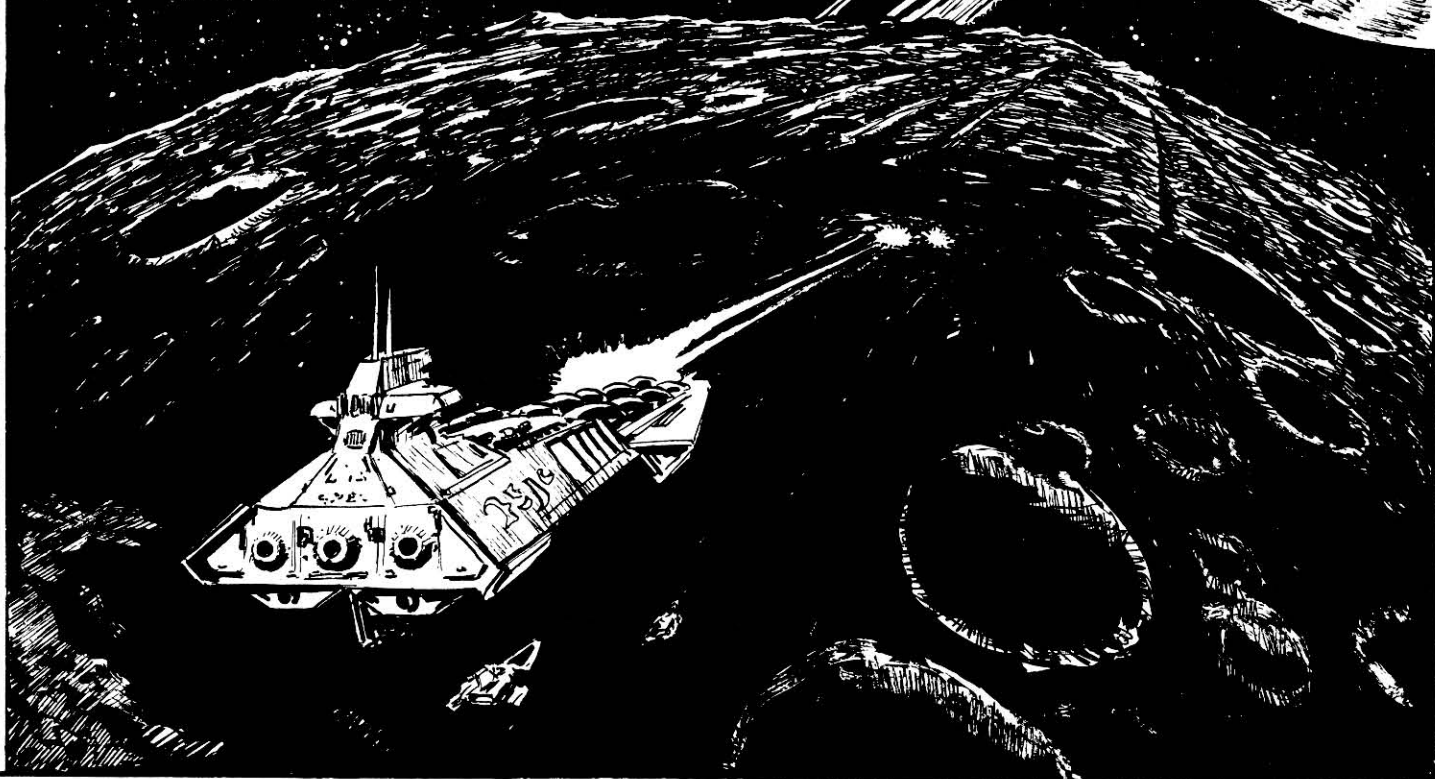


Fleetwatch



Fleetwatch by W. H. Keith

This folio adventure is designed for characters with Navy, Marine, or Scout Service backgrounds recalled to active duty during the Fifth Frontier War. The referee may draw characters from any source desired, including existing campaigns; it is urged that these characters have some skill in ground combat situations.

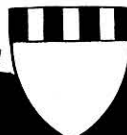
Approved For Use With

TRAVELLER™

Science-Fiction Adventure in
the Far Future

The characters used in FLEETWATCH are personnel attached to the Close Escort Stag. Details on the statistics, performance, and layout of the ship are unnecessary for this adventure, but can be found, if desired, in GDW's Supplement 7, *Traders and Gunboats*. The referee may also find material in *Mercenary* (Traveller Book 4) and *High Guard* (Traveller Book 5) useful in this adventure.

Marischal



Adventures

Fleetwatch

Background: The Zhodani offensive which culminated in the Battle of Thanber marked a major crisis in the early stages of the Fifth Frontier War. Zhodani forces swept through the independent worlds of the Querion subsector and threatened Imperial systems in the adjacent Vilis subsector, including the heavily populated worlds of Vilis and Garda-Vilis. The enemy position was strengthened by a small allied fleet in the Swords Worlds, ready to support any Zhodani drive against the exposed Imperial flank.

Choleosti (Vilis 0208 C200100-9), an undeveloped and ignored system on the Imperial fringe, assumed vital strategic importance as the Zhodani threat increased. The planet, largest satellite of a ringed gas giant called Cholprime, was an ideal point from which to monitor refueling fleets operating over the system's only useable fuel source -- the gas giant itself. Choleosti -- lifeless and barren, egg-shaped and tide-locked by the attraction of the giant primary -- became the hiding place of an Imperial Fleetwatch Station.

Eight Scout Service personnel, specialists in communications and detection equipment, were assigned to Choleosti Fleetwatch Station. Periodic contact with the Scout Base at Vilis was handled by computer-directed X-boats kept in distant stellar orbit; tight-beamed radio transmissions stored observations in the boat's message banks, then triggered the jump sequence. X-boat tenders performed maintenance and crew rotation every two months. During the opening months of the war, as battle squadrons formed and maneuvered and set the stage for Thanber, all was quiet. Then one of the Fleetwatch X-boats dropped into the Vilis system with chilling news: Zhodani light escort and scout ships had been seen refueling at Cholprime. Defense of the region was weak, still recovering from the destruction of Vice Admiral haut-Alloran's fleet and the reverses of the Thanber campaign. A large enemy fleet at Choleosti could mean disaster.

The Close Escort Stag, just completing repairs at Vilis, was given an urgent double mission: scout the Choleosti system and rescue the staff of the Fleetwatch Station. It is particularly important for the Imperium to learn whether the Zhodani are moving into Choleosti in force, or just passing through on their way to the Swords Worlds.

When Stag dropped out of Jump, Choleosti's system was empty of ships, much to the relief of the crew. The Fleetwatch Station responded to Stag's recognition codes, assured them that all was well, and requested pick-up. Though Stag could be landed on the airless moon, no one is eager to have the escort caught on the ground by the sudden appearance of a Zhodani fleet. A landing party was sent down in the armed gig while Stag assumed a hidden orbit amid the scattered chunks of ice and rock in Cholprime's ring system.

On Choleosti: The gig lands near the station -- clustered domes in the shadow of a crater wall. Just as one of the party comments that things seem too quiet, the party sent on foot to meet the Fleetwatch team rounds a rock outcropping. Everyone freezes in their tracks. Holes have been melted into the domes, electronic equipment has been dragged onto the crater floor and then smashed, and signs of a firefight are everywhere. Before they can react, incoming missile salvos silently bathe the rock-studded plains in white light. The group starts back to the gig, but see it destroyed before they've taken three steps. As missile hits score closer and closer to their position, they scramble for cover among the boulders and broken terrain near the station. The missiles stop, but everyone knows that can only be because Zhodani ground troops are moving in, ready to complete the trap . . .



Referee's Notes

The Situation: The Zhodani surprise attack leaves the party stranded on an airless moon, their gig destroyed, and with the promise that enemy combat troops are closing in. Their radio link with Stag went with the gig; their suit radios, tightly shielded and ranged against interference from Cholprime, are useless over more than a few tens of meters. They have whatever equipment they carried out of the gig with them; everything else has been destroyed. Each character has air for six hours.

It should be noted that that their vacc suits are military issue, and shielded from the psionic talents of the pursuit. Note also that each character can carry 60% more mass on Choleosti, due to the weaker gravity.

The Survivors: When the situation seems hopeless, they find survivors from the Watchstation. Six men, two of them wounded (the first -- original characteristics 869684 -- has wounded characteristics of 003684; the second, originally 995779, is now 015779) managed to escape the Zhodani landing party through a break in the crater wall and were on their way to hoped-for safety, when they saw the glare of another battle over the crater. One of them returned to rescue the would-be rescuers.

The Fleetwatch personnel have retrieved eight spare air tanks, each with three hours' air, 12 meters of rope, and an assortment of weapons determined by the referee. They also have a way off Choleosti, if they can reach it -- another gig hidden, they hope, 20 kilometers away, quite close to the world's abandoned starport.

The Journey: The referee will use the map to trace the party's progress. Each hex represents 1 kilometer, and takes 15 minutes to traverse. The referee rolls for an event every 15 minutes, whether the group is moving or not, and applies the results as given in the Event Table.

The Zhodani are on Choleosti in force, and will do everything in their power to kill or capture the fleeing Imperials. Encounters with enemy forces are presented in the Event Table; the referee should create for the players the impression that Zhodani forces are closing in on them throughout the chase. In addition, armed cutters and escort vessels will begin passing overhead in irregular search patterns soon after the ambush. Every 30 minutes, roll 2D; the party will be detected on an 11+. 1D missiles will be launched, achieving a near miss on each 8+.

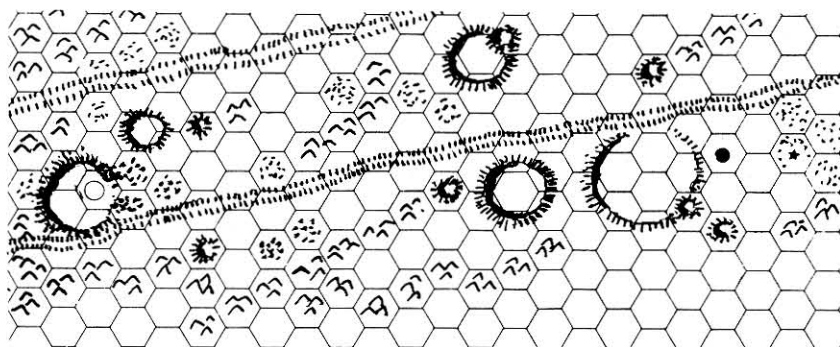
Near Misses: Missiles exploding nearby cause 2D injuries to each player who fails to roll 9+. Each player also rolls 1D; on a 6 he is flash blind for 1D 15 minute turns. He must be led by another character, and will not know how long he will be blinded.

NOTE: Characters who elect to stay aboard the gig after it lands will escape its destruction (unless, of course, they happen not to be wearing vacc suits at the time) on a roll of 8+, but will be subject to the effects of a near miss.

Ice Caverns: When the party enters a hex containing a fissure, they will find an ice and rubble floored valley created by tidal stresses with Cholprime. In the side of the fissure they will find a cave; if they elect to explore the cave, it will lead them to a cavern in Choleosti's subsurface ice layer, running along a straight line underneath the fissure, and passing within a few kilometers of the hidden gig. Travel through the ice cavern takes 30 minutes/hex, but the party cannot be detected by Zhodani searchers, and the referee applies results ONLY from seismic quakes and rockslides on the Event Table. Leaving the cavern requires 1D 15 minute turns to find and clear an opening in the roof; each character throws against his strength to climb out, and slings will have to be rigged for the wounded men.

The Starport: Once, when further development of local trade routes was planned, a class C starport was begun on Choleosti. The alienation of the Swords Worlds caused the project to be dropped, and the nearly completed port was abandoned. Now it is the Zhodani base of operations, occupied by a destroyer, five escorts, dozens of cutters and light gunboats, a transport, and several companies of Zhodani marines. The players may consider raiding the base (for weapons, a radio, a ship, or whatever), but it will be heavily guarded, and the chances of being spotted are very high. Because of constant patrols going in and out of the port, the referee will roll for detection by spacecraft every fifteen minutes when the party is within five kilometers of the base, and they will be spotted on 9+.

The Escape: The gig will be found intact, fueled, and ready to lift. The referee may wish to heighten the excitement by having the getaway made under fire. Once the party gets back to Stag, the escort will have to evade Zhodani ships while it maneuvers for its jump to Vilis. They will carry important news -- the Zhodani have secured Choleosti and are probably expecting heavy fleet elements to arrive soon. They were not just passing through, but are readying a strike into the heart of the Vilis subsector, and Imperial strategy will be shaped by this intelligence.



MAP KEY	
○	Fleetwatch Station
●	Hidden gig
●	Choleosti Starport
☼	Crater - +45 minutes to cross crater wall. DM+1
⌄	Mountain terrain - +1 hour to traverse. DM-2
⋈	Very rough terrain - 30 minutes to traverse. DM-1
---	Fissure - 30 minutes to traverse. See rules on subsurface ice caverns. DM-1
"+" indicates time delay in addition to normal time required to cross hex. DMs are applied against rolls for party to be detected by Zhodani ships or troops.	

Event Table

Roll 2D every fifteen minutes. An event may occur on 7+; roll 3D and determine the results on this table.

3D

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 3-6 | Seismic Quake. See Basic Traveller, Book 3, page 31. |
| 6-8 | Rockslide. 1D rocks hit each character unless dexterity or less is thrown to avoid. Each rock hitting a character inflicts 2D wounds. On 11+, the character is pinned, and can be freed by expending 4D strength points. |
| 9 | Geyser. Boiling water turns dust and ice to mud. Party cannot proceed for 30 minutes. |
| 10 | Volcanic Eruption. Hex ahead blocked by lava and mud. Also, apply results of both seismic quake and rockslide. |
| 11 | Meteor shower. See Basic Traveller, Book 3, page 31. |
| 12 | Very rough terrain. Speed reduced to 1 hex per 30 minutes. |
| 13 | Zhodani grav sled with 1D marines passes overhead. Party detected on 8+. |
| 14 | 3D Zhodani marines, on foot, are seen approaching party. Party detected on 10+. |
| 15 | Zhodani escort passes overhead, in direction of starport. Party detected on 9+. |
| 16 | No event. |
| 17 | No event. |
| 18 | No event. |

Choleosti is continually torn by seismic disturbances, due to its close orbit around giant Cholprime. Quakes and rockslides will be common, and on a roll of 5 or 6, a quake will cause a rockslide. Events for rolls of 9 and 10 will occur only once. If these results turn up again, they are treated as "no event". Of course, the referee should feel free to add his own complications to the adventure, and to use the results on this table to create new and original problems for the adventurers to overcome.