishment (so THAT'S what he came here for!).

3. LORD TIKYOV. The Bandit Lord and his two stalwarts are currently cruising the various levels of the Palace (having been here for four days, they've seen just about everything at least once). They might be encountered in any room. PCs who succeed in a SM/ME:V may be able to identify Tikyov, who stands out even in a place like Petsi's. He is not one of the most approachable of people, so the PCs will probably have little chance to actually speak with him unless they get involved in a game of some sort (or perhaps a little arm-wrestling with one of his "knights" will break the ice). Perhaps the Players simply overhear him saying something about "waiting until this deal with Rach goes through" to one of his men, or are introduced to him by Petsi. Some sort of Static Maneuver roll (probably Diplomacy) will be required to get Tikyov to talk about the specifics of the deal, but if the PCs impress "his Lordship", they might find themselves invited to join him for a round of drinks (especially if there are any ladies in the group.)

4) GOOSE CHASE. If the Players have let all the clues presented fly right over their heads (or had extremely bad luck at the ol' Maneuver Tables), perhaps they would be interested in doing a little favor for Emerich — say, in exchange for his obtaining a few new Mech Interface Bots for them? All they would have to do is... (the GM may make up any wild goose chase that comes to mind and send the PCs on it. If anyone figures out that Rach's an imposter, it won't be THESE clowns.)

5) RACH'S STATEROOM. Clever Players may decide to take a peek in Rach's stateroom to see what they can find there. This would have to be done while the Android is still playing cards in the Gambling Rooms. Petsi can tell the PCs which room to check, but will only do this if she believes the whole imposter story. Otherwise, the PCs will have to ask around (a SM/Diplo:X). Lord Tikyov also knows which room is Rach's. Once the PCs find the right room, it will take a SM/CrimT:X to get past the lock. Inside the room may be found a number of interesting clues; a stack of trays, covered with untouched food easily over a day old, sits in the corner nearest the door (Petsi will recall that Rach has ordered food thrice since his arrival here, and has not eaten in the Buffet Room as far as she is able to determine). The closet is empty, and the bed has not been slept in. Should the Players look under the bed they will find the clincher: a Compact Android Repair Kit in a fancy case bearing the initials "E.R."

6) RACH ATTACK. If the PCs reveal their information to "Rach", he will play it off as casually as possible (trying to convince anyone around that these people are simply drunk or drugged). When this bit no longer works, make Initiative rolls and enter combat action phases. The Android's

primary concern at this point will be to get to the Achad-Dareg and take off. He will throw as many objects between himself and the Players as he can while he runs (most such obstacles will require a MM/QU&AG:L to clear without slowing), and will stop to attack physically only if it becomes clear that he has to. If the Android is badly damaged it may drop to the floor, seemingly unconscious, and wait until a Player comes closer to leap upon them, taking them "hostage" if at all possible.

7) STARSHIP COMBAT. If the Android makes it to either ship, he will attempt to escape immediately, firing up the engines (which takes three rounds) and tearing

free of the safety moorings. The Players may find that the only way to stop him now would be to follow in another vessel and engage in starship combat. The Android will be at quite a loss here, due to the fact that he's operating without a full crew, and all maneuvers he attempts will be rolled as if they were two Difficulty Levels harder than they actually are. There won't be a lot of time to take care of this situation — once the Android gets a chance he'll begin astrogating a course for the Colosian HomeWorld (Gamma Vulpeculae IX, "Orpheus"). If the Players are really digging into him, he'll make shunt without bothering to astrogate, and disappear into Hyperspace.

8.0

INSYSTEM ENCOUNTERS

The following system is designed to aid the GM in creating on the spot encounters for starship travelling characters. Obviously, the vast majority of such encounters will take place near or within the gravitational effect of a given star (no ship encounters occur in H-Space) - hence, the term "Insystem" (its meaning is fairly obvious, as well). Whenever the PC enter a new stellar system, or have spent a reasonable amount of time Insystem, the GM should roll against the **SPACE MASTER ENCOUNTERS** table to determine whether or not the PC have an encounter, and what type of approach the encountered party will use. The amount of time which should pass between rolls depends upon the traffic in the system; an Inner Provincial HomeWorld might require rolls every few minutes, while a distant Frontier outpost could go for weeks without a roll. If an encounter of some type is indicated, this chart may be then used to determine the nature of the encountered vessel and crew.

NOTE: This system is NOT designed to generate "fair opponents" for the Players to fight (although, they may, of course). Rather, the purpose of the **INSYSTEM ENCOUNTER CHART** is to provide the GM with quick, flexible and realistic ship encounter notes for all manner of situations, allowing simulation of Insystem "traffic". The chart is divided into eight columns, each of which is rolled on in order (from left to right), with the applicable mods added to the d100 die roll. Details on each step follow:

CREW/PERSONNEL: Roll 1d100 (open-ended), and apply any of the Modifiers which apply (from the bottom of the chart - these may be cumulative). The results shown include several possible variations on a basic "type" of encounter — the GM must determine exactly which of these possibilities is the encountered

one: select the most likely/desired possibility, and roll a "yes or no" die (50% "Ye), moving on to the next most likely result if a "No" is obtained, until one of the possibilities receives a "Yes" (indicating this to be the actual result) or all have received a "No" (in which case the GM's "most likely" choice — the first one — is used.

ORIGIN/DESTINATION: Roll 1d100 (Open-ended), and apply the Modifier which appeared in the lower right-hand corner of the CREW/PERSONNEL result. Select the exact result from those obtained via the "Yes/No" process described above.

TONNAGE/CLASS: Roll 1d100 (this roll is "Open-ended" ONLY if the Modifier obtained from the ORIGIN/DESTINATION column is followed by an asterisk). The Modifier used comes from the lower right-hand corner of the ORIGIN/DESTINATION result (subtract 10 if the ship is automated). The result obtained indicates the ship's "Tonnage Category" and provides several suggestions for ships within that range. Select the exact result via the "Yes/No" method.

CONSTRUCTION ARMOR TYPE (CAT): Roll 1d100 (Open-ended), and apply the Modifier shown for the TONNAGE/CLASS result obtained, as well as any of the other Mods shown (at the bottom of the chart) which apply. If the result obtained indicates more than one

possible CAT, determine which is the actual one by the "Yes/No" process, only the lesser CAT is always the "Most Likely", and the chance of its being the one is 75% (rather than 50%). If the resultant CAT is less than the "MinCAT" result (from the TONNAGE/CLASS column), then the "MinCAT" is the actual armor type.

ARMAMENT: Roll 1d100 (NOT Open-ended). Apply the same Mods as were applied to the CAT roll. The result shown indicates the Imperial Classification of the ship's offensive capabilities. The GM may assign the vessel any weaponry which is allowed at this classification level on a lesser one (based on weapon type and Mk - see the chart below).

DEFENSE: Roll 1d100 (NOT Open-ended), applying the same Mods again. The results shows the dice rolled to determine how many Rating Picks the vessel possesses in the shield and EW departments. (+) NOTE: Any vessel which is H-Space capable will possess at least 1 rank in Shielding, regardless of the "None" result.

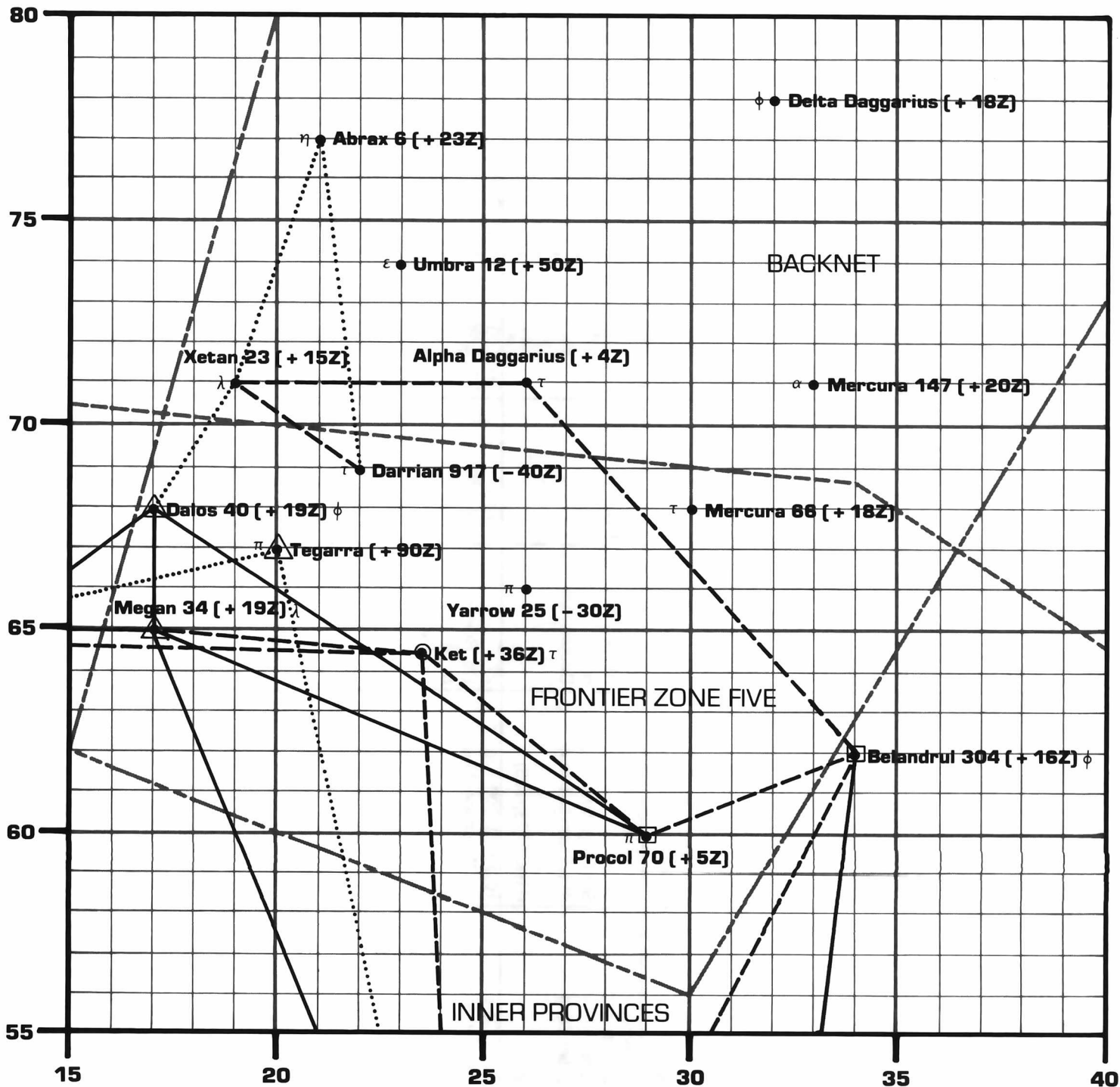
DRIVES: Roll 1d100 (NOT Open-ended), and apply the same Mods again. The result obtained indicates the die rolls used to determine the number of Rating Picks possessed for Sublight and Faster-than-Light Drives. If a result of "0/Malf." is obtained for a ship which would definitely possess FTL capability, the drive is currently suffering a Malfunction/Refueling/Damaged by weapons fire/etc.

COMBAT PROGRAMS: Roll 1d100 (Open-ended), and apply the same Mods again. The result shows how many "Combat Assist Programs" are in the vessel's Computer banks, and how many Ranks are "possessed" by those programs. "Combat Assist Programs" include Tactics, Evade, Predict, Missile Targeting, Construct Analysis and Bio Analysis. The GM knows exactly which program(s) are present. NOTE: The highest possible result ("1 @ 1-10") directs the GM to reroll, aiding 1d10 ranks to one of the programs thus indicated - this may occur cumulatively, and may be added to the same program more than once if desired (but keep in mind your own definition of Imperial "State-of-the-Art") - only alien or pre-Tech Recession vessels may exceed this level (somewhere between 30 and 50 ranks is suggested).

Armament Table					
	Defensive	Light	Medium	Heavy	Holoc'stic
Non-Expl.Msl	Up to Mk10	Mk11-30	Mk31-50	>Mk50	
Expl.Msl	Up to Mk10	Mk11-20	Mk21-40	>Mk40	
Nuclear Msl			Up to Mk20	Mk21-30	>Mk30
M/A Torpedo			Up to Mk10	Mk11-30	>Mk30
Blaster		Up to Mk10	Mk11-20	>Mk20	
Laser		Up to Mk10	Mk11-30	>Mk30	
Disruptor		Up to Mk20	Mk21-40	>Mk40	
Plasma Gun			Up to Mk10	>Mk10	

INSYSTEM ENCOUNTER CHART

TOTAL ROLL	CREW/PERSONNEL (OPEN-ENDED)	ORIGIN/DESTINATION (OPEN-ENDED)	TONNAGE/CLASS (CLOSED unless *)	CAT (OPEN-ENDED)	ARMAMENT (CLOSED)	DEFENSE (CLOSED)	DRIVES (CLOSED)	CBT PROGRAMS (OPEN-ENDED)
<26	Citizens, Laborers, Free Traders, Smugglers (+/-0)	Nearest Station/Satellite/ Large Construct (-10)	<50 Tons: Insystem Shuttle, Avg. Drone, SMAC Fighter (-35)	22 Lt. Steel	Unarmed FTL 0/Malf.	None+	SBL 1-4	None
26-65	Provincial/Corporate Subsidized Port/Traders/Import/Exporters/Distributors (+10)	Largest HomeWorld/Courier Shuttle, Base insystem (+/-0)	50-500 Tons: Reinforced TMAC fighter, Imperial Search-and-Destroy Drone (+/-0)	23 EW 0 Steel	Defensive FTL 1-4	SHD 1-6	SBL 1-8	1 @ 1-6
66-75	System Security Local Military, Local Administration (+15)	Same Province/Sector/ Frontier Zone (+30)	500-1000 Tons: Sm. Explorer/Scout Yacht, Sm. Patrol Cruiser (MinCAT23) (+20)	24 Aligned Crystalline Steel	Light EW 1-6	SHD 1-10 FTL 1-6	SBL 1-10 1 @ 1-4	1 @ 1-10
76-85	Provincial/Imperial Military/ Admin., VegaPol, Dia Khovaria (+20)	Neighboring Province/Sector Frontier Zone (+35)	1000-10,000 Tons: Gunship, Sm. Freighter, Avg. Explorer/Scout (MinCAT23) (+25)	25 Alloyed ACS or 26 Double Hull	Medium EW 1-10	SHD 1-10 FTL 1-10	SBL 1-12 1 @ 1-6	1 @ 7-12
86-95	None, Automated; Robot Crew, Drone Vessel FrigateMODS: (+/-0)	Imperial Core World, Sol, Vega, Hanaan, Nearest Imp. Base MODS: (+35)	10,000-50,000 Ton Sm. Passenger Line Avg. Cruiser, Avg. Freighter, (MinCAT24) (+25)	27 Dbl Reinf'd or 28 Dbl Hv Steel	Heavy EW 1-10	SHD 7-12 FTL 1-20	SBL 7-12	2 @ 7-12
96-130	Pirates/Rebels Mercenaries (Vessel probably stolen) (+15)	Distant Province, Frontier Clan/ Colony (+35)	>50,000 Tons: Line/Flag Cruiser, Lg. Passenger Liner, Lg. Frigate MinCAT25) (+25)	29 Ardinium or 30 Ordium II	Holocaustic EW 1-20	SHD 11-20 FTL 11-20	SBL 11-20 1 @ 7-12t	1 @ 11-20
>130	Unknown Xeno-Race, Alien Race (+30)	Backnet, Alien surveyed system (+35)	Heroll as above Humans, unique/exotic/ alien design/capability (as above)	Heroll and reduce ENC Mod 1 step (sp.alloy)	Unknown/ Exotic/Alien	SHD 11-30 EW 11-30	SBL 11-30 FTL 11-30er.	+1 @ 1-10s
	MODS: Frontier Zone +10 Backnet +20 Alien Territory +20 Home insystem -10 Automated vessel -10	MODS: From CREW column	MODS: From ORIGIN column	MODS: From TONNAGE column Foreign +5 Military +10 Crim/Rebel +5	MODS: <← Same	MODS: <← Same	MODS: <← Same	MODS: <← Same



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