



STAR VIKING

Hot Recovery Operations



Reformation Goalition Manyal



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Smash & Grab™

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"Not Just A Job... An Adventure"

About 75 years after Virus ended the Final War and brought about the total collapse of the Third Imperium, a small group of worlds in the Old Expanses banded together, called themselves the League of the New Dawn, and sent

out a dozen trading vessels to open peaceful commerce with the neighboring planets in the Wilds. The 12 ships were instantly gobbled up, their crews imprisoned, executed, or worse. Had even a few of them returned, history might have been different, but the total destruction of the Dawn League's first attempt at peaceful contact had a profound effect. Within a short time, the League had recast itself as the Reformation Coalition, and was practicing a more forceful version of diplomacy.

ment, or information held by local forces. The reluctance of local forces to part with these assets, of course, was what made the operations "hot." Hot recovery became the signature operation of RCES, and troops soon developed a slang term for it—Smash & Grab.

I didn't say "smash, "I said "stash." Stash what you've got and go back and grab some more. Stash and grab, not smash and grab.

What are you people, deaf?
I'm never gonna hear the end of this.

-Lieutenant Vijayan "Smasher" Roosevelt, 1200

Look, Hoss, I don't care who died and made you immortal, I'm only going to explain this one more time...

—Lt. Commander Pat "Who Me" Ritter, C.O., DLS Ashtabula from the final message to the "God-Emperor" of Hastaan

Captured ships and crews were rescued. Corrupt dictators suffered from punitive raids, and were sometimes toppled. The growing industrial and technological base of the Reformation Coalition was fed by artifacts recovered from the Wilds and brought back to Coalition Space. These recovery operations were coordinated by the Reformation Coalition Exploratory Service (RCES), and fell into two categories:

Cold recoveries were those directed at derelict facilities, such as dead orbital starports or now-uninhabited worlds whose life support had failed, placing the population at the fatal mercies of a hostile surface environment.

Hot recoveries, on the other hand, were directed at inhabited worlds, and aimed to recover personnel, equip-

This adventure anthology is designed to teach the referee and players everything they need to know about smashand-grab operations (S&Gs). It does not contain essays on tactics, standard operating procedures, targeting priorities, or any of a number of useful features. (For these, players and referees are directed to Path of TearsTM: The Star Viking

Sourcebook.) Instead, Smash & Grab teaches by example. Included are five representative missions, and once the referee and players have played through all five of them, there should be very little question as to how future adventures such as these should be run. (And player characters who survive all five will have become veteran Star Vikings indeed!)

Okay, if the Hivers are so smart, then how come I'm in charge of this operation?

—Gunnery Sergeant Tony "Rasta" Fahrion, 1201



Note the interesting usage of the term "representative missions." One thing that should occur to the reader is how different they all are. While some begin with the classic meteoric assault that is a hallmark of S&Gs, others require the characters to do some covert legwork first before they get around to any serious smashing. This is as it should be. The universe is a big place, and is governed by a few ground rules:

- In a universe this big, there is a lot of stuff going on, and you'll never figure it all out.
 - Nothing is ever what it seems.
- There is nothing so complicated that it can't become even more complicated—and in a hurry.
- When they're shooting at you, even simple things become difficult.
 - Never assume anything.

The upshot of all this is that no two situations, therefore no two smash and grabs, are ever alike, and that means that the best skill for a prospective Star Viking is flexibility. You never know how you'll have to solve the next operation. Sometimes you still won't know how even after the mission is over.

The adventures in this collection are all set to spinward of the Coalition, in either the Khulam or Promise subsectors of Diaspora. This will be familiar territory for owners of Path of Tears, but all the information necessary to run these adventures is contained in this book and the Traveller® basic rules book.

Each adventure begins with a referee's abstract, which explains the general course of the adventure to the referee. This will give the referee enough of an overview to understand the specific details of the adventure as they unfold.

Next, each adventure has a short introduction which addresses the means by which player characters are assigned (or get tangled up with) this mission. The missions themselves are designed to be equally accessible to serving members of the RCES as well as the far more numerous (at least in terms of player character vocation) free-lancers. This section is open-ended enough that the adventures can be run in any order desired and can be integrated into any campaign run in Diaspora Sector. Referees can even spread the adventures out over several months in a campaign, running a smash-and-grab mission, then several sessions of less dangerous adventuring, then another smash and grab, etc.

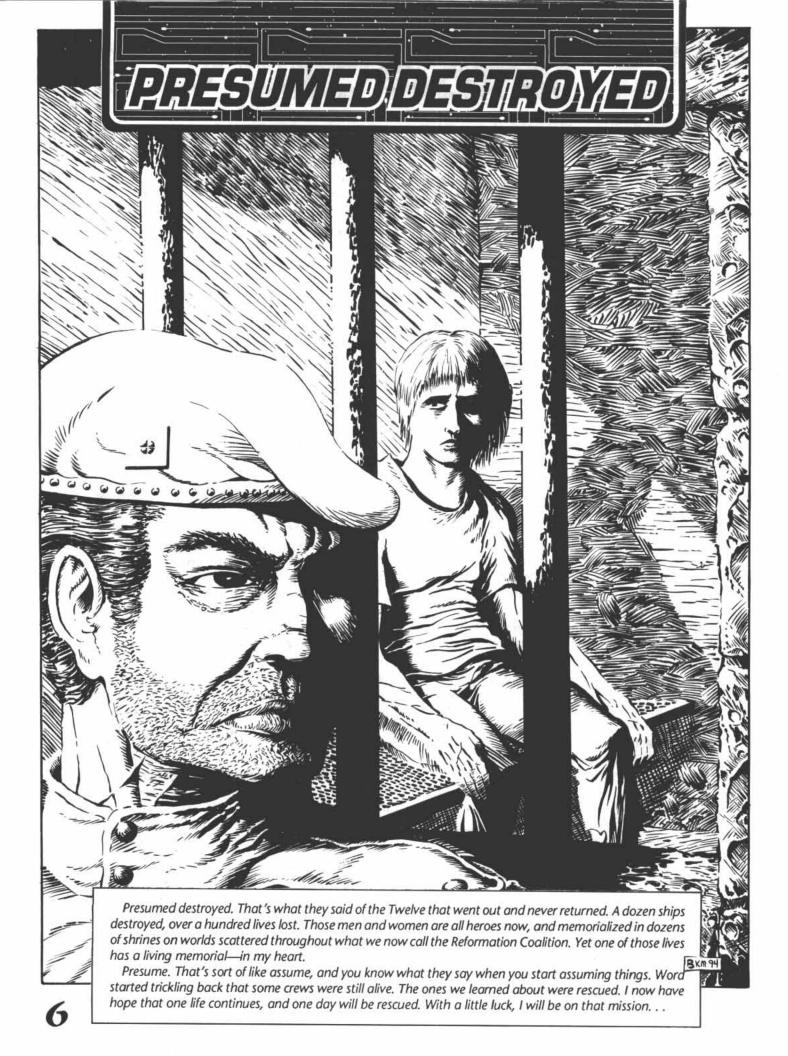
The next section of the adventure is usually the player hand-outs. These are intended to be photocopied and given to the players as part of the briefing which follows. Referees are specifically granted permission to photocopy the handout pages for distribution to their players as part of the mission briefing. Doing so will add a nice feeling of formality to the briefing, and will lend focus to the players' subsequent planning efforts.

The briefing itself is next, and we have actually scripted the briefing so that the referee can read it verbatim. Our experience is that this is easier on the referee than having him or her make up the words of the briefer. Also, having a script enables the referee to engage in some roleplaying, and makes the briefing that much more real for players. We have also provided NPC sketches of the briefers, even if they don't appear later in the story, to aid the referee in roleplaying out this important part of the adventure. This, after all, sets the stage for what follows later, and allows the referee to bring these characters back as potential contacts for future adventures.

Finally, the adventure itself is laid out, with all necessary maps, diagrams, and NPCs integrated into the text where they are most likely to be needed. Equipment used in the adventure comes either from the Traveller basic rulebook, or in the case of new equipment, is gathered in a separate section at the back of the booklet for ease of continuing use. This equipment is designed using the rules in Fire, Fusion, & Steel: Traveller Technical Architecture, and can serve as inspiration for referees and players to design more equipment for their own campaigns, beyond being used in the adventures contained here.

Even after you've played all five of the scenarios, Smash & Grab can provide valuable material for future adventures. All five of these worlds—Daaliisa, Isis, Lefiguura, Eloji, and Suudo will continue to figure in Coalition operations and politics. And since the characters are now experts on these worlds, having gained their experience the hard way, they stand to be key players in any future developments. Most of the surviving NPCs in this book will continue on in their roles, and can serve as future allies or opponents to the player characters. Smash-and-grab operations are just the first step in expanding an interstellar civilization; there are still bootstrap, pacification, diplomatic, and trade operations to be undertaken, not to mention the next round of smash and grabs, and any assorted emergencies that might arise. When these five adventures are concluded, they will have been only the beginning.

Now hear this. Sorry to cut your vacation short, boys and girls. System control reports an overdue intel bird, just a couple parsecs up. It's probably nothing serious, but I told them we'd have a look; they'd do the same for us. Strap in and stow your gear, we're heading out.





REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

This scenario is a bit different than the usual smash-and-grab mission, in that it is more than just equipment the characters will be going for. Indeed, the primary objective of this mission is to recover a far more valuable asset: Hiver-trained personnel, one of the 12 teams that the Coalition (when it was the Dawn League) sent into the Wilds.

After receiving the mission briefing, the characters will have to travel to the system of Isis. There they will have to avoid detection by the TED's forces and land on the world. A brief recon should be all that is required to establish that the situation at the prison is as it was briefed.

Complications come in when the characters make the assault. It seems that another group, a survivor group (TNE, page 66), is interested in freeing the Coalition prisoners, and by sheer coincidence are making their assault at the same time. The confusion caused by two teams trying a jailbreak at the same time should prevent the initial success.

Believing that there will be a second assault, the TED increases security at the prison. The characters will not now be able to succeed by themselves, and should seek the help of the survivor group.

The survivors will be willing to help, but they will want something in return.

What should follow is a second, coordinated assault on the prison, the recovery of the prisoners' far trader, and the fulfillment of the characters' obligation to the survivors.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure opens in orbit about a gas giant of the Davao/ Promise system. The character's ship is docked to the Coalition clipper *Aube*, which has been serving as a forward presence of the Coalition in the Promise subsector of Diaspora.

Aube has been servicing the smaller Coalition vessels

working the subsector, as well as providing more firepower and troops when and where needed. In a recent encounter with a vampire ship, Aube suffered considerable damage. Although still jump-capable, the ship's meson gun is disabled and several cargo modules have been damaged. If the characters make an approach by small craft to Aube, they will see swarms of technicians in vac suits conducting EVA repairs on antennae, gun mounts, and other surface fixtures.

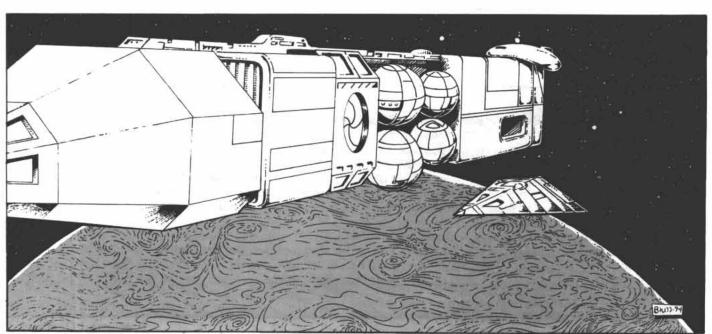
The Davao system is uninhabited and seldom visited by Guild or Free Trader vessels, and so makes a reasonably private forward base. It is also inside the Reformation Coalition Primary Area of Operations, so it is less likely to cause political problems back home than would a more forward location.

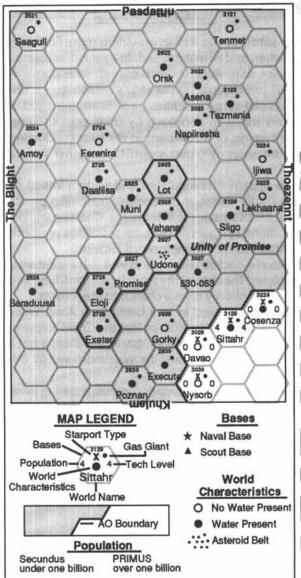
Another vessel is docked with *Aube* as well. It is a scout ship, RCS *Nightwatcher*. The crew of the scout is on board *Aube*, and the characters will shortly have a chance to meet them.

The characters are called in to a briefing on *Aube*. While being one of the largest class of ships that the Coalition owns, the clippers make maximum use of space, and there is not a separate briefing room. Instead, the wardroom will fill this function.

As the characters arrive, a steward is finishing clearing away the remains of a meal, and a junior officer, Ensign "Emma" Kitcheer, is setting up for the briefing. Shortly after the characters arrive, the crew of Nightwatcher will enter the wardroom. The characters will have a few minutes for conversation with them or with Emma, Aube's Communications Officer, before the arrival of the Captain. Nightwatcher crew will swap tales of the Wilds, but will not reveal anything about the subject of the briefing beforehand.

The following five pages are the handouts given to the players as part of the briefing. The referee should photocopy these sheets and give them to the players.





Dual listings: All worlds are listed with their pre-Collapse (1119) data. Worlds within the Reformation Coalition AO have been surveyed and have a second line showing their current (1201) data. 1201 data is available for referees only in the referee's section.

PROMISE Subsector in 1201 (Subsector L/Diaspora Sector)

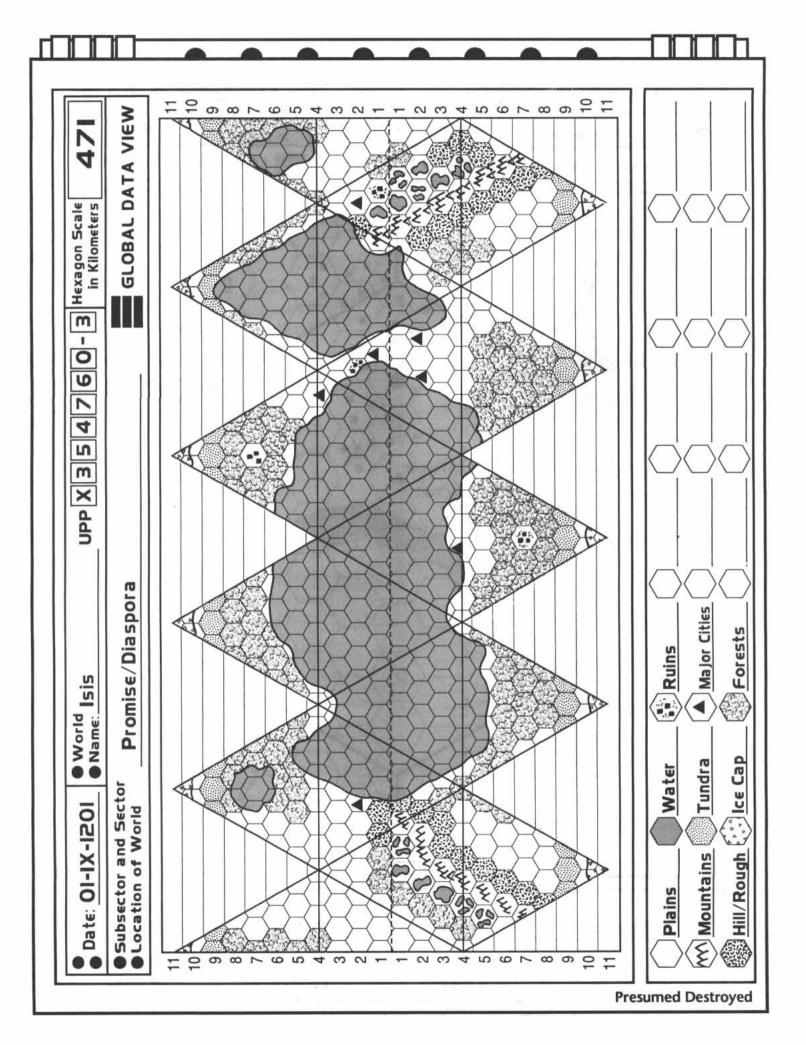
Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Seagull	2521	D7B1430-9		NIFILO	103	LI	G2 V
Amoy	2524	D454634-8		Ni Ag	305	LI	G0 V
Baraduusa	2528	C342231-D		Ni Po Lo	215	u	G3 V
Ferenira	2724	B100165-F		Ni Va Lo O:2825	123	LI	M3 V
Daaliisa	2725	D7677B8-7	100	Ag C:1	A114	LI	M1 III
Eloji	2728	B846647-C		Ni Ag	302	LI	M0 V
Exeter	2729	A769895-F	101 (41	Ri	524	U	K3 V M9 D
Muni	2825	B3428C9-C		Po	A605	LI	K4 V M6 D
Promise	2827	A542999-F		Hi In Po Cp	502	U	M1 V
Poznan	2830	C232888-A		Po Na	403	So	M4 V
Orsk	2922	B535321-F	N	Ni Lo D:0	A912	u	M4 V M9 D
Lot	2925	A245666-F		Ni Ag O:2825	A503	LI	K5 V
Vahana	2926	B65A577-F		Ni Wa	703	U	K2 V M5 D
Udone	2927	A000599-F		Ni As	314	LI	M0 V
Gorky	2929	A200542-F	N	Ni Va	911	LI	G1 V
Execute	2930	C684588-A		Ni Ag	303	So	G1 V
Asena	3022	C354855-C	1		114	U	M7 II
Napiiresha	3023	B559230-D		Ni Lo	623	LI	K6 V M3 D
530-053	3027	X443201-7	100	Ni Po Lo	R822	LI	K3 V M4 D
Davao	3029	D100677-D		Na Ni Va	113	So	M3 V
	3029	X100000-0		Ba Va	013	_	M3 V
Nysorb	3030	C9B6525-C		NiFI	733	So	K2 V M4 D
	3030	X9B6000-0		Ba Fl	033	-	K2 V M4 D
Tenmet	3121	B110725-F		Na	203	LI	K2 III
Tazmania	3123	A456527-F		Ni Ag	104	U	G1 V M9 D M6 D
Sligo	3126	B878322-D		Ni Lo	703	LI	K7 V
Sittahr	3129	C766530-D	111-30	Ni Ag RsT	405	So	KO V M3 D
	3129	X766430-4		Ni Lo	B505	Wi	KO V M3 D
ljiwa	3224	B300864-F		Va Na O:2827	202	LI	M2 V M6 D
Lekhaana	3225	E100223-B	100	Ni Va Lo	424	U	G6 V
Cosenza	3228	B527485-F		Ni Lo	312	So	K2 V M2 D
	3228	X527000-0		Ba	012	_	K2 V M2 D

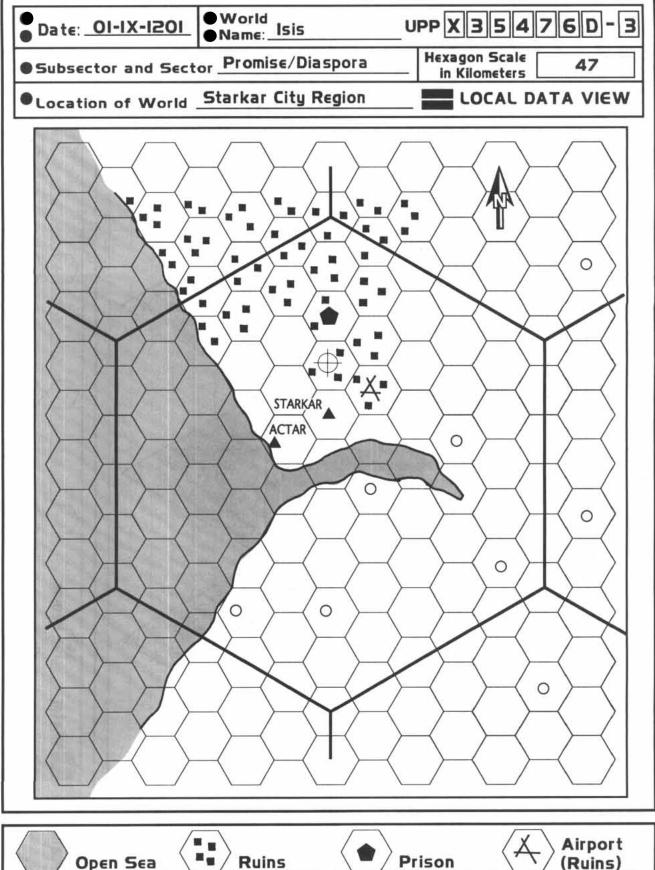
Base Codes: N: Naval Base

Trade Codes: Ag: Agricultural; As: Asteroid; Ba: Barren; Cp: Subsector capital; C:N or D:N indicates that the world was populated in part by Chirpers or Droyne, the number "N" following the colon indicates how many tenths of the world's population consisted of these races (0 = 10); FI: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; In: Industrial; O:NNNN indicates that the world is owned by the world in the indicated (NNNN) hex; Po: Poor; Ri: Rich; Rs: Research Station (with Greek letter designation); Va: Vacuum; Wa: Water world

TPPG indicates Travel Zone, Population Multiplier, Planetoid Belts, and Gas Giants. If 1119 Travel Zone digit is empty, it was listed as a Green Travel Zone; A and R indicate Amber and Red zones, respectively. If 1201 Travel Zone digit is empty, there is no particular meaning. A B in this column indicates a Balkanized world, the government code in the UPP string describes the predominant government on the world.

Allegiance Codes: LI: Lucan's Imperium; So: Solomani Confederation. 1201 codes are Na: Non-aligned, no off-planet allegiance, use government types on TNE, page 188; Wi: Wilds (no off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact); use Wilds government type on TNE, page 191 (in case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," tech level is world's sustainable tech level; tech level of the TED and his/her support structure is higher, up to world's original tech level); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.





0

Villages

City

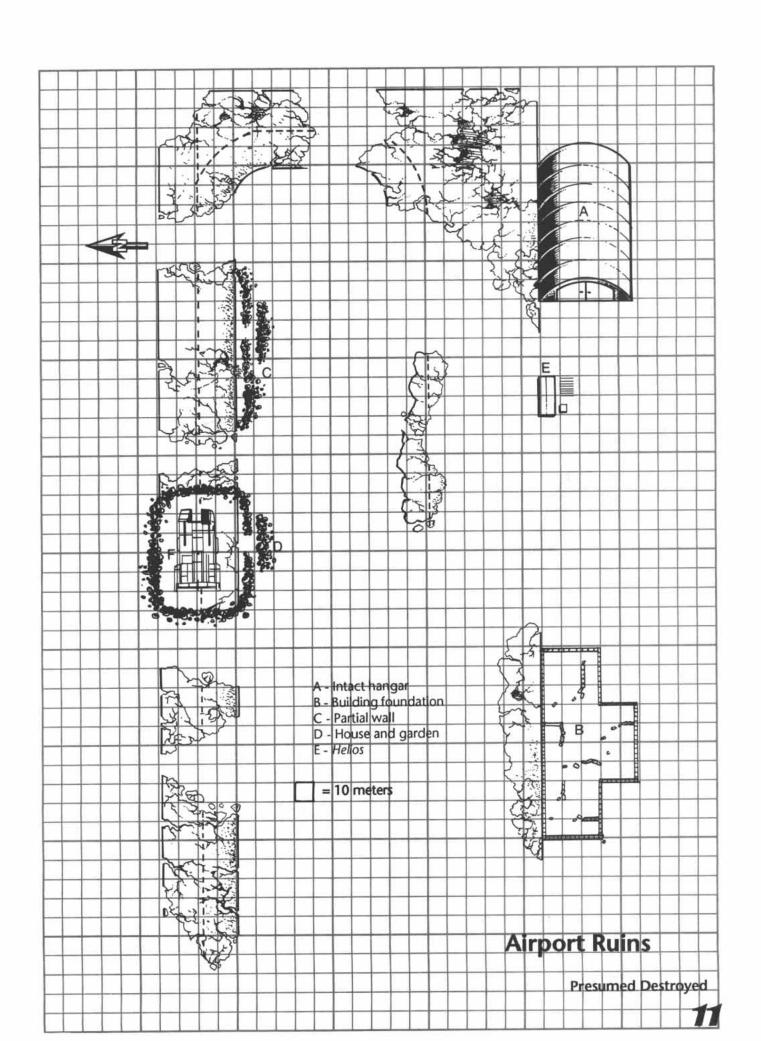
Presumed Destroyed

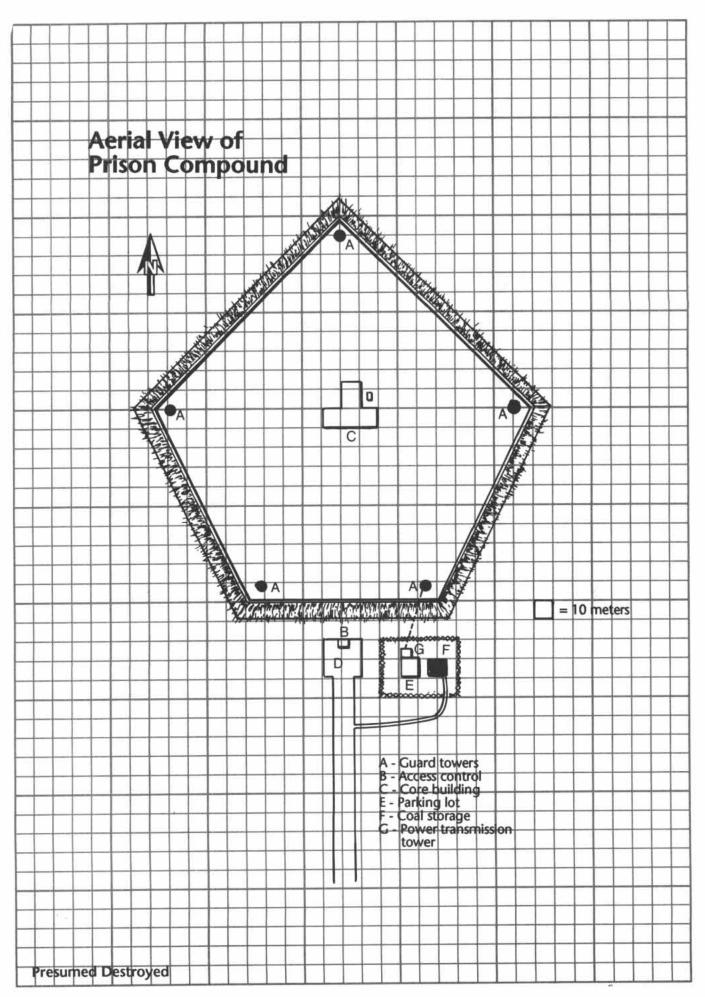
Starport

(Ruins)

Open/

Cultivated







SINNER'S BRIEFING

Captain Cynta "Sinner" Lawter arrives, and she begins the briefing.

"People, I have some extraordinary news, and a mission that most people on this vessel would kill to be a part of.

"Four months ago, we had the opportunity to interview the Captain of the Wandering Star, one of the traders who works in this region of the Wilds. During the interview, Captain Arlwin Sam, who prefers to be called Trader Sam, revealed that he had met with DLS Helios approximately one year ago. You heard me right—Dawn League Ship Helios, one of the original 12 Dawn League ships, missing and presumed lost for well over a year.

"Trader Sam stated that they met in Docbo City on Tazmania. Captain Kaul of Helios indicated that they were going to the system at 3022, then believed to be called Asena. Trader Sam advised Captain Kaul that other traders avoided landing on that world, but Kaul seemed intent on landing there in the hopes of finding replacement components for Helios' damaged jump drive.

"What was Helios doing in Promise subsector? Its original flight plan didn't take it anywhere near there. Apparently Helios experienced a major misjump incident, which left it in the Tazmania system. The crew were able to make temporary repairs, but Helios was incapable of anything beyond jump-1. If you will consult your briefing folder, you will see from the star chart of the Promise subsector that jump-1 capability confined Helios to a cluster of four worlds: Tazmania, Orsk, Napiiresha, and Asena, which we now know is called Isis.

"After much discussion between Kaul and Sam, the two agreed to meet on Napiiresha a month later, but Helios never showed up.

"On the basis of Trader Sam's information, I sent Nightwatcher to investigate. I will let its crew brief you on that mission and what they discovered. Full House, do you want to take over here?"

Captain James "Full House" Roger begins his brief:

"Our flight path was from Davao to the 530-053 system (3027), Vahana system (2926), Lot system (2925), Napiiresha (3023), and then Isis (3022). We refueled at gas giants all the way, although we did ground ship at Napiiresha to see if there was any word on Helios. No luck. The government there is tribal, the tech level is really low, and the locals are petrified of anyone or anything from a starship. Remember that all of these worlds are right in the the express lane of what the Free Traders call the Vampire Highway. We didn't see any vampires going out or coming back, but we may have just been lucky.

"Our next jump actually brought us into the system at 3022. Since we had enough fuel to jump out of system in an emergency, we entered near the mainworld of the system. We learned later that this world is named Isis. After a passive sensor search of the area did not reveal any vampires, we proceeded to the world.

"Isis is over 5000 kilometers in diameter. It has a small chunk of rock in orbit about 40,000 kilometers out. The atmosphere is thin without taint, so atmospheric conditions presented no problems for landing. The world was not broadcasting a landing beacon, so we just dusted in a big clearing in some ruins on the eastern shore of the largest sea. These ruins were just north of the largest city, which we correctly guessed was the capital. We made a couple quick scans from orbit going in

and coming back out, and we've put together a composite planetary map from the imagery. You'll find it in your briefing folder. We've marked the landing site for you as well.

"For a description of the conditions on the world, I will turn the brief over to 'Curry.'"

Doctor Drahmet "Curry" Frahtori begins to speak:

"By our estimation, the Isis year is 463.5 standard days long. Isis is currently at its closest approach to the sun, which puts it in its summer phase. The region you will be working in has an average daytime high of 38° Celsius. The average nighttime low is -34° Celsius. The 40-hour day and the thin atmosphere combine to produce this wide temperature range.

"Most of the clear terrain is used for agriculture. From what we have observed of it, their methods are very primitive and labor intensive. In our estimation, most of the populace is involved in agriculture, and it is probably barely feeding all the inhabitants of the world.

"The observed general tech level is about 3. Some locals have electric power, but this is usually water or steam turbine generated and very limited. There is evidence of relics, but mostly in the realm of military hardware, but "Graything" will tell you about that a little later.

"From talking to the locals and observing the military's technology, there is unques-

Dr. Drahmet "Curry" Frahtori a remnant who was rescued by

and later joined the arew

of RCS Nightwatcher tionably a TED on this world. We learned from the locals that

there is a single leader on the world named Joseph Beres who calls himself a Duke. His propaganda literature claims lineage back to the Third Imperium.

Cynta "Sinner" Lawter Captain of RCS Aube



James "Full House" Roger Captain of RCS Nightwatcher

"The law level is extremely high. None of the citizens can





Major Clallum "Graything" Greyling Nightwatcher's ground tactics specialist

possess any weapons. On one occasion, we observed workers returning their tools to an issue point. Also, anyone who travels beyond their home region must have travel papers. We had to move carefully because the TED's forces make regular patrols and have checkpoints along most roads.

"The roads on Isis are crude, generally just wide dirt trails through the countryside. This indicates that Isis had a higher tech level before the Collapse,

and the inhabitants are adjusting to having to travel on the ground. Most people walk, but the Isans have domesticated a herbivore and use it for riding or pulling wagons.

"I am sure we've all heard the phrase 're-inventing the wheel.' Well, these people have had to rediscover the art of wheelwrighting. From the scarcity of wheels, I would say that it is still a rare art on Isis.

"The common people of Isis wear simple outfits consisting of trousers and a belted tunic. For outer wear, they wear coats made from felted material. All are made of natural fibers. The supply department has produced some native outfits for your team. They are loose fitting, so it will fit over standard issue body sleeves easily enough.

"The common people are generally reluctant to speak to strangers. However, you will be able to find those who are willing to exchange information or sell information for food or drink. We were able to obtain most of our information from a group of survivors living in the ruins north of the city of Starkar.

"Now for a description of military matters, I will turn the brief over to 'Graything.'"

Major Clallum "Graything" Greyling, moves to the speaker's position.

"As Curry has mentioned, the survivors in the ruins were very cooperative. We met with one group led by Nathan Stano. When we asked about any starships landing there, a woman who had recently joined the group recalled having seen a ship like ours descending toward the ruins of the airport. The woman, Dilkia Summers, offered to act as our guide while we were on Isis.

"On our way to the airport, we passed the ruins of the starport. It had numerous craters, and our radiation counters were picking up levels slightly above background. It isn't dangerous for short periods of time, but I wouldn't spend too much time there. The only ships we saw there were twisted hulks, some of which looked like they had flown into the ground at full thrust.

"At the airport we found *Helios*. From what we could observe, she was sitting on a stretch of unbroken runway. The TED has had a work force build a wall, which looked like it was made up primarily of rubble, around the ship. Work was in

progress on a second, similar wall on a patch of runway adjacent to *Helios* enclosure. We believe that they are constructing this second enclosure for their SDB, which "Rami" will brief you on shortly.

"If you will turn your attention to screen 2, you will see an overhead shot of the site. We have included a hard copy of this map in your briefing folder labeled 'Airport Ruins Map.' In the southeast comer, there is an intact hangar. This is the site guard's base of operations. It seems to be used for quarters, maintenance, and command. You can barely make out a radio antenna just to the west of this building.

"The structure just to the west of that appears to be a recently built dwelling. At first, we thought this was the site commander's house. However, its occupant was dressed differently than the soldiers at the site, and was always accompanied by a guard. We observed him entering *Helios*, so we have concluded that he is some type of technician studying the ship.

"The only other structure near *Helios* is a foundation with a few standing walls and a lot of rubble. We believe it was once the terminal building. The work camp is about a kilometer to the northwest of the site. There are four guards there when the workers are in camp, and it is uncertain whether they would leave to join a firefight if you were to get involved in one.

"By our estimation, there are 24 troops at this site—all armed with primitive firearms of local manufacture. The survivors gave us one of the weapons, which they had captured. These are 5mm assault rifles, and clearly are not of local origin.

"The troops appear to work in alternating shifts of 10 hours each. The 40-hour day means that each "shift" works one daylight stretch and one night stretch. One shift is on guard at any time, and one is resting. There is always one guard posted at each corner of *Helios'* enclosure. When not guarding them at camp, four guards watch the workers on site. The remaining four include the shift supervisor, an assistant leader, and a couple gofers.

"Once we knew where *Helios* was, our next objective was to find out if the crew was alive, and if so, where they were located. Dilkia suggested that important prisoners were kept in the old Imperial Prison which is located north of the old starport.

"There is a community about a kilometer southeast of the prison where the off-duty guards and their dependents live, and it has the usual collection of support and service establishments nearby. In one of these, a drunken guard revealed that our people actually are kept in the prison.

"The prison is located in the ruins, but near the edge of them. It may have been abandoned once, but is in use again. There is a new building on the south side of the prison wall. Judging from the mound of coal, we believe the smokestack, and the wires running to the prison, provides power to the prison.

"The small building just to the west of it would seem to be the main entrance to the prison, as the walls themselves have



no break in them. From the vantage point we had, we could see into the yard itself. There appears to be only one building inside. It seems unlikely that this one building houses all the prisoners at this facility. Therefore, we believe that this facility has underground cells.

"There are five guard towers, one at each of the corners. These have spotlights suspended from the bottom. Only one guard mans each tower, and they appear to be armed with assault rifles.

"The guards here also work 10-hour shifts. Each morning, a new section arrives at the prison and relieves the previous day's section. We counted 30 guards in the oncoming duty section, so there are probably about 15 on duty at any time. There were also several workers who arrived in civilian clothes.

"The off-shift guards probably are quartered in the core building for easy access to the prison yard and down to the cell levels. Therefore, your best approach might be through the main entrance. With any luck, you should be able to bottle the off-shift guards up with only one or two personnel.

"You shouldn't count on finding keys to the cells, so you should probably carry some explosives with you. If you don't have any explosives in your ship's locker, talk to Rooster down in supply. Sinner has authorized the issue of whatever you need, within reason.

"Now, let me take a couple of minutes to talk about what you really want to know about—what sort of goods this TED has. We observed a group of grav vehicles pass us while we were by the old starport. There were six vehicles in the group. Five of the vehicles were G-carriers, but they didn't have any plasma cradle guns on them. That's the good news. The bad news is that the sixth vehicle was a TL-13 grav tank.

"We asked our guide and several other people that we met, and no one could recall ever having seen more than those vehicles. If you are lucky, they may be all the grav equipment the TED has left. You might consider taking something to use against the vehicles, because the TED may feel that the prisoners and/or Helios are important enough to commit these vehicles to action.

"We were concerned that, if they had grav vehicles, they might have battle dress as well. Again we questioned our host, and, after having great difficulty getting her to understand what we meant, we learned that there are some on the world. However, they are pretty scarce. Dilkia told us that the people who wore that type of armor are called "Scarlet Knights" and usually work alone. They are apparently itinerant enforcers of the Duke's will, and have some pretty fancy firepower. Since these "Knights" travel across the world, we believe that the armor is probably no more than unpowered combat armor, and probably at a TL consistent with the observed relic technology, which is about 12.

"Again, from talking to people we learned that the troops in the G-carriers also carry the assault rifle, but the G-carriers themselves still have an operational machinegun on them. However, you shouldn't rule out the possibility that the G-carrier troops may have higher tech weapons, but limited ammo supply causes them to use the common weapon most of the time.

"Now I will let "Rami" tell you about the biggest problem we ran into.

The last speaker of the briefing, Ramus Rami Gadsby.

"Initially, we were not sure about the second wall that was being constructed at the airport, but we suspected that there might be another ship in the system. As previously mentioned, we did not detect any



Ramus "Rami" Gadsby Nightwatcher's electronics officer

ship as we made our approach to Isis, even though we were primarily looking for vampires.

"Anyway, having seen the wall, we attempted to be a bit more cautious when leaving the world. Full House put us in a parking orbit above Starkar so we could get some orbital photos of the airport and prison sites.

"At 1407 Universal Ship Time, just as we finished our photo recon, we started to pick up a trace of something moving away from the moon. We worked the contact for awhile, but remained on passive. We didn't want to give our position away if it had not already acquired us.

"At 1443 UST, we had a lock on the contact, and started the classification process. By 1457 UST, we had the contact classified as a *Shukugan*-class Sig-Delt. At this time, we were ready to move out to the jump point.

"At 1529, just after we had finished thrusting to give Nightwatcher an outward vector, the contact lit up. However, it was not operating an active EMS like we would expect from an SDB of that class. Instead, it was operating a radar which we were able to classify as a planetary defense radar. By its strength, we estimated its short range as being about 30,000 kilometers.

"At 1546, a second trace appeared in the vicinity of the first contact. Although the *Shukugan* was not equipped with a small craft, we didn't rule out the possibility that the contact had launched one. However, we believed that the contact had probably launched a missile at us. *Nightwatcher* did not have a large enough angle relative to the missile's vector to try to out-turn it. So, our options were to try to evade or outrun the missile, neither of which promised much success. The Captain chose to increase our velocity toward the jump point. In the meantime, we went active trying to acquire the missile.

"Our gunner fired several shots at the SDB, and was itching to get a shot at the missile, but we never managed a target lock.

"At 1621, the missile detonated. We are not sure why, but we were not hit by even one of the missile's lasers, and the EMP effectively broke any target lock they may have had.

"By 1637, we intercepted a radio transmission from the SDB reporting to the world that 'the intruder had been destroyed.'

"Not wishing to correct its error, and cause the SDB to shoot at us again, we powered down the power plant and let momentum carry us to the jump point.





"During our encounter with the SDB, we were not hit at all by their lasers. Whether this means that they are not functioning or they have no skilled laser gunners, we can't be sure.

"And on a similar note, that they fired only one missile is not an indication that they have no more. Since missiles are a rare relic out in the Wilds, the SDB may have been unwilling to commit more than one at a time.

"This ship could be very dangerous; be wary of it.

"Now, Sinner has a few more words for you."

Sinner returns to the front of the wardroom.

"Since the condition of Helios was unknown, Nightwatcher's mission was reconnaissance only. There wouldn't have been enough room on Nightwatcher to bring the whole crew back anyway, so if they would have been unable to recover and use Helios, there'd be some stranded people out there and a very alert TED. They did the right thing—they came back and reported, so that a formal mission could be prepared and launched.

"Right now, I've got about 80 Marines on board who would trade useful parts of their anatomy to drop on Isis and spring our people out of that hole. If we weren't half shot to pieces, that's just where we'd be headed right now. I'd probably find an excuse to climb in one of the those drop capsules myself. But that's not going to happen. Aube is too valuable an asset to risk that far away from Coalition Space while it's this banged up. As it is, I should have pulled her back to Nike Nimbus two weeks ago, but we still have two mission teams out there counting on us being here at the rendezvous point.

"So it's your mission, people, and I sure wish I was going with you. Your primary objective is to rescue the crew of Helios. If in your estimation you can recover Helios herself, then that is your secondary objective, but do not let it endanger your primary. Your ship's large enough to carry everyone in the event you cannot get the ship. Anything you need to make this happen, let me know, and if we've got it, it's yours.

"When you enter the system, you will want to avoid detection to prevent complications on the ground. Depending on how much noise you make dirtside, you may want to avoid detection on the way out. While you are larger than Nightwatcher, an SDB, even a relic in poor condition, can cause a lot of damage.

"Are there any questions? No? Then good luck and bring our people home!"

TRAVEL

From Davao, the characters will have to make five jumps to reach Isis. This trip should be relatively uneventful. However, if this scenario is being worked into a campaign, the referee may wish to give the usual amount of attention to this journey. This does not have to be anything as dramatic as a vampire, just a little something to let them know that they are travelling through the Wilds.



As briefed, it would be a good idea for the characters to refuel their ship at Napiiresha (3023/Promise) before jumping to Isis. This would leave a jump worth of fuel in their tanks upon arrival. When jumping into a potentially hostile system, it is always good to keep one's options open. However, if the characters expend too many G-hours maneuvering to avoid the SDB (see below), they may end up cutting into the jump fuel, which would then require refueling before leaving the system.

ARRIVAL

As soon as the characters emerge in the Isis system, they should get down to the world's surface as soon as possible. However, they want to get there undetected, which may not be an easy matter. The SDB which attacked Nightwatcher makes regular patrols around Isis. Its job is to keep unwanted ships from the surface or to warn the Duke if one manages to get by. At the referee's option, the SDB might be currently on the surface for maintenance, which would initially make the characters' mission easier.

The characters will probably want to land in the same relative area as Nightwatcher did, which is the ruins north of Starkar. There are several groups of survivors (see TNE, page 66) in the ruins. The group that Nightwatcher dealt with is led by Nathan Stano. If the characters attempt to retrace Nightwatcher's path, let them meet up with Nathan's group, who will again provide a guide, if requested.

RECON

After landing and perhaps meeting with Nathan's band, the characters should travel to the prison area and

perform a reconnaissance to verify conditions are as described in the briefing. The referee can make the trip to the prison site as easy or difficult as desired. However, most of the travelling will be through the ruins. The Duke's forces do not regularly patrol in the ruins. They only make the occasional raids against the survivors, but otherwise tend to avoid the ruins.

The reconnaissance of the prison site will reveal that the

Nathan's Survivor Group

Nathan Stano

Survivor Leader

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Archery, Early Firearms, Armed Melee Combat

Other Assets: Observation 12, Survival 12, Tracking 12

Motivation:

Diamond Ace: Nathan has an understanding of the

troubles of others and is generous with whatever help he can provide,

Club 5: Living a life as a survivor and eventually a leader of a survivor group has made Nathan used to violence, especially as a means of keeping their freedom from the Duke's influence.

Dilkia Summers

Survivor Guide

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Rifle, Unarmed Melee Combat

Other Assets: Navigation

14, Observation 12, Stealth

10, Streetwise 10, Survival

12, Tracking 12 Motivation:

Spade Queen: Dilkia's hus-

band, the grandson of a pre-Duke Joseph leader, died in prison for who he was. Consequently she fled their farm and eventually joined Nathan's group. Dilkia has no mercy on the Duke's forces because of her loss.

Heart 10: Dilkia has a great concern for fellow survivors, and is very willing to help anyone who opposes the Duke.

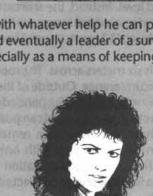
Group Profile

Group Size: 250

Warriors: 50-Trained

Equipment: Firearms consist of a mixture of bows and TL-4 rifle muskets and a few captured assault rifles. Melee weapons consist primarily of clubs and blades. No armor.

Nathan's group is camped primarily on the coast of the ruins north of Starkar. Their principal occupation is fishing.



situation remains almost as described by Graything. Ruined buildings surround the prison on all sides, but none come any closer to the prison walls than 150 meters. If the characters watch at night, they will notice that each tower has only one light functioning, and that the lights do not overlap. There is also a radio antenna fixed to the tower nearest the power building.



PRISON

The following description of the prison is not general knowledge and can only be learned if the characters get inside the prison or speak to someone who has been inside. Finding a person who has been inside and is willing to tell about it is an Impossible: Streetwise task.

Walls: The inner layer of the prison's wall is a half-meter of reinforced concrete which is eight meters high. The outer layer is packed dirt sloping up to the top of the concrete wall.

Guard Towers: The guard towers rise 28 meters above the prison yard. The pedestal walls are 0.2-meter-thick reinforced concrete (AV 8). Inside the pedestal is a spiral staircase leading up to the guard room at the top. The tower does not have an opening at the yard level. Instead, the staircase leads down to the first underground level where a separate tunnel leads to the core. It takes one minute (12 combat turns) to walk up or down this staircase.

The guard room is six meters across. The room has windows around its entire circumference. Outside of the room is a one-meter balcony with a metal railing. Suspended underneath the platform are two spotlights. The guard can position these from inside the room, however, they have remained in a fixed position to cover most of the yard with only one bulb per tower. The tower nearest the power station has a radio. All guard towers have a field telephone connected to the sergeant of the guard's post.

Power Station: A cinder block building (AV 9) which contains the following areas:

- Generator Room: Houses a steam turbine generator. All power to the prison is fed through a breaker in this room and out to the nearest guard tower.
- 2. Boiler Room: The boiler occupies most of this room. A coal bunker is in the corner. A wooden door opens to the outside to allow restocking the bunker. There is usually one civilian worker in here stoking the furnace.
- 3. Maintenance Room: There is a workbench and an assortment of mechanical tools here. This room also holds a stacked set of bunks, a small table, and two chairs. The "engineer" works here, but this room also serves as his home. The stokers have the same work rotation as the guards, but only two work each day. One will put a shift in the boiler room, and the other can rest or sleep in the extra bunk. The stokers have never been inside the prison, but the engineer has. Additionally, there are charts of the prison in the maintenance room.

Access Control Building: A concrete structure (AV 9) containing the following areas:

1. Transfer Area: An area sealed off by a security door (AV 5). A lift shaft and spiral staircase lead down to the tunnel to the cell blocks. The lift does work, but it is slow, taking 45 seconds (nine combat turns) to go up or down. A person can walk up or down the stairs to the tunnel in 30 seconds (six combat turns). If the person is trying to move stealthily, double the time.

- 2. Storage: A large room formerly used to hold prisoner possessions. Now used for general storage.
- 3. Reception Area: This area has a metal desk for the front guard. This guard has keys for the security door to the transfer area. The desk guard is the only one who stands watch in this area. He has an old field telephone which is wired to the post of the sergeant of the watch. This area has a wire reinforced window to the front of the building.

Core Building: A reinforced concrete building (AV 10) containing the following:

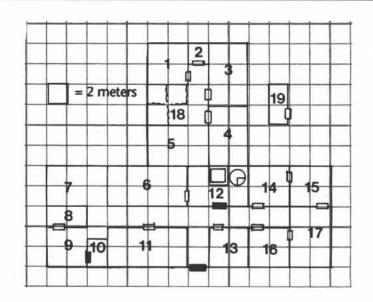
- 1. Surgery: A simple surgical suite.
- 2. Scrub Room: An area for the surgery team to scrub.
- Women's Ward: An open ward with eight beds. Curtains can be used to isolate individual beds.
 - 4. Men's Ward: Similar to women's ward.
- 5. Waiting Area: Part of this area has been partitioned off for the resident physician. There are eight metal and plastic seats in this room. If an inmate is here, there will be a guard in this area. The physician only works 12 hours each day. There is a medic on duty at all times. The physician and medics have been throughout the prison.
- 6. Kitchen: Meals are prepared here for the prisoners and the guards. The guards eat in the mess hall. Prisoner meals are taken to them in their cells. Meals are passed through a slot into the guard mess hall. One cook works each day. One other person assists him and takes the meals to the prison levels. The cook only travels through the first underground level to get to the core building. The assistants travel throughout the prison, except to the guard towers.
 - 7. Guard Mess Hall: A place for guards to eat.
- 8. Sergeant of the Guard's Quarters: A private room shared by the section sergeant of the guard and his two assistants. There is usually one person asleep in this room.
- 9. Guard Lounge: A place for the guards to relax. 1D6 guards will be in this room most of the time.
- 10. Armory: When not on watch, the guards keep their weapons in this room. There are also 10 shotguns with 100 rounds of buckshot each here. The sergeant of the watch and his assistants each have a key to the armory.
- 11. Guard Bunkroom: 30 bunks are in this area. This area also has bathrooms and showers.
- 12. Transfer Area: This area has a lift shaft and a spiral staircase leading down to level one of the underground portion of the prison. A person takes 30 seconds (six combat turns) to walk up or down the stairs. Prisoners are only brought up to this level to go to medical or to see the warden. A security door separates the medical area from the quard/admin area.
- Records Room: A storage area holding records and cleaning supplies.
- 14. Admin Office: A small office for prison administration. This room has a field telephone connected to the sergeant of the



Core Building

- 1 Surgery 2 Scrub
- 3 Women's ward
- 4 Men's ward
- 5 Waiting area
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Guard mess hall
- 8 SGT. of guard's quaters 9 Guard lounge

- 10 Armory 11 Guard bunkroom
- 12 Transfer area
- 13 Records room
- 14 Administration office
- 15 Warden's office 16 Warden's lounge
- 17 Warden's quarters
- 18 Examination area
- 19 Diesel generator

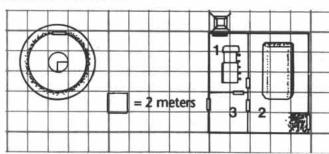


3

Access Control

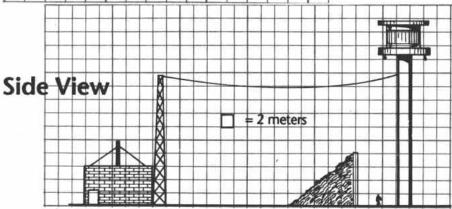
- 1 Transfer control
- 2 Storage
- 3 Reception area
- = 2 meters

Guard Tower



Power Station

- 1 Generator room
- 2 Boiler room
- 3 Maintenance room





guard's post. During daylight hours, one civilian works here. The civilian only travels to and from this area and is not familiar with the cell blocks.

- 15. Warden's Office: Similar to 14 above, but richly appointed and reserved for the warden's use.
- 16. Warden's Lounge: A living and dining area for use by the warden.
- 17. Warden's Quarters: The warden's bedroom and bathroom. The current warden, Anju Nogen, only uses this area if his work requires him to spend long hours here, which it usually does not. Anju has a house at the guard community.
- 18. Examination Area: This area contains three separate examination tables segregated by curtains.
- 19. Diesel Generator: A small diesel-powered generator is in this building. It is a reserve power supply in the event of main power failure. It has a fuel supply for 20 hours. A guard must enter this building to start the generator. The output of this generator is sufficient for the prison's lights only. This generator has not been well maintained and may not start. If anyone attempts to start the generator, roll 1D20; on 15+, the generator will not start. If the generator fails to start, it is a Formidable: Mechanic task to get it operational again.

Level 1 Underground: This is the uppermost level of the prison's underground portion. It contains the following:

- Tunnels to Towers: Tunnels lead from this corridor to the base of each of the guard towers.
- Shaft to Cells: This area has a lift shaft and a spiral staircase which leads down to each of the cell levels below. The lift takes 30 seconds (six combat turns) to travel to each level. Walking takes 20 seconds (four combat turns).
- 3. Shaft to Core Building: Connects to area 12 of the core building.
- Shaft to Access Control: Connects to area 1 of the access control building.
- Shaft to Towers: The spiral staircase goes up through the tower pedestal to the guard tower. Only one is illustrated, but is typical of all.
- 6. Rebel Tunnel: This is how Marissa's group enters the prison in its effort to free Helios' crew. The tunnel leads 230 meters to the a sub-basement of a ruined structure. The group has been working for months clearing this tunnel. They have used a strong solvent to weaken the wall lining the tunnel.

Cell Blocks: There are five levels of cell blocks below the first underground level.

The bottom-most is submerged in water, being below the local water table. Although the prison does have electricity, and could operate the pumps to clear this level, there are two reasons the engineer does not pump out this level: First, the prisoner load is not heavy enough to warrant it, and the water here serves as a well for the prison's water supply. It is easier to pump what the prison and boiler need out than try to de-water the whole level.

Actually, only the upper two cell blocks have prisoners.

Important political prisoners are kept in the upper level. The crew of *Helios* are in the next level down. *Helios* crew are the only prisoners on that level, but each is in an individual cell and widely separated from the other crewmembers.

Details of the cell blocks are as follows:

Cells: The cells are 3 meters by 3 meters by 2.75 meters high. Each cell has two bunks, stacked, a toilet, sink, and shower area. The bunk frames are made of a heavy, molded plastic. The walls between cells are solid concrete, but there are 2.5 centimeter steel bars (AV 5) across the open end. The locks used to be electronic, but the power is not as reliable as it used to be, therefore each occupied cell has a chain and lock securing the door. The cell at the end of each bay has a solid door with a small, barred window. A heavy hasp has been welded to the front of this door. This cell is used for solitary confinement.

Cell Bays: There are four cell bays on each level, one in each of the four cardinal directions. Each bay has a total of 25 cells. Access Area: The central area on each level. The lift shaft and

spiral staircase open to the north on each level.

Guard Station: Each occupied level has a guard station on the east side of the lift shaft. The station on the upper-most occupied level is manned by the sergeant of the guard. It has an old field telephone which has lines connecting it to each of the towers, the access control building, the core building, and the other guard station. Each level also has one roving guard who makes regular rounds of each of the cell bays and reports to the guard post. The guard at this station has the keys to all the cells locked in his desk. The only key this guard has on him is the one to the key drawer. The sergeant of the guard has two keys to the security doors, one he always keeps, and one he checks out as necessary.

Prison Conditions: The prison interior is lit by electric bulbs. However, to avoid putting too much of a load on the generator, they are used sparingly in some places. This gives many areas of the prison a dark and gloomy aspect. The halls of the cell blocks are well lit, but the cells themselves have no lights.

For heat, the engineer has rigged a system of steam heat down to the cell levels. The radiators are fastened to the ceiling of the cell bay halls. This heating is barely adequate against the cold of the night. The overall effect is a damp, chilly environment. Prisoners are provided with heavy clothing and blankets.

Steam frequently escapes the pipes at the relief valves, producing a fog in the area of the particular valve. The core building uses electric heat.

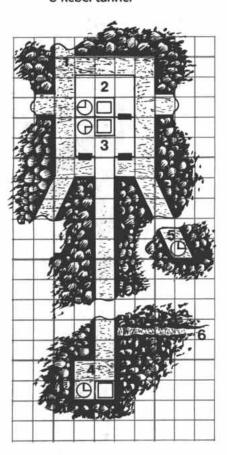
Prison Guards: The guards in the prison are Novice NPCs. They have no armor and are armed with assault rifles. The guards in the cell blocks have nightsticks instead of firearms. Each shift has 15 guards on watch: one in the access-control building, two each on the two occupied levels, one in each of the five towers, and five as a central reserve usually in the guard's lounge. Of the off-shift guards, five to 10 are usually sleeping.



Level 1 Underground

- 1 Tunnels to towers

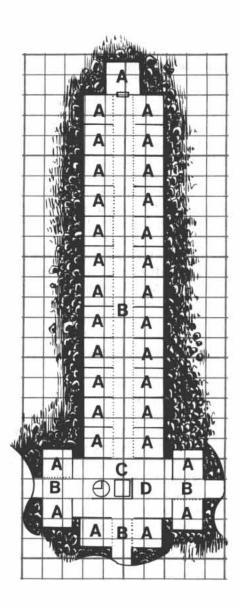
- 2 Shaft to cells
 3 Shaft to core building
 4 Shaft to access control
 5 Shaft to tower (typical)
 6 Rebel tunnel



= 2 meters

Prison

- A Cells B Cell bays C Access area D Guard station





INITIAL ASSAULT

There are primarily two ways to enter the prison: over the wall or through the access building. Whichever way the characters choose is acceptable to the scenario.

If the characters choose to go over the wall, their assault should be made under the cover of darkness. Their biggest obstacle will be the lights on the guard towers. These could be shot out. If shot from a reasonably long range with a silenced weapon, the guard will probably believe that the bulb just blew out; after all, the bulbs are relics and their supply is limited and old. The guard will report it, and expect that it will be replaced the following day. With the light out, the characters can carefully approach and climb the wall without being noticed.

Climbing the wall from the outside is not a problem. The walls were designed to keep people inside, not outside. A grapple and line is all that is needed to lower the characters to the ground level. With one of the lights out, they can make it all the way to the core building with very little chance of being discovered. Once they have forced their way into the core building, they will have alerted the remainder of the guard section quartered there, but the guards will require five combat turns to get armed. That is, unless the characters reach the armory and prevent that beforehand. Once they have dealt with the guards in the core building, they will only have the guards on post to contend with.

Of course they may elect to go in with guns blazing. If they elect that route, the remainder of the guard section in the core building will be alerted, armed, and ready for action by the time the characters reach the core building.

Once the characters are inside the core building, half of the guards in the towers will proceed to the first underground level to assist with the defense there. Also, if the off-duty guards are alerted, which they probably will be once the assault has started, they will arrive at the prison 10 minutes (120 combat turns) later. Half of these guards will cordon off the prison, and half will attempt to enter through the access building to assist the guards inside.

The characters can prevent the alerting of the off-duty guards by cutting power to the prison, destroying the antenna, or incapacitating the guard in that tower. Destroying the radio itself would work, but short of destroying the tower, this is impossible unless the characters were able to get up inside the tower. However, if they could get that far without raising an alarm, why not just release the prisoners and leave just as quietly? (Of course they don't know that the survivors will be making enough noise to raise the alarm.) Anything that could destroy the tower would be noticeable enough in the community to raise the alarm.

Entering the prison through the access building might be a bit easier. The characters will only have to overcome the one guard on post there.

If they approach at night, there are two lights outside the front of the access-control building, a light over the door of the power station, and one illuminating the coal yard in back. If more than one of these bulbs are extinguished at a time, it will





be noticed. Cutting the power will darken the lights around the access-control building, but the ones around the power station are fed directly from that building. The referee will have to determine the difficulty of the characters' approach and their chances of being observed based on the characters' plan of approach.

If they approach by day, they will be spotted and challenged by one of the tower guards shortly after they get clear of the surrounding ruins. If the characters ignore the challenge, the guard will alert the sergeant of the guard and then issue a second challenge. If the characters pass within 100 meters, the guard will open fire on the characters.

However, the characters might be able to slip in during the daily deliveries. Each day a wagon brings food and supplies to the prison. Since its arrival time is irregular, the access-control guard has to call in for a working party to come for the food. The wagon is open-topped, but a tarp covers its cargo.

Another delivery's arrival time is regular: coal. Two wagons of coal arrive each afternoon and are added to the pile behind the power station. The beds of the coal wagons are opentopped, but they have closed sides. The wagons have a rig which allows the contents to be dumped out rather than manually removed. If dumped out with the coal, the characters should go through the power building before rushing the access-control building.

In either case, the characters should be able to get inside the access-control building before the guard there has had a chance to react. Of course there is a good chance that the offduty guards will be alerted by the tower guard with the radio. However, the characters may be counting on getting in and out before these guards can react.

Once inside the access-control building, they would be able to subdue the guard and get the keys to the security door. From there they can get down to the first underground level without any problem.

No matter which way the characters enter, complications arise when Marissa's group begins its assault (see sidebar on page 24). The referee should have this assault start shortly after the characters arrive on the first underground level.

Marissa's assault begins with an explosion which blows the remaining portion of the tunnel wall inward. Then Marissa, a lieutenant, and 20 of her warriors will enter the tunnel and split up. The lieutenant and a team of five warriors will head for the access-control building to neutralize the guard there, and cover that entrance. Marissa's team will head for the central area where the shafts are. The plan upon reaching that point is for eight warriors to keep the off-watch guards from coming down, and eight to descend to the cell blocks, neutralize the guards, and free the prisoners.

However, it is at about this point where they will encounter the characters, and will assume they are prison guards. Once Marissa's team has taken five or more casualties, she will order a withdrawal. By this time, the real prison guards should be starting their counter-attack. If the characters have dispatched all the guards above them, there are still the guards down below. If the referee wants to bring in the off-duty guards, and the characters have thought to take out the radio, perhaps one of the guards or prison staff fires a flare pistol to alert those guards.

Any or all of these factors will make it more difficult for the characters to achieve their objectives. In all actuality, because of unforeseen complications, this assault should fail.

If the characters notice that the prison yard is large enough to land their ship in, they may want to fly in, free the prisoners, and fly away. They should, however, realize that they will consequently have to leave some characters on the ship to guard it while the rest are inside freeing the prisoners. If they still insist on using this method, they could, in the confusion, get their ship captured. Also, once alerted that there is a second ship on the world, the TED's forces, including the SDB, will be looking for it.

FINDING MARISSA'S GROUP

After getting clear of the prison, it is unlikely that the characters will want to go back to *Aube* empty-handed. However, they should realize that with the increased security, they are unlikely to succeed without help.

Once they have analyzed the situation, they should realize that the other group they faced was not the prison guards, and if found, could probably help them. Fortunately, there are several ways to find the group.

The easiest (and recommended) way is for Marissa's group to "find" them. Marissa could realize during the combat that the group they are fighting is not the guards, especially when the guards start arriving and shooting at both groups. She might have her warriors cease firing at and try talking with the characters to get them to stop firing. Of course, it should be too late to get the prisoners out, but she can offer the characters an escape route through the tunnel. Once everyone is in the tunnel, Marissa will set off a second charge to seal the tunnel against pursuers. Then, the characters will have the opportunity to travel back to Marissa's camp and negotiate with her.

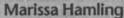
There are other ways to locate Marissa's group. Once the characters are clear of the prison and have lost or neutralized any pursuers they can try tracking Marissa's group as they withdraw from the prison site. Of course, the characters should be careful in their approach, as Marissa will tend to interpret any pursuit as hostile.

The characters might try to use their passive EMS array to locate camps within the ruins. However, this would require placing their ship in a parking orbit above the ruins, and potentially exposing themselves to the SDB. The larger camps will show up as heat sources against the cold background of the ruins. Five camps may be found with a Difficult: Sensors task; one is Nathan's camp, one is Marissa's camp, there are two other camps not previously contacted, and there is one of the Duke's forts at the northeast edge of the ruins shown on the area map. Since the orbital view cannot tell which is which, the characters will have to travel to each to find which is Marissa's. If they have contacted Nathan's group, they will know that that camp belongs to his group.

The characters might try asking at any farms that are near the ruins, reasoning that the survivors probably trade relics for



Marissa's Survivor Group



Marissa Hamling is the current leader of the survivors living in the ruins north of the city of Starkar. She is also a remnant, a senior officer of Ganar's Grunts, a mercenary company hired by a faction of Asena (as Isis was known then) to fight against Duke Beres' forces.

When the Collapse hit, Ganar's Grunts were stranded here, so most of the officers and some of the troops decided to sleep through what would become the Dark Time. The rest of the mercenaries chose to face the Collapse with the locals.

The group that elected to sleep learned of a shipment of portable cold-sleep capsules. They conducted a raid, and acquired the capsules they needed and retreated to the ruins. They dismantled their vehicles and set up a chamber deep under a demolished building. To power the cold-sleep capsules, the group used the vehicle fusion power plants and provided them with several years of fuel.

To make sure the plants were operating properly, one of their number would remain awake to watch over the operation. The first watcher gained leadership of a band of survivors living in the ruins. When it was his turn to sleep, he told his followers that he must go away, but would send another to take his place. He then returned to the chamber, woke his replacement, and briefed him or her on the situation. This process has repeated itself throughout the Dark Time.

Now, the survivors view the Leader in a semi-mythical awe. The ruins where the chamber is located is now known as the "Place of the Sleeping Ones." The "First Counselor" of the survivors has been instructed how to wake the next Leader in the event of the current Leader's untimely death. The First Counselor has had to perform this function once during the Dark Time.

Marissa has been awake for eight years now. Her awake time will be up in about two years. Given that the Dark Time has lasted some 70 years now, Marissa has thought about staying awake for the remainder of her natural life. However, with the arrival of the *Helios*, she has begun to hope that interstellar civilization has begun to awake, and she may eventually get to leave this world.

The referee could, if desired, allow one or more characters or NPCs to be a member of this sleeping mercenary group. It might be that Marissa decides that the time is right to use the group and their high-tech weapons to overthrow the Duke.

Initiative: 5 UPP: 685A88-0-4

Skills and Assets: Autogun 8, Armed Martial Arts (Large Blade) 8, Slug Rifle 16, Slug Pistol 13, Grav Belt 10, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 11, Stealth 12, Environment Suit 8, Riding 10, Ground Tactics 11, Observation 12, Sensors 13, Streetwise 12, Survival 18, Willpower 13, Computer 8, Interrogation 10, Language (Aslan) 9, Leadership 11

Motivation:

Heart Queen: Marissa has a deep love for the people she leads and is concerned for their welfare. She will not risk any venture that could result in undue casualties.

Diamond 5: Marissa's drive for money has caused her to accept several high-risk, high-pay jobs, primarily as a mercenary.

Group Profile

Group Size: 450

Warrlors: 90-Experienced.

Equipment: Firearms consist of a mix of TL-4 rifle muskets and captured assault rifles. Marissa has six ACRs available, but limited ammunition for them. Melee weapons consist primarily of blades and clubs.

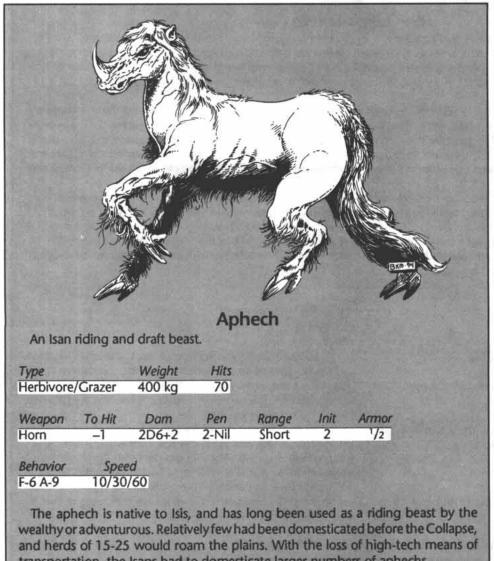
Marissa's group is also located in the ruins north of Starkar, but away from the coast. Most of the group's commerce is done by salvaging goods in the ruins and trading them to local farmers.

food and other goods. On the area map, the open spaces are almost entirely covered with farms. Marissa's group does trade, but the farmers do not know where her group is located. The characters may wait for Marissa's group to come to trade again. To keep from getting trapped, the trading parties from the survivors do not have a regular schedule. However, one party will leave the ruins four days after the assault on the prison for cloth and medical supplies. The characters must take into consideration the Duke's security when travelling to farms. They will have to avoid patrols and checkpoints.

The characters may decide to ask a group they know about Marissa's group. If they have not already contacted Nathan's group, they may consider doing so now. If they have already contacted it, they could return and talk to Nathan. Nathan Stano knows that Marissa's group is the only one large enough to attempt the prison break. Dilkia also knows this information, and will offer to guide the characters to the camp (if the characters were already using Dilkia as a guide, they will not need to return to Nathan's camp).

There may be other methods that the characters can





transportation, the Isans had to domesticate larger numbers of aphechs.

conceive of that are not listed here. The referee will have to determine the merits and dangers of each. Of the ones listed, having the group withdraw from the prison with Marissa's group or having Dilkia lead them to Marissa are the easiest.

MEETING THE SURVIVORS

Once the characters learn where Marissa's group is, they should try to contact it. Marissa's reaction to the characters will be guarded and a bit adverse at first. This is especially true if the characters caused several casualties to her raiding party. However, if the characters reveal that they are off-worlders and have come to rescue their fellows, she will become more cooperative.

Marissa will eventually offer the assistance of her warriors, but she wants something in return: She wants the characters to use their technologically advanced weaponry to help change the government of Isis. If the characters balk at that, Marissa will accept a compromise. She wants the grav tank and G-carriers destroyed, and her group provided with advanced weaponry, ammunition, armor, and communica-

More importantly, Marissa wants the promise of Coalition help in organizing an active resistance to the vampire fleet that periodically visits the world. She can provide timetables of arrivals and departures and approximate ship strengths, but needs the help of a power with interstellar warships to have a chance.

The characters must agree to at least these terms or Marissa will not cooperate. But this is exactly the sort of operation that the Coalition is most interested in getting involved in, so there should be little hesitation on the part of the players. They are not in a position to formally commit Coalition resources, of course, but they can at least explain the Coalition and promise to do everything in their power.

INCREASED SECURITY

After the initial assault on the prison, the Duke will increase security there. He will commit two of his House Cavalry's G-carriers with their troops to the prison. In addition, he will order troops to increase the number of patrols they make through the area. (The fort's commander, however, not willing to lose any more men to the ruins, will interpret the orders loosely and

only have patrols made around the ruins.)

If the characters decide to wait out the Duke, he will eventually step down the increased security. If a month goes by with no further attempts on the prison, he will recall the Gcarriers and their troops. He will replace them with 30 Line Troops (page 31) for an extended period. The extra patrols will also be stopped; the troops needed to make them having been sent to the prison to increase security there.

FREEDOM AT LAST

The second assault on the prison should have less confusion than the first. The actual details of this assault will depend on what the characters work out with Marissa's group. However, Marissa's warriors are probably better suited to creating diversions, keeping the off-duty section away from the prison and engaging the regular guards. The characters can then concentrate on neutralizing the high-tech equipment.

If the characters do any planning at all, they will probably



The Duke's Forces

Controlling a population of 90 million scattered across a world requires a substantial number of troops. Fortunately for the PCs, most of these are of a low quality, unarmored, armed with low-tech weapons, and scattered across the world in garrisoned forts.

There are about 60 battalions of militia infantry scattered across the planet garrisoning towns and villages. These are actually local police forces rather than military forces, and they are usually armed only with melee weapons or black-powder pistols, with a few shotguns.

There are 30 battalions of Line troops, stationed in forts guarding key locations, usually near cities. About half of the line troops are cavalry, and are available to reinforce local militias if necessary. Each fort will have a mixed unit of cavalry and infantry, the size of these units depending on the importance of the fort and the area it controls. Line troops are equipped entirely with firearms, mostly muskets.

There are about five battalions (perhaps 2500 soldiers total) of elite troops equipped with assault rifles or other "modern" firearms. These guard key facilities (such as the prison) are scattered in very small detachments among the forts to stiffen the line troops and insure their loyalty.

There is only one company of House Troops, and one company of House Cavalry. These are the Duke's personal troops, and are usually located where the Duke is, unless they are dispatched on a mission which requires their special abilities and weapons.

There are only 24 Scarlet Knights. These are very seldom all together at one time. Most work individually, acting as a personal representative of the Duke: demonstrating his technical prowess, and enforcing his edicts. Six of the Scarlet Knights are stationed with the Duke and act as his personal bodyguard, two of which are with him at all times. The Duke's guards are posted to him for one year. All of the Scarlet Knights rotate through this position.

Infantry

These are the common foot soldiers of Isis.

Level: Novice (Leader: Novice)

Combat Assets: Early Firearms (Slug Weapon in Elite units) and Armed Martial Arts

Other Assets: None

Equipment: Jack armor, musket, blade, and sabre. In Elite units, the musket is usually replaced by an assault rifle.

Cavalry

Level: Novice (Leader: Novice)

Combat Assets: Early Firearms (Slug Weapon in Elite units) and Armed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Riding 10

Equipment: Musket (corresponding to combat asset), lance (spear), and sabre. Each trooper also has a riding beast and tack. In Elite units, the musket is usually replaced by an assault rifle or automatic pistol.

House Troops

Level: Novice (Leader: Experienced)

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon and Armed Martial Arts Specialists add one from Autogun, Communications, or Medical Other Assets: None

Equipment: Jack armor and TL-1 helmet, assault rifle, blade, and sabre.

House Cavalry

Level: Novice (Leader: Experienced)

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon and Armed Martial Arts

Specialists add one from Autogun, Communications, Computer, Electronics, Energy Artillery, Mechanics, Medical, or Pilot (Interface/Grav)

Other Assets: None

Equipment: Ballistic weave vest and helmet, and assault rifle

Notes:

1. The House Cavalry has five operational G-carriers (TNE, page 363). Having no more ammunition for them, the plasma cradle guns have been removed. Typically, the scarcity of ammunition also means that only two linked belts (200 rounds) are provided for the 7.5mm machineguns.

2. The Duke's remaining grav tank is technically attached to the House Cavalry; however, it is not used without the Duke's personal authorization. When it does get used, the Duke himself usually commands it. The vehicle is a TL-13 grav tank (as listed in TNE, page 364). It has only 10 rounds remaining for its fusion cradle gun, but always carries a full load of machinegun ammunition.

Scarlet Knights

Level: Experienced (Leader: Veteran)

Combat Assets: Armed Martial Arts, Energy Weapon, Slug Weapon, Unarmed Martial Arts, Environment Suit, Medical

Other Assets: Survival 10, Riding 10 (Leader: Ground Tactics 10)

Equipment: TL-12 combat armor (Third Imperium Marine Issue—Maroon Color), TL-12 plasma rifle with two magazines, slug weapon, cutlass, TL-12 3000-kilometer communicator

Notes:

- 1. The slug weapon is the NPC's personal sidearm (to use when valuable plasma rounds are not required) and may be the NPC's choice of any slug weapon up through TL 7. Shotguns, submachineguns, and assault rifles are frequently preferred by the Scarlet Knights.
- Although the combat armor does have the chameleon option, there is only a 50% chance that the Knight has any chill cans at the moment.



The Crew of DLS Helios

Anna "Aye Kay" Kaul Captain/Astrogator Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Pistol

Other Assets: Astrogation 15, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 13,

Leadership 13 Motivation:



Anna "Aye Kay" Kaul

Heart Ace: Anna believes in justice, and consequently hates injustice. She uses her position to fight injustice whenever she is allowed to

Spade 8: Anna's desire to control people has led her into a position of Captain of a ship working in the Wilds.

Tarin "No One" Nadir

First Officer

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Energy

Other Assets: Pilot (Interface/Grav) 13, Astrogation 11

Motivation:

Diamond 5: Took the job working in the Wilds because of the possibility of great rewards.

Diamond 4: Enjoys bargaining for just about anything. Considered a good person to work contact with worlds that have been isolated by the Collapse.



Qarsan "Ballast" Balashu

Tarin "No One" Nadir

Qarsan "Ballast" Balashu Electronics Officer

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Rifle Other Assets: Sensors 13,

Gunnery (Energy Weapon) 11 Motivation:

Club Queen: Qarsan has a

stubbom streak. It displays itself when he tenaciously locates and tracks a target. When Qarsan has decided that something is the right way to do something, it is very hard to convince him otherwise.

Heart 9: Qarsan enjoys working closely with the Captain and First Officer, and aspires to a higher position of authority.

Laura "Dead Eye" Berg

Port Gunner

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Energy Rifle

Other Assets: Gunnery (Energy Weapon) 13, Ships Engineering 11

Motivation:

Heart King: Laura has a strong sense of honor and has a personal warriors code.

Clubs 7: Laura is rather aggressive, and often wants to "shoot first and ask questions later." This urge is moderated by her sense of honor, and deference to the wisdom and judgment of others.



Laura "Dead Eye" Berg

Helen "Heckle" Eklund

Starboard Gunner

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Energy Pistol Other Assets: Gunnery

(Energy Weapon) 13, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 11

Motivation:

Heart Jack: Helen is quite wise, and is the crew's philosopher. Her tac code is a derivation of her name and the fact that she often argued philosophywith instructors at the Hiver technical academy.

Club 2: Helen has seen a considerable amount of violence in her time, and has seen stark testimony of the violence of the Rebellion and the Collapse. It does not intimidate her, but she prefers to deal violence at long distance.



Helen "Heckle" Eklund

Theore "Toga" Romans

Steward/Doctor

Trained NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Pistol

Other Assets: Service 13,



Theore "Toga" Romans

Sensors 11, Medical (Diagnose) 13, Act/Bluff 11 Motivation:

Spade 3: Theore is the Helios' storyteller, and has been practically everywhere and done practically everything, at least as he tells it.

Club 3: Theore is not a stranger to violence, but prefers to talk his way through life.





Wayne "Moon Man" Mullins

Engineer
Trained NPC
Combat Assets: Slug Rifle
Other Assets: Ship's Engineering 13, Medical
(Trauma Aid) 11
Motivation:

Diamond Jack: Wayne is a coward at heart, and has no

tolerance for pain. Somehow the psych tests missed this aspect of his personality. When given a choice between hardship in prison and a comfortable life working for the Duke, he had no hesitation in making his choice.

Heart 7: Wayne has a strong sense of loyalty, not to his crew, but rather to the Helios. His new position places him nearer the Helios, but he cannot operate it by himself. If given the opportunity, he will alert the Duke's forces of anyone trying to take the Helios.

succeed. If the characters choose not to get assistance from Marissa's group, they will probably be overwhelmed by the numbers of troops and guards at the prison. If they are not killed in the attempt, they will also be incarcerated at the prison.

If the PCs treated Marissa's group at least fairly, then she may have her warriors assist in the assault. Of course, any such assistance will not be coordinated with the characters' efforts. This may still allow the characters to succeed, but there will probably be more casualties in both the PCs' and Marissa's groups.

If the PCs made no attempt to contact Marissa's group, or dealt unfairly with them, they will not help the characters at all. However, the referee still has an option for providing the PCs with some unsolicited assistance. The referee could have Nathan's group provide support in the assault. Of course, with fewer warriors, the chance of failure is greater. Again, lack of coordination will bring greater casualties.

When they free *Helios'* crew, they will discover that *Helios'* engineer is not among them. Once they are safely away from the prison, Captain Kaul will tell the characters that the engineer is working for the TED, but she does not know where he is. Captain Kaul will insist on at least looking to see if *Helios* can be recovered.

RECOVERING THE SHIP

While they may be stubborn, arrogant, greedy, and have a host of other faults, TEDs are not inherently stupid. The Duke will reason that once *Helios'* crew is out of prison, they will attempt to recover the ship. Accordingly, he will station the other three G-carriers and their troops at the airport. If either of the G-carriers survived the second prison assault, they will also be stationed at the airport with any surviving troops.

Although the grav tank will remain at the capital with the Duke, it will be powered up and ready to go at a moment's notice.

One G-carrier will be positioned in front of the enclosure holding *Helios*, and another will be positioned behind it. The guards that were previously posted at the airport will still stand at the posts where they were previously. The troops that come with the G-carriers will make regular patrols around the perimeter of the site.

Although they have Captain Kaul's crew with them, the characters will probably want some additional help with this action. If asked, Nathan will offer help. If they have had Marissa's help already, she will offer continued support. If they seek her help at this time, Marissa will then make her request (page 25).

Once the assault has begun, two things will happen. First, the engineer will subdue his guard, take the guard's weapon, and attempt to reach *Helios*. Second, the Duke will be alerted by radio from the airport that they are being attacked. Each G-carrier has a radio, as does the site's headquarters. The Duke will immediately dispatch the grav tank to the site for additional defense. The grav tank will arrive at the airport 10 minutes (120 combat turns) after being alerted. Since the combat is not likely to last that long, the grav tank will arrive as the characters are cleaning up pockets of resistance and/or getting *Helios* started.

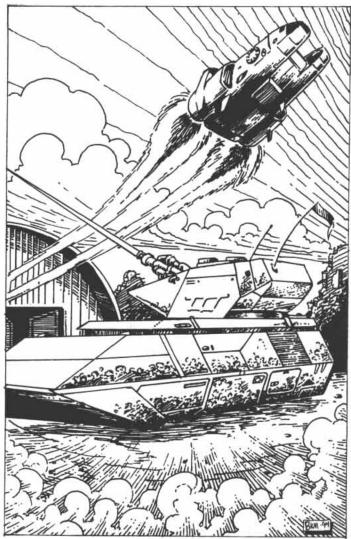
It will take about 20 minutes to get *Helios* started. Then someone with engineering skill could possibly crash-start the power plant; in fact, they will have to in order to get *Helios* up in 20 minutes. However, *Helios'* engineer has disabled the power plant to prevent someone from taking it. Whoever is attempting to start the power plant will fail the first attempt.

If the PC (or NPC if "Dead Eye" is doing the work) thinks to check for obvious problems, several disconnected cables will be immediately obvious. Further investigation will reveal other easily repaired problems. All of this and the second attempt at a crash-start will consume the 20 minutes. If "Moon Man" made it to Helios, he will not be trusted to start the power plant or cooperate by telling how he has disabled it. If left unguarded, he will do whatever he can to prevent Helios from leaving.

However, by that time, the grav tank will arrive. It has orders not to shoot the starship unless it attempts to lift. The commander, however, will try to bluff the characters into leaving the ship and/or engage any characters remaining outside the ship. The characters should realize that the tank's fusion gun can do major damage against the ship. The ship's lasers can do major damage to the grav tank, even through its front armor. However, they first have to have power, and then they have to hit the tank.

Eventually, the tank will have to be dealt with. If *Helios* tries to lift, the tank will attack it. The tank will pursue the ship until it outdistances the tank or the ship leaves the atmosphere. If the characters heeded Graything's admonishment, they should have weapons to attack the tank, unless they squandered them on the G-carriers.





Once the power plant is on-line and the tank has been dealt with, *Helios* can leave. The *Helios'* crew will then transport the characters to their ship. Captain Kaul and her crew will offer to assist the characters in fulfilling their obligation to Marissa.

CHANGING THE GOVERNMENT

The characters may have already accomplished this. The Duke, in his rage, will personally command the grav tank in its defense of the airport. If the *Helios'* crew are monitoring radio transmissions from the tank, they will recognize the Duke's voice. The tank is also flying the Duke's banner. If they destroyed the tank, the Duke may have been killed. If they disabled the tank, the Duke may have survived and can be captured.

If the referee wishes to extend the characters' adventures on Isis, he could leave the Duke back at the capital when the grav tank goes to the defense of the airport. Then the referee will have to work out the details of the characters' attempt to unseat the Duke and his defense.

In either case, once the Duke is defeated, another person must take over the rule of the world. Marissa is probably a good

person for this role. Setting up a new government takes some work, some of which may require character participation, if they are willing.

EPILOGUE: FOLLOW-UP

If the characters receive Marissa's support and provide the support she requested in return, they will have gone a long way toward bringing Isis back into the interstellar community.

If the characters make the agreement, receive Marissa's help, and then renege on their end of the bargain, the Coalition will eventually have to expend a lot of extra effort, and probably a few lives to bring Isis into the fold. Even if the characters are not directly implicated in this cost, news of it should reach them, and it should weigh on their conscience.

If the Duke's rule was toppled, there are a lot of things which can be done on Isis, many of which are material for adventure:

There are sure to be a few generals who feel they can wrest power back from the Coalition-supported government. Some troops may choose not to support the new government and resort to banditry.

There are the many problems associated with setting up a new government and getting it into smooth running order.

There is the airport site, which with a little work, can be transformed into a class "E" or even a class "D" starport.

The ruins are full of relics, most of which are inoperable. However, with knowledge and tools, many of them can be repaired, some for use on this world, some to be sent back to the Coalition.

Knowledge and relics can be used to improve the agricultural methods of the farmers, increasing crop output and reducing labor required for farming. This will make it easier for the farmers to feed the populace, and there should be enough surplus for off-world trade. Also, the excess workers can be trained in other skills that will improve the life-style of the Isans.

Most importantly, however, there is a vampire fleet coming back, and the Isans have less than a year to prepare for its return. When it comes, it will have to be defeated, perhaps by the Coalition Navy, perhaps by a Trojan Horse commando team disguised as new "slaves," perhaps by a combination of both means. If it is not defeated, it will be able to exact a terrible toll on the inhabitants of Isis.

Many of these ideas can provide a starting point for further adventures for the PCs should they choose to return to Isis and help with its recovery.

If they succeeded in at least their primary mission, the characters should be suitably rewarded for a job well done, and given appropriate campaign ribbons and/or medals. Characters which were wounded should receive a Purple Heart. If they also recover Helios, Sinner will be very pleased and will give the characters a week of R & R on Promise and the reasonable cooperation of Aube's Supply Officer. If they have changed the government of Isis, they will have made many lasting friends on that world.



REFEREE'S NOTES ON ISIS

Isis in 1200: X34576D-3 Ag.

This world was known as Asena before the Collapse (3022/ Diaspora C354855-C). It was not a very remarkable world, lying off of the xboat route that passed through Orsk on its way to the core. It never had a starport above class C, and its population of 100 million was a long way away from making Asena a high-population world. In fact, Asena did not qualify for any trade modifiers.

As the Rebellion changed the fate of so many worlds, it changed Asena's as well. With its breathable atmosphere and its reasonable amount of water, the world became more desirable as Hard Times set in. Ex-Duke Starkar Beres returned to this, his homeworld, to begin a bid for control of the subsector. He brought with him forces from the Union of Promise and Skerrit Adan's Regulars. With this and the support of Solomani sympathizers, he began to win control of this world.

His efforts were not without opposition, however. The pro-Imperial citizens of the world managed to hire several mercenary groups to help them in their fight against Beres. These forces might have succeeded if it had not been for the Collapse.

The Collapse cut all off-world logistic support for the pro-Imperial mercenaries. Eventually, all these mercenary groups were destroyed or scattered, and Beres gained control of the world. He promptly renamed it Isis in honor of the Solomani sympathizers who had supported him for so long. By 1140, the war for control of Asena, and the effects of the Collapse, reduced its population to 50 million, half of its prewar population. However, the conditions of the world would support this population, so once Beres gained control, the population stabilized, and actually began to grow again.

In 1150, control of Isis passed to Nolan Beres, Starkar's oldest son.

In 1173, the world was visited for the first time by a vampire fleet. The controlling intelligence of the fleet contacted Beres and, after a convincing demonstration of power, demanded that he turn over people to serve as maintenance parties on the ships of the fleet. In return, the fleet delivered a number of high-tech weapons (5mm assault rifles) and ammunition to solidify his rule.

This contact began a new era in Isan history. Before contact by the vampire fleet, central control was becoming gradually less restrictive as Beres' means of enforcing his edicts dwindled for lack of spare parts and ammunition. To retain power, compromises with farmers and local city and town representatives were becoming the rule rather than the exception.

After the fleet contact, however, Beres' power was reasserted with a vengeance, and was now coupled with periodic slave roundups for delivery to the fleet.

In 1195, power passed to Joseph Beres, Nolan's oldest son. The fleet has returned at regular intervals since its original visit. There will be an eight-month interval between visits followed by a two-year interval, as Isis is not in the center of its normal back-and-forth flight pattern. The next visit is expected







in seven standard months, and Beres plans to turn over the crew of *Helios* to it when it comes, anticipating a special reward for such highly trained slaves.

Current Situation

Duke Joseph has big problems. The citizens of the western province are in open rebellion against his rule. He will not commit his high-tech forces to deal with the problem, because he feels they are all that is keeping the citizens in the capital region from rising up against him. Indeed, there are survivors living in the ruins who oppose his rule. The Duke's forces have been unable to eliminate them, partly from inexperience, partly from fear of the ruins.

He had hoped to use the weapons of *Helios* against the rebels in the west, but *Helios'* gunners will not co-operate with him. To make matters worse, *Helios'* Captain has a code lock on the computer, so the Duke cannot even fly the ship. However, the Duke did succeed in suboming *Helios'* engineer into getting the SDB's power plant working again. The Duke feels this gives him a measure of defense against off-world intrusion. He keeps the rest of *Helios'* crew in captivity, intending to deliver them to the vampire fleet when it next visits in return for more powerful weaponry to deal with the rebels.

Duke Joseph Beres is the grandson of Starkar Beres, who gained control of this world just before the Collapse. Starkar maintained a claim of Dukedom, which he passed on to his son, who passed it on to Joseph.

Joseph was schooled in the exclusive Academy of the Technical Priesthood (TNE, page 94). He knows how to operate the



Duke Joseph Beres

high-tech devices with which he retains control over Isis.

Initiative: 3 UPP: 453756-0-F

Skills and Assets: Armed Martial Arts (Large Blade) 5, Slug Rifle 8, Unarmed Martial Arts 6, Energy Artillery 6, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 6, Guard/Hunting Beast 5, Riding 5, Swimming 5, Observation 9, Willpower 8, Communications 6, Computer 7, Electronics 6, Act/Bluff 9, Galanglic 16, Instruction 7, Leadership 11, Persuasion 7

Motivation:

Diamond Queen: Joseph has a lust for the power that was given to him, and will do almost anything to keep it.

Diamond 9: Joseph enjoys the perquisites that his power brings to him.

Government Characteristics

Corruption: Moderate

Talent: High

Cruelty: Moderate
Aggression: Moderate

Paranola/Xenophobia: High

Armed Forces

Total Personnel: 225,000

Wet Navy: 11,000 manning 22 combatant vessels,

all TL-3

Space Force: 500 manning one SDB and

maintenance facilities Ground Forces: 213,500

6 division equivalents of militia (Novice, TL-3)

3 division equivalents of line troops (Novice, TL-3/7)

1 division equivalent of elite troops (Novice/

Experienced, TL-7+)



— Coalition Marine Sergeant Borga, just before Operation Cosmic Fire Recorded by Correspondent Gabrielle Diabla



REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

This is supposed to be a routine smash-and-grab raid, but then aren't they all? Intelligence has learned of an functioning pre-Collapse database. The Coalition believes that if this database could be recovered intact, it could significantly help the Coalition's cause in this subsector, possibly in the entire region. Of course where there is a computer, there could be Virus, and the Coalition is not ruling out that possibility.

However, the recon mission could not obtain any substantial amount of information about the site. Therefore, *Aube's* Captain has elected to use a heavier force than might otherwise be necessary in a similar situation. As it turns out, it may not be enough.

The forces defending the database are not the typical, conscripted, low-morale troops that fill a TED's barracks. Instead, they are well armed, well armored, and well trained, and should give the Coalition a serious fight. There is also another factor that makes them quite disconcerting—they are not human. Furthermore, they are not the pastoral Chirpers the Coalition was led to expect.

The first part of the assault is conducted by jump troops dropping to the surface and securing a landing zone for the ship's modular cutter. The cutter carries additional troops and an important passenger, a Hiver computer expert who will examine the database for signs of Virus.

The computer is the ship's computer on a downed Droyne cruiser, the *Umptys*. The computer is infected, and has named itself Umptysdayu, but has been providing some beneficial services to its charges, and through a "priest," the rest of the world. This may cause some interesting ethical questions in the minds of some of the player characters.

INTRODUCTION

It is possible to work this adventure into a campaign that is currently under way.

If the campaign is an ongoing RCES campaign, getting the regular characters involved can be as simple a matter as ordering them along on the mission. Beyond this type of campaign, however, the difficulties increase. Basically, the characters will fall into one of two groups: those who have a ship to use, and those who do not. While it might seem that characters without ships should be more common than those with, one must remember that the characters discussed here are player characters. Therefore, they are above the ordinary, and probably have a ship.

If the characters do not have a ship, they could have been recruited by the RCES to perform some function on the mission. In this case, the referee should review the characters' skills and decide which skills they are to be recruited for.

An interesting possibility for the referee to use is to make the characters part of the team embarked on *Fire Lord*. While the main thrust of the adventure does not deal with this, enough information can be derived from the text to provide an abundance of adventure opportunities. If the referee is feeling particularly fiendish, and the character party is composed of

only two to four characters, they could be left on Daaliisa as the forward observer team. This team would have to find its way across to the island and avoid detection for the two to three weeks that it would take for *Fire Lord* to get to Muni and *Aube* to return. Of course, the answer to why they don't make contact with *Aube* is entirely up to the referee.

Characters with a ship will be a little harder to work into this scenario. There is always the part about the Coalition owning a part of their ship, but referees may prefer to have the characters partake in this scenario willingly.

The main problem with characters with a ship is that most characters will not want to leave their ship and go jump out of another ship. Therefore, the referee will have to provide some use for the ship. In the brief, several uses for additional vessels are mentioned, and the characters with their ship can fill one of these roles, which provide adventure possibilities in their own right.

Of course, if the referee wants to get the characters involved in the main part of the adventure, a malfunction could occur on the modular cutter which cannot be quickly repaired. This would leave the characters' ship to carry the Hiver computer expert and the additional troops to the landing zone. In this case, the referee may want to adjust the action so that most of the defense and/or counterattacks occur after the ship arrives at the landing zone.

Any of these options will require the referee to get the characters to Daaliisa with *Aube* and with the intent of assisting in the assault. How this is done will depend largely on the overall context of the campaign, and is best left to the referee running that campaign.

To be involved with a significant part of the action of this scenario, the characters should be Coalition Marines, and preferably jump troops. However, *Aube* has been operating in the Wilds for several months and has suffered casualties along the way. Each platoon is understrength by as much as a dozen troopers, and so any character with combat experience will be included in the mission. Non-Marine characters may be spread out among Marine squads, but if they are used to working together will more likely be organized as a team or squad of their own. Characters with the necessary skills will be included in the first platoon and will be part of the assault drop.

Other roles also offer a number of opportunities for action. The characters could be part of the crew of the modular cutter. They could be part of the additional troop contingent that is on-board the cutter, or perhaps technicians tasked to accompany the Hiver. Some non-combat skills which might be useful dirtside include Communication, Electronics, Linguistics, Navigation, and Mechanic. Characters with high assets in any of these skills might be asked to participate in the raid. If any characters understand Chirper, their services may be required as an interpreter.

Players who generate characters to be part of the Marine detachment should remember that there are only five officers in the detachment, and only one of those will be in the drop.



Most Marine characters should be enlisted. Members of the jump platoon should have Environment Suit assets of 11 or higher. A high Initiative is also desirable, as the battle dress will lower Initiative.

The scenario opens on-board the RCES clipper Aube, which has been working in the Promise subsector of Diaspora. The clipper is in jump space en route to the world of Daaliisa. Breakout into normal space is expected within 24 hours, and the Captain has called a briefing for the coming mission.

The player characters are given a small folder with supplemental information immediately before the briefing commences. Pages 35-39 of this book are those handouts and should be photocopied by the referee and given to the players.

BRIEFING

The briefing is opened by Captain Cynta "Sinner" Lawter, Commanding Officer of RCS Aube.

"Several weeks ago, while *Aube* was at Nike Nimbus undergoing repairs, my staff and I had an opportunity to chat with Karii Dinlas, the Captain of the far trader *Distant Venture*. Captain Dinlas related an interesting tale of what happened to her while on Daaliisa.

"It seems that Distant Venture was down at the starport and with little prospect of getting off again due to a broken jump drive. While hoping that another far trader would arrive soon, they got a lead on a way to get the blueprints for the part they needed. They gave the broken part and an information fee to a techno-priest who took the information to the "Sky Temple." They received the blueprints they needed—from an Imperial Standard Database.

"Captain Dinlas later showed the blueprint to Steed and Babbage, who examined it. According to them, the print has all the proper identifying information on it, but is printed on paper of recent manufacture. Their analysis was that it was from a still functional Imperial Database, or a very, very clever hoax. Given that the probability of the latter is slight, we sent

Trajectory TACTICAL READOUT

Fire Lord to investigate further. I will now turn the briefing over to Steed.

Aube's intelligence expert, a Hiver named Steed, moves to the front. Steed's tentacles move swiftly over the surface of the voder which "speaks" in mechanical tones.

"The crew of *Fire Lord* completed their investigation and rendezvoused with *Aube* in the system of Muni. They found Daaliisa largely as Captain Dinlas had reported it. Information on this world is included in your data package.

"The Fire Lord's crew sought information and were allowed to travel to the island of Etsokry, which is the location of the Sky Temple, but did not get any closer than the airport there. The inhabitants of Etsokry are primarily Chirpers, but the crew did get to talk to Prarm, who is apparently the human high priest of the Sky Temple. He received the crew's request, and returned with the information the next day.

"Although the crew was treated cordially by the Chirpers, they were not allowed to leave the premises of the airport, and were even lodged there.

"While on the world, the crew made another discovery: Daaliisa lies along what the Free Trader Network calls the Vampire Highway, although it is slightly off the main trace. It is regularly visited by vampire fleets, but they have seldom attacked the human inhabitants and have never attacked the Chirpers. Instead, they orbit the planet for a day or more and then move on. On one occasion, it is rumored that they wiped out a human settlement that had attacked Chirpers. Whether this is true or simply a local legend, the humans on the planet do not molest the Chirpers.

"Daaliisa is a relatively stable world whose various governments are currently at peace with each other. The tech level is 7, which seems to be its pre-Collapse tech level. Although the world is still largely agricultural, significant portions of the population are in manufacturing jobs. Air travel is common on Daaliisa.

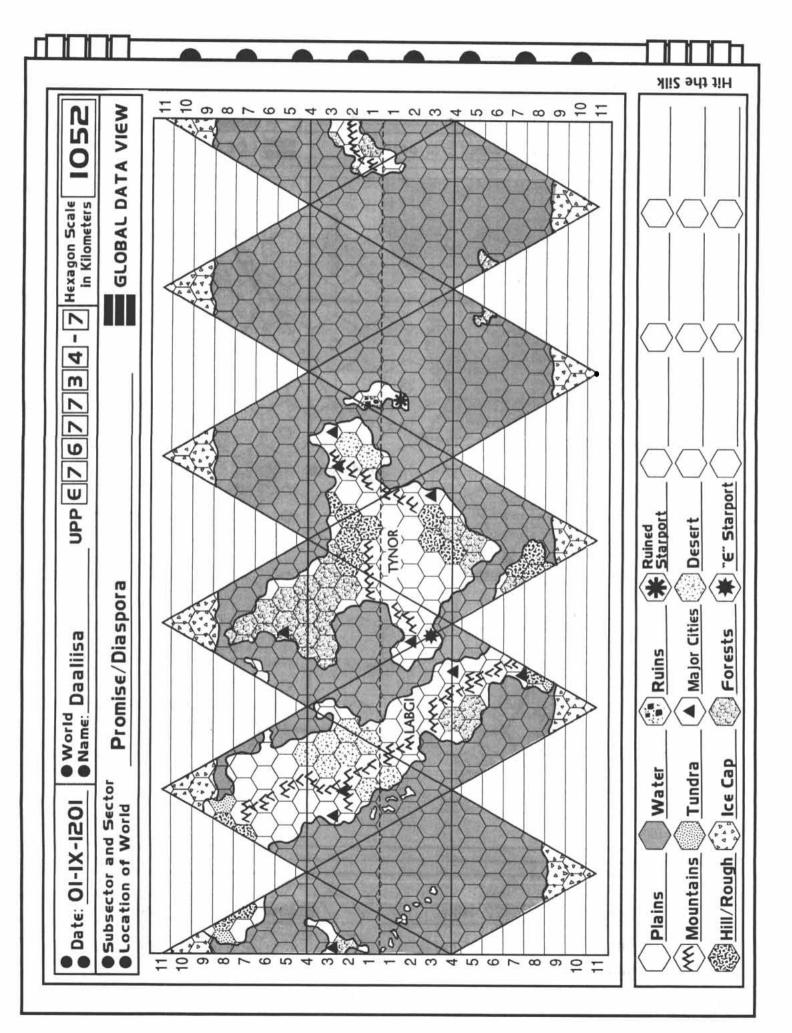
"The world is spacefaring, and numerous satellites are in orbit around the world. A former class-D spaceport has been given sufficient facilities to rate as a class-E starport.

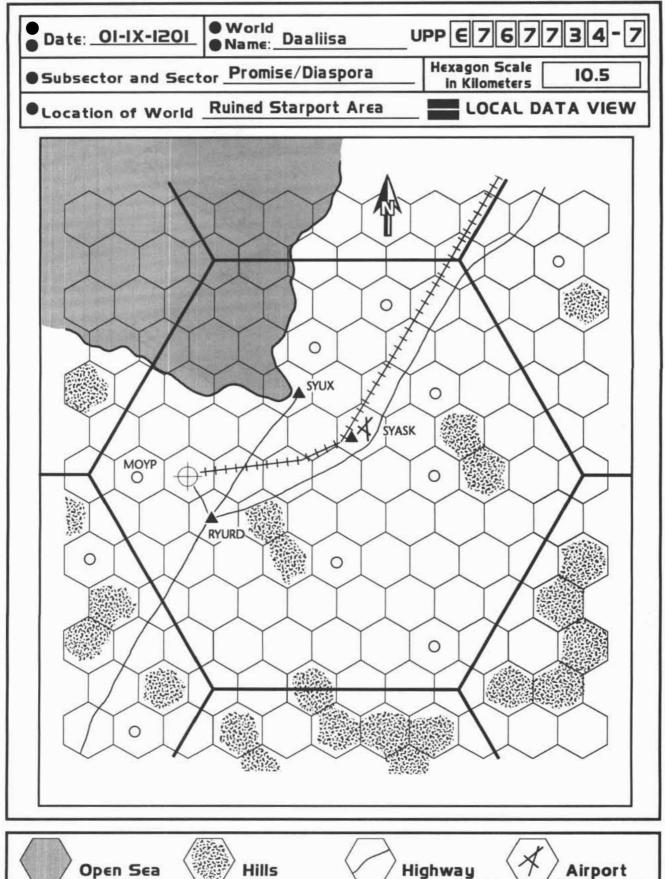
"Not having suffered some of the worse effects of the Collapse, the human inhabitants of Daaliisa are friendly and interested in achieving higher tech levels.

"However, it is our belief that the computer system which contains this Imperial database is also a Virus command control system in regular communication with the vampire fleets that periodically sweep through the Promise subsector. As such, the memory systems of the computer may contain data which will enable us to understand why these fleets exhibit such a regular migratory pattern and offer some means to defeat them.

"After leaving the world, Fire Lord did some orbital photography in preparation for an assault.

"I call your attention to the first screen. This is a view of the entire world. At the center of this view is the continent of Tynor. This continent is home of the nations of Vekinon and Sassatab, which has the world's only functional starport. The long continent to the west of Tynor is the continent of Ladgi. The island to the east of Tynor is Etsokry.





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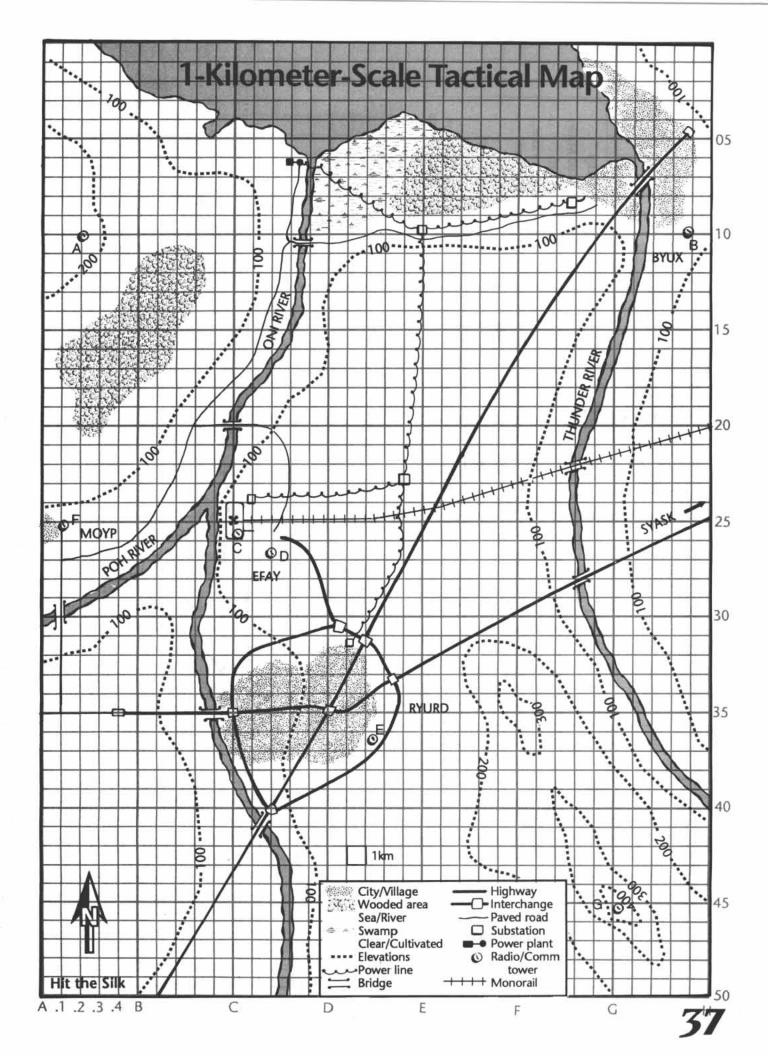
Villages

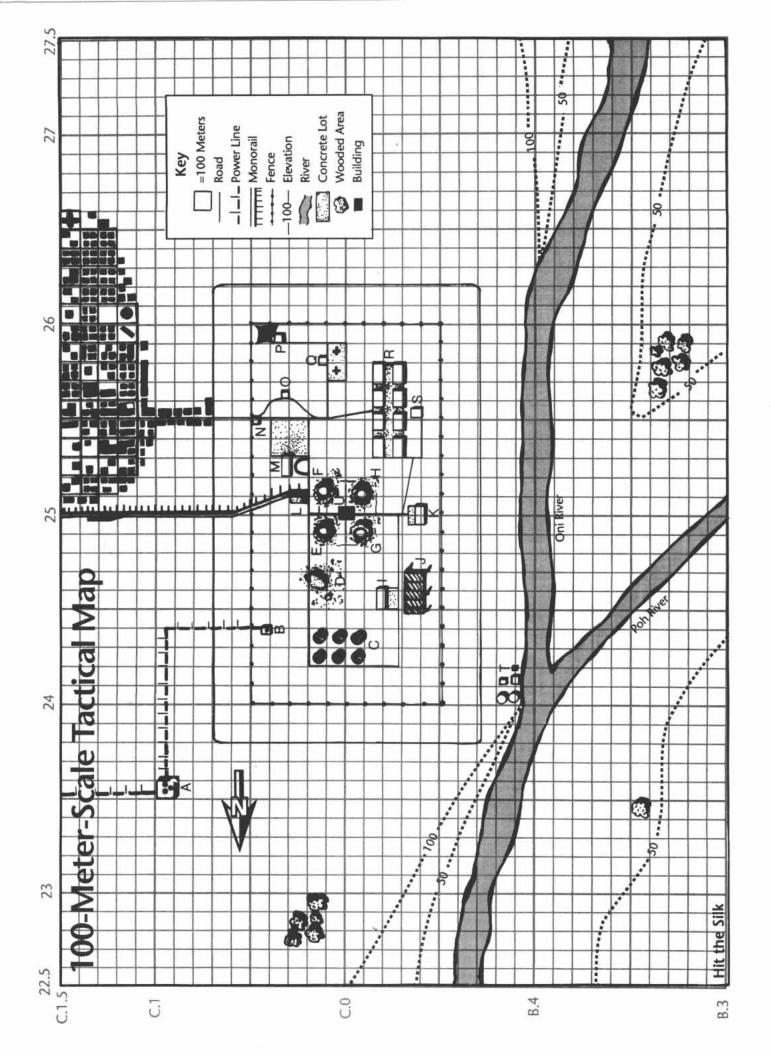
Monorail

City

Hit the Silk

Starport (Ruins)





Operation Name—COSMIC FIRE

ORDERS

First (Jump) Platoon

Insertion to target area will be by individual atmospheric re-entry. Designated touchdown is at grid coordinates D.2, 15.0. Assemble on the Platoon Leader and proceed toward the starport area. Establish a Dust Zone in or near the starport and hold until the cutter arrives. Support the landing party as required.

Platoons 2 and 3

The Second and Third Platoon with the Hiver computer technician Babbage will form the Landing Party. Insertion to target area will be by the modular cutter which will touch down at the Dust Zone designated by First Platoon. If the tactical situation dictates, the cutter will dust off upon delivery of the Landing Party. The Landing Party will then proceed to the objective and secure the database, or, upon detecting Virus, destroy the computer.

Rules of Engagement

You are free to engage anyone or anything which presents itself as a threat to you or your mission, or which fires upon you. Damage to civilian structures should be kept to a minimum.

Prisoners

You are not to take prisoners. Anyone captured will be disarmed, bound, and left in place. Any confiscated weapons will be taken or destroyed.

Identification

Under no circumstance will you identify yourselves as members of the Reformation Coalition. No Coalition identification will be worn on your uniforms or armor.

Communication

Due to communications jamming, you will not be able to contact *Aube* with your suit communicators. Each unit will be provided with maser communicators for that purpose. Tactical communications between suits will not be affected as long as the units are within 10 kilometers of each other. While *Aube* is establishing a geosynchronous orbit, the ship's boat will serve as a communications relay station. *Aube* should take approximately two hours to achieve that orbit.

Brevity Identification Codes

Aube—Sinner
Cutter—Blue Fire
Hiver—Babbage
Company HQ—Blue Six
1st Platoon—Blue One
2nd Platoon—Blue Two
3rd Platoon—Blue Three

Brevity Event Reporting Codes

Upon touchdown—Touchdown
Upon establishing a DZ—Green Light
Upon reaching computer—Pay Dirt
If discover Virus—Torn Sheet
When ready to leave—Cold Feet
When teams have left—Door Closed

Recovery

Recovery will be by way of pick-up by the modular cutter. A Search and Rescue vessel will attempt recovery of anyone who gets separated from the team. If anyone cannot make pick-up or is not found by the SAR vessel, they will have to attempt to make their way to the starport on Tynor. For Lack, a far trader which works with the Coalition, will call at the starport 6 months from now. If you cannot, for some reason, make it to the starport in time, send a message by general delivery to Dr. Renj C'tah. If you can make it to the starport, meet the crew in Sigmund's Cafe, a small establishment near the port.

Assault Timetable

J+0000—Jump squad departs Aube

J+0100-Jump squad touches down on Daaliisa

J+0115—Jump squad assembled and ready to move, code passed.

J+0330—Jump squad establishes DZ, code passed.

J+0430-Cutter lands, team proceeds to computer.

J+0530—Computer reached and accessed, code passed.

J+0600—Database secured or computer destroyed.

J+0615—Teams assemble at cutter

J+0630-Cutter departs Daaliisa.



"On the next screen, you can see the southern portion of Etsokry, which is the area around the Sky Temple. Information gathered by the crew of *Fire Lord*, and orbital photography, lead us to believe that the Sky Temple is located in the world's former starport. As you can see on this map, the former starport is only about 40 kilometers from the airport.

"The next two screens show two closer views of this area, one at a one-kilometer scale, and one at a 100-meter scale. These views, with the assigned grid coordinates, are included in the map chips in your data packs. On the one-kilometer map, you can see the former starport centered at grid coordinates C.0, 25.0.

"We have marked some structures on the 100-meter map. Our analysis of them is a follows:

A, B-Power substations.

C—Storage tanks; only one appears to be entirely intact.

D—A mound of dirt. This may have been a landing pad at one time.

E–H—These also look to have been landing pads, but seem to serve some other purpose now. No starships were evident at this time, and sources indicate that this port has not been used since before the Collapse.

I-Unknown structure.

J—An array of some sort, whether it is a solar or sensor array is uncertain.

K-Unknown structure.

L-Probably the monorail station.

M—This structure looks to be the former terminal. From the descriptions of the Sky Temple, and our experience dealing with Collapsed cultures, this is probably it.

N-Gate shack.

O—Unknown structure.

P—Probably contains communications equipment. A radio tower is located just east of this building.

Q—The pads to the west of this building look like helo pads, so this is probably a helo ops building.

R—Unknown structures, but a high probability that these were warehouses.

S—Unknown structure, but the presence of a number of ground vehicles leads us to believe this is a motor pool.

T—Unknown structures, probably fuel extraction machinery.

U—Unknown structure, probably served as a some sort of service building for the starships.

"As far as defenses are concerned, we have been able to detect several ATVs in the photos. There are also a fair amount of troops in and around the target site. The troops are not likely to have anything much above TL-7, so they should not be much of a problem. The ATVs seem to have some sort of turret on top, probably a low-caliber autocannon. You will have to watch out for these, but they should not be anything you cannot handle.

"Perhaps the greatest opposition you will have are the two attack helicopters which are hangared at the airport. These will

naturally be a primary target for our preparatory bombardment, but we cannot be certain that they will be damaged in their hardened shelters, or that they will even be there at the time.

"There was a small flotilla of warships, including an aircraft carrier, operating 250 kilometers southwest of the island, but intelligence gathered indicates that these do not belong to the island. I will now turn the brief back over to Sinner. . ."

Sinner continues, "As we are maneuvering to make the drop, we will make a preparatory strike on the site. Fire Lord has left a team of forward observers on Daaliisa for this purpose. Furthermore, Aube will conduct broad-band EMS jamming. Now take a few minutes to review the mission profile and your orders.

"Are there any questions?"

One of the Marines asks if the array will be targeted in the initial bombardment.

"No. Neither will we target the power substations. Our objective is a database, and since we don't know what its power source is, or how volatile it is, we cannot risk destroying the very thing we are after. Furthermore, we don't wish to cause any more damage to the local technological or industrial base than is necessary.

"I realize the intelligence is sketchy at best, but we will just have to make the best of what we find there. After all, you are the Coalition's finest, and trained to do just that. Any other questions? No? Then good luck."

PHASE I-THE DROP

"The Waiting is The Hardest Part"

The jump platoon will have a few hours to make checks and cross-checks of their equipment. Finally, *Aube* breaks out of the hole, and the signal is given to suit up. Then things start to go wrong.

First, as the Ship's Doctor is giving the jump platoon a brief check, he down chits one of the (NPC) troopers in the first squad. Even though there is only evidence of a slight ear infection, a loss of equilibrium in free fall could be fatal.

Then, the platoon leader gets a call from Sinner on the tactical command circuit. The troopers on the common circuit cannot hear what is going on, but the word quickly passes. The forward observer team failed to contact *Aube*, and could not be raised. That means limited preparatory fire—never good news on an assault against a largely unknown force.

"Going Down..."

It is not much later when the prepare signal is given. The troopers open the hatches to the launch tubes and climb into the drop capsules nestled within. Each trooper, under the watchful eye of a "hook-up buddy," straps him or herself into the capsule harness, and connects the data, communications, and life support umbilicals. Then the buddy double-checks the fittings and pronounces them secure, and goes off to strap in, also with the assistance of another buddy. Finally only the senior trooper



is left to strap in, and is double-checked by the launch officer, who controls the firing sequence from aboard the ship.

During the final run-in, each trooper is alone in the privacy of his or her capsule. Although they are connected into the ship's intercom and can communicate, most remain silent, meditating or going over the mission plan one last time in their minds. Some old hands even fall asleep.

In the meantime, Sinner is astrogating the ship onto an extremely precise course. This will put the re-entry devices on the correct trajectory to reach the designated touchdown area.

Just before the drop, the troopers are given a weather report on conditions over the site. There is a light cloud cover over the target area. Atropical depression is to the east of the island, but should not have any effect on the operation.

Finally the launch claxon blares, indicating the the launch tube outer doors are being opened to vacuum. Shortly thereafter, each trooper feels a surge as the capsules are fired from the tubes, and start to freefall toward the world. Theoretically, the troopers are mere passengers in the drop until it becomes time for them to steer their parachutes. Each capsule is fired from a ship flying a precise drop vector, each launch tube is aimed and sequenced to fire its capsule at a precise atmospheric entry angle, and each capsule is fitted with a flight computer which pilots the capsule on a violently evasive course into the atmosphere to the precise point where the parachute-equipped trooper will be released, all the while spewing flares, chaff, and other decoys from the capsule's countermeasures dispensers. In reality, of course, the troopers must be prepared to intervene in this automated process if something goes wrong.

On a 1D20 roll of 20, there is an error in the course.

To correct the course is a Difficult: Environment Suit task. On a simple failure, the trooper will land 1D10 kilometers from the designated touchdown area.

On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper will land $1D10 \times 10$ kilometers from the designated touchdown area.

On either failure, roll on the Scatter Diagram (page 281 of TNE) for the direction of deviation.

At 35 kilometers from the ground, the capsule splits open, releasing the trooper strapped into the equipment frame/parachute harness, which deploys a drogue chute. On a 1 D20 roll of 20, the chute fails to automatically deploy. To recover from a drogue chute failure is a Difficult: Environment Suit task. Success indicates manual release of the chute. On a simple failure, the chute is released late and only partially slows the descent.

On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper continues to descend unchecked.

The next event is the main chute deployment. On a 1D20 roll of 20, the main chute fails to deploy. If the drogue was deployed late, the main chute is torn off on a 20, and does not correctly deploy on an 18 or 19. If the descent is unchecked, the main chute is lost on a 19 or 20, and fails to deploy on a

16, 17, or 18. To recover from main chute failure is a Difficult (Environment Suit or Parachute) task. Success indicates manual release of the chute. If the main chute has been torn off, then success indicates deployment of the back-up chute.

On a simple failure, the trooper had to resort to the back-up chute which will check the descent rate, but provides less directional control.

On a Catastrophic Failure, the main back-up chute deploys but is damaged. The trooper will land off-target and harder than intended.

To guide the chute to a landing is a Difficult: Parachute task. The difficulty increases to Formidable if the back-up chute had to be used, and Impossible if the back-up chute is damaged. Success indicates that the trooper landed safely. The platoon is expected to land within a one-kilometer radius of the designated touchdown area. However, there may have been deviations introduced by earlier events. On a simple failure, the trooper lands with a deviation of 1D10 × 500 meters. On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper lands with a deviation of 1D10 × 1 kilometers and has to make a touchdown roll-Average: Parachute. Success indicates a safe touchdown. On a simple failure, the trooper takes 1D6 wounds of 1D6 each. On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper takes 1D6 wounds of 1D10 each. For each wound inflicted, roll randomly to determine location affected. If there was a previous deviation, the present deviation will be from that point, which may actually put the trooper closer to the designated touchdown area.

Fortunately, with good electronics and a good insertion into the atmosphere, this process is a lot less dangerous than it appears. But for the jump trooper, there are other dangers...

More Complications

Umptysdayu observed *Aube's* approach to Daaliisa, and the release of multiple objects. Because *Umptys* was a warship, Umptysdayu correctly deduced that the objects were jump troops and upon calculating their trajectory, realized they would be landing on its island. Therefore, they were potentially a threat to it or the Droyne. Accordingly, it alerted the Droyne to prepare their defenses. As the jump troops made their meteoric descent, Umptysdayu launched the air-defense missiles.

There are six long-range surface-to-air missile sites scattered around the ruined starport. Each site is concealed under a radar- and IR-absorbing hood which makes the site look like a trash pile to anything passing over it, including *Fire Lord*. Each site has a 24-cell vertical launch system. Umptysdayu directed a pre-emptive strike and launched all 144 missiles at the incoming troopers. The hot surface of the re-entry capsules made excellent targets for the heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles. If it were not for the decoys, the casualties would have been far greater.

The referee can handle this in a variety of ways according to the desired results. The easiest way is to randomly select from one to five NPCs to have not made it to the touchdown area.



Droyne Warrior (Common Troops)

The Droyne warrior is one of the more specialized of the six castes of Droyne. Its primary function is to defend the community. Droyne warriors are consequently larger and heavier than the average Droyne, reaching heights of up to two meters and massing as much as 60 kilograms. Specialties within the warrior caste range from the common soldier to civilian police.

Level: Experienced

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon. Specialists have Autogun or Grenade Launcher.

Other Assets: One at level 11 and one at level 9 of Climbing, Combat Engineer, Communications, Electronics, Forward Observer, Ground Tactics, Ground Vehicle, Language (Anglic), Map, Mechanical, Medical (Trauma Aid), Navigation, Observation, Pilot (Rotary Wing), Sensors, Tac Missile, or Tracking. The Psionic ability of these troops is negligible.

Equipment: Ballistic cloth vests with plate inserts, 5mm assault rifle-7. Grenadiers have a shoulder-fired 4cm grenade launcher-7.

When they do not respond, it becomes the job of the SAR team to recover them. If the player characters are not the leaders of the group, this is the best opportunity to put them in that position.

If the referee wants to be more arbitrary, roll 1D20 for each trooper, which, if desired, could include the characters. On an 18 or 19, the missile made a proximity hit, showering the trooper with shrapnel. While this would not penetrate the armor, it will probably damage or destroy important things like the drogue, main and/or back-up chutes, or weapons. All of which will probably put the trooper far from the touchdown area and possibly with some freshly broken bones. Shrapnel might also get wedged into critical areas of the suit and immobilize an arm or leg.

On a 20, the missile made a direct hit, which would probably kill the trooper either from direct damage (12D6 to one location) or by knocking the trooper unconscious from concussion (Formidable: Constitution to avoid). An unconscious trooper could not recover from any failures which would almost certainly have been induced by the explosion. Although it may be "realistic," we recommend that referees do not kill characters in this manner. If they do get hit, we recommend that any hits on characters be proximity hits. It is more challenging to overcome extreme difficulties than to sit and watch the rest of the group have fun. The missile sites are located at the following coordinates (on the 100-meter tactical map): B.3.3, 26.0; B.3.5, 24.0; B.4.4, 23.6; B.4.8, 27.1; C.1.1, 22.9; and C.1.4, 26.8.

Once the surviving troopers have assembled with whomever is left in charge, a further difficulty presents itself. All of the cargo pods are gone. Whether they were destroyed in the missile attack or deviated sufficiently far from the touchdown area to be beyond recovery is unknown.

At this point, whoever is left in charge should attempt to contact *Aube*. Using one of the Manpack Maser Communicators, this is a Difficult: Communications task. After Sinner listens to the report, she will direct the team to locate the missile sites for destruction from orbit, and to act as forward observers for fire on any other threat to the cutter.

By now, the team has had its orders modified, lost its supply pods, and lost several of its number without having seen the enemy. Then it starts to rain.

The referee can use the weather as a temporary event or something the team will have to contend with throughout the operation. If the weather becomes too rough to attempt a cutter landing for a number of hours, the troopers could be running low on power before it gets down. They might even be forced to abandon their suits and use their back-up equipment.

Humping to the DZ

The referee can make this part pass quickly or use it to present the characters with a variety of challenges.

The Droyne have been alerted by Umptysdayu and are prepared to defend the old starport site. They have a number of TL-7 tracked ATVs which have had a remote turret added. This turret contains a 30mm autocannon-7. Also, the commander has a high-velocity grenade launcher-7 on a pintle mount. The ATV has a crew of three (driver, gunner, and commander), and can carry four troops. The referee can adjust the number of vehicles for balance of play, but there should be no more than six total.

The attack helicopters will also be a problem for the team, but the referee may wish to save them for later in the scenario. Also, they are not all-weather capable, so a severe storm will have them grounded.

For statistics on the vehicles and weapons of the Droyne guards, see the equipment section in the back of this book.

Once the team has destroyed or routed the ATVs and/or the helicopters, its primary opponents will be assault rifle-armed Droyne warriors. Since the battle dress is impervious to small arms of that caliber, the characters may be inclined just to wade through these defenders or ignore them. Several factors can bring the characters back to reality. First, about one in 10 of the Droyne warriors will have a shoulder-fired grenade launcher. Rounds that were designed to slow down a tank will penetrate battle dress.

Furthermore, even non-penetrating hits can cause blunt trauma injury.

Of course, if the characters have had to abandon their suits, they are a lot more vulnerable to the "puny" assault rifles than they were in their suits.

Eventually, the team should be able to establish a Dust Zone and pass the word to *Aube*. The only question that remains is where are they going to establish it. If the opposition at the old starport is sufficiently stiff, the characters may decide to



establish one some distance from there and enlist the help of the rest of the company to get to the objective. They might, however, decide to use *Aube* instead to soften up the target some before attempting to move on the objective and/or establishing a Dust Zone.

PHASE II-THE EXPERT

Hot DZ

Once the proper code has been passed, the cutter will take about 60 minutes to reach the landing site. Even if *Aube* has destroyed the ground passive EMS array, Umptysdayu can still use its satellite connection and will notice the cutter's departure from *Aube*. It will reason that the cutter is bound for its area.

If there are any helicopters left, they may attempt to attack the cutter as it makes its approach to the DZ. Their antitank missiles are not designed for aerial combat, but they have a 5% chance of scoring a lucky hit. The antiair missiles can hit, but are designed to attack aircraft, not spacecraft. However, the referee may decide to let a missile damage one of the cutter's controls or CG lifters, forcing it to land somewhere other than the designated DZ. All of which adds more complications to an operation that has already gone far too wrong.

Umptysdayu might also direct its defenders to attack while the cutter is debarking its troops. In this event, the cutter's crew will want to dust off and withdraw to a safer place. In any event, getting Babbage safely from the cutter to the temple complex will be the next priority.

The Ruined Starport

Eventually, the group will have to enter the ruined starport. At a distance of 200 meters from the fence, there is a security road. This road is built up on a two-meter embankment which the security vehicles can go hull-down behind. There are also rifle pits dug along the outer edge. The space between road and the fence is clear of any shrub, tree, bush, or structure.

The "fence" is actually two fences separated by a space of 10 meters. Each fence is a three-meter-high cyclone fence topped with concertina wire.

Once inside the ruined starport, this is what can be found (refer to the 100-meter-scale tactical map):

A, B—As briefed.

C—Storage tanks; one holds fuel, another holds water. Tank walls are AV 4.

D—The *Umptys* is buried under this mound. At present, the only entrance is through the maintenance tunnels. Two meters of packed dirt covers the ship (AV 40).

E–H—Used to be landing pads, but a roof has been placed across the berm, and the insides are used as listed below. All have provisions to serve as a bunker. The berm walls are a quarter meter of reinforced concrete covered with two meters of packed dirt (AV 50).

E-Warrior quarters.

F-Mess hall.

Babbage

Hiver Computer Expert

Novice NPC

Combat Assets: Energy Rifle

Other Assets: Computer 20, Electronics 16, Language (Anglic) 16, Biology 12, Chemistry 12, Communications 12, Mechanic 12, and Robotics 12

Motivation:

Club 2: Babbage has been with Aube from the time her keel was laid and consequently has been on a number of missions. Although not entirely used to the idea of personal violence, Babbage recognizes its necessity at times, and will employ it only as a last measure.

Heart 8: Babbage has a strong parental instinct and is deeply committed to the goals of the Coalition in general and the well-being of the crew of Aube in particular.

Equipment: Hiver-form ballistic weave body suit, Hiver filter/respirator, TL-9 Hiver laser rifle, pocket computer, and five canaries.

G—Warrior quarters.

H-Worker and technician quarters.

I—Former security building; now serves as a duty building for the "alert" response teams. This is a cinder block structure.

J—An antenna array for a 300,000-kilometer passive EMS array. This still functions, and feeds into the computer.

K—The former emergency vehicle building, it still serves this function.

L—Monorail station. An elevated structure with a single large room. A ticketing area is on one end, bathrooms are at the other end. A cinder block building.

M—Terminal building. Interior described below. On top of this building is a maser antenna which serves the computer as an uplink to its satellite in orbit. A reinforced concrete building (AV 10).

N—Gate shack. A one-room, cinder block building.

O—Customs shack. A one-room, cinder block building.

P—Communications building. A cinder block building. A radio tower is located just east of this building.

Q—Helo pads and the helo ops building. A cinder block building containing a waiting room, briefing room, small office, and weather office. Pumps at the edge of the pads hold HCD fuel.

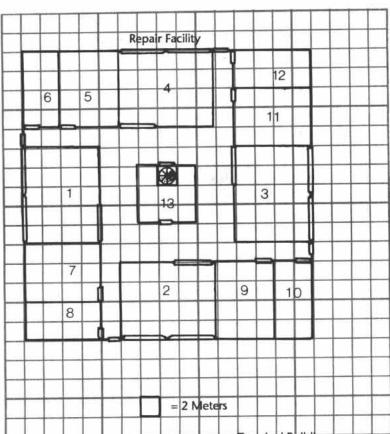
R—Warehouses. Some are used for storage, some hold junked vehicles, one holds starship parts, and one serves as a garage for the security vehicles. The warehouses are simple aluminum-walled buildings and have no appreciable armor value.

S—Motor pool. A cinder block structure housing vehicle maintenance bays, vehicle tools, and a small office.

T—Fuel-extraction machinery. Now it only serves to filter

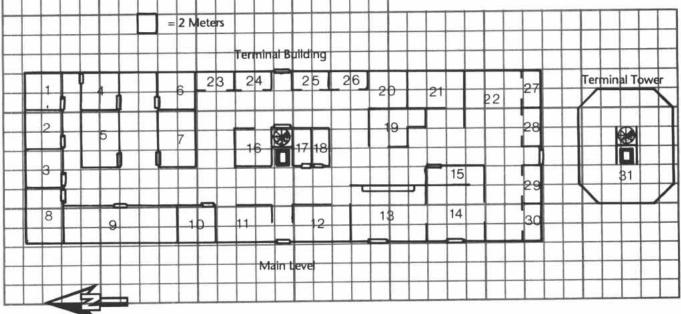


Buildings Map



	Repair Facility
1-4	Repair Bays
5-12	Workshops and
	Retail Shops
13	Maintenance Office
	Terminal
1-3	Admin Offices
4-7	Rental Offices
8	Dispensary
9	Computer Room
10	Security Office
11-12	Waiting Rooms
13	Baggage Handling
14-15	Customs
16	Retail Shop
17-18	Bathrooms
19-21	Retail Shop
22	Lobby
23-30	Kiosks

Space Traffic Control



Hit the Silk



water and pump it up to the storage tank. Cinder block structures.

U—Central building. Formerly contained repair bays, repair shops, and general merchandise shops. The Droyne still use the repair shops and bays, but the merchandise shops are now used as classrooms. The structure has provisions to serve as a bunker. The building map shows the interior of this building. The spiral staircase behind the maintenance office leads down to the maintenance tunnels. The walls are one-meter-thick reinforced concrete (AV 40). The doors to the repair bays are equally as resistant. The smaller doors are only AV 2, but have sandbag walls (AV 10) built in front of them.

The Marines will encounter the greatest resistance from buildings E, F, G, H, L, and U. The tower of the terminal building has a Droyne sniper who can identify Babbage as being important and will take a shot at the Hiver if given an opportunity. He is armed with a 9mm rifle-7 with a telescopic scope.

The referee should use some of the Droyne Temple Guards to defend this area; however, no more than half should be used. The others will be needed to defend the *Umptys*.

Once the characters are beginning to fight in or close to buildings, the Droyne with psionic powers will be close enough to their enemy to use their powers. This will be mostly in the form of nuisance attacks pulling pins on grenades or pulling triggers by telekinesis and that sort of thing. The damage caused by the weapons will probably not harm the troopers, but it may unnerve them. The Droyne will also be able to remotely trigger devices such as door and light switches or detonators.

To the Temple

There will be very few defenders on the west side of the Terminal Building, and very few within the building. This is to avoid stray rounds hitting the building, penetrating, and damaging the computer.

The following is a description of the current use of rooms within the terminal building. The key on the buildings map show what the rooms in the terminal used to be used for. The Droyne have adopted them for slightly different purposes.

- 1—Droyne leader's quarters
- 2—Human priest's quarters
- 3—Droyne leader's office
- 4—Military commander's office
- 5—Artifact room. A room which contains various relics from the *Umptys* and collected from around Daaliisa.
 - 6-Human priest's office
 - 7—Coyn ceremony room
 - 8—Conference room
- 9—Computer room. Contains the starport's computer, now an extension of Umptysdayu.
 - 10—Building security office
 - 11-Waiting room
 - 12-Waiting room

Droyne Warrior (Temple Guard)

These warriors have been given the duty of protecting Umptysdayu. They receive more extensive training than the common troops, and have inherited the weapons and armor of the *Umptys'* Marine Squad.

Level: Veteran

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon and Energy Weapon.

Other Assets: Environment Suit 13, one at level 13 and one at level 11 of Climbing, Combat Engineer, Communications, Electronics, Ground Tactics, Ground Vehicle, Language (Anglic), Map, Medical (Trauma Aid), Navigation, Observation, Sensors, or Tracking. One Psionic ability at level 11 of Telephysics, Teleperception, or Telepathy.

Equipment: TL-14 combat armor, TL-15 Droyne fusion

- 13—Outer Sanctuary. Has flat display screens on which Umptysdayu can address its subjects.
- 14—Inner Sanctuary. Has a holoprojector for a hologram projection of the image of Umptysdayu, who presents itself as a Droyne leader.
 - 15-Priest's dressing room
 - 16—Information and administration
 - 17—Bathroom
 - 18-Bathroom
- 19—Merchandise shop. Sells small mementos of a visit to the Sky Temple.
- 20—Bookstore. Hard copies of information provided by Umptysdayu.
- 21—Library. A collection of Droyne and Daaliisan information in bound books.
 - 22—Lobby
 - 23-30-Study rooms
 - 31—Observation tower

The spiral staircase next to room 16 goes both up to the observation tower and down to the maintenance tunnels. It is behind a locked door. The lift shaft only goes up to the observation tower.

If the characters reach the Outer and/or Inner Sanctuary before they reach the computer room, Umptysdayu will use the flat screens or "pseudoreality" holograms to warn the characters away (it uses a hologram of a Droyne leader as its holographic alter ego). It just wants to be left in peace with the Droyne. It will try to reason with the characters that it is providing a vital service to the Droyne/Chirper community in particular, and the world in general.

Once the characters have penetrated the computer room, Umptysdayu will shut down power to the remote part of itself. It reasons that if the characters believe that it is dead, they will leave. Umptysdayu realizes that the characters may want to be sure it is dead by destroying it. That is an acceptable, but potentially regrettable, risk.





Inside The Ship

At the end of the new tunnel, a shaft leads up to the keel of the Umptys. Looking up, the characters will be looking into the lower air lock of the Umptys, outer iris valve is open, and the conduit terminates at a panel inside. This air passes lock through the lower deck, which is used for fuel, and up to the main deck at

The characters may be fooled into thinking that the computer is dead, having finally suicided. The Hiver will be suspicious, and upon examination, will find interface cables that can ultimately be traced to the *Umptys*.

Eventually, the characters will find the entrance to the maintenance tunnels. An Average: Construction task will reveal that a newer electrical conduit has been run through these tunnels. This conduit runs from the terminal building to the *Umptys*.

From under the terminal building, the tunnel runs due west until it reaches line C.O. Then it tums north until it reaches a small room directly under building U. Radiating from this room are four arms which form an X. Each arm leads to the bottom of one of the former landing pads. At the end of each arm, a spiral staircase leads up to a utility pit in the center of the respective pad. This pit has been covered by decking, but has a trap door. This door is not readily evident from above.

An extension has been dug at the end of the arm leading to pad "E." This extension runs a little east of north and ends up directly under mound "D." The walls of this portion are dirt supported by wooden beams where the other tunnel walls were reinforced concrete. The only conduit in this tunnel is the newer one which leads to the *Umptys*.

The referee should have two to four of the temple guards defending these tunnels. Also, the tunnel leading from the terminal building has a booby trap set. A trip wire across the tunnel will set off enough explosives to collapse the tunnel. If the characters avoid the trip wire, the defenders may detonate it psionically to divide the team or to block the team from the *Umptys*. In the latter case, the characters will have to find one of the other entrances to the tunnels, if they have not already done so.

the central assembly area.

The *Umptys* is a 1000-ton *Etsokryu*-class cruiser built at TL-15. It is a streamlined disk with a hull armor of 84. It was capable of jump-3 and maneuver-3, but is not anymore. A 1900-megawatt fusion power plant provided for its power requirements. Its weapon complement included two 300-Mj laser barbettes, six 150-Mj laser turrets, and two missile barbettes. There are no missiles left on-board the *Umptys*. For sensors, it has a 300,000-kilometer active EMS, and 150,000-kilometer passive EMS. Other than the usual maser and radio communicators, this vessel has a 3000-kilometer meson communicator. This class had a crew complement of 36.

The key on the deck plans (see page 48) shows the primary purpose of each of the areas. The following are some notes about areas in general and the contents of some areas in particular.

All staterooms, lounges, assembly areas, cargo bays, and lockers have been stripped of any useful items. Any character making an Easy: Starship Architecture task will recognize that this ship is not a human vessel. All letters are in the Droyne alphabet, and unrecognizable to anyone who does not speak or understand that language.

From the place they enter, the characters should not know which direction is forward or aft. The referee should not allow the players to see the deck plans until after they have explored the ship.

Indications on the bridge and in maneuvering will show that the power plant is operational at a low level. Estimation of fuel expenditure reveals that the fuel remaining in the tanks could support this level of operation for decades to come.

Remember, this is a pre-Collapse ship. The computer can control almost any system on-board the ship, from opening



doors to firing weapons. However, the ship's life support systems are largely destroyed, and in particular the G-compensators and floor gravity field are inoperable.

Initially, the computer will project its hologram image in the central assembly area, and try to persuade the characters to leave. Failing that, it will use the ship's systems as much as possible to deter and/or harm the characters. Unless the characters shoot the closed-circuit cameras, Umptysdayu will inform the defenders of exactly where the characters are. The defenders have the advantage of knowing their way around the ship.

One thing Umptysdayu will not do is try to explode the fusion power plant. It simply is no longer a part of its programming.

Of the Droyne temple guards left, two will guard the bridge deck, and four will guard engineering. They have welded shut the iris valve leading into the starboard side of engineering. The passageways to engineering are very effective killing zones. To simulate the increased probability of hitting someone in a narrow passageway or doorway, decrease any hit tasks by one level. Of course, this works both ways. If the Marines are approaching engineering or the bridge deck, the Droyne will not hesitate to use their fusion weapons.

Although the Droyne will defend Umptysdayu to the last being, it is almost inevitable that the Marines will eventually reach the computer room. If given the opportunity, Umptysdayu will make one last plea for its existence. It will even offer a compromise—to be disconnected from every system, except input and output devices, and be allowed to live. The fate of Umptysdayu will literally be in the characters' hands.

Quitting Time

Once the computer has been dealt with, and the databanks

downloaded into portable storage cells, the objective of the mission has been achieved. It is time for the teams to withdraw to the cutter and evacuate the site.

The evacuation should proceed with little difficulty, but if the characters seem too complacent, a last bit of defiance by the Droyne should make them aware that they are not really safe until they are back on *Aube*. If the referee really wanted to spice up the evacuation or extend the scenario, other Daaliisan forces might arrive in response to the Coalition's assault. There is that carrier off the coast. . .

EPILOG

Once the characters are back on *Aube*, having been extracted on the cutter or having left with their own ship and docked with *Aube*, the scenario is over. Sinner will want to conduct a post-mission debrief, any serious wounds can be treated in *Aube'* s medical facility, and a period of unwinding is available. *Aube* will leave the system bound for Muni as soon as possible.

If Umptysdayu was met, discovered to be a Virus, and its memory banks drained, then the mission was a success within the parameters of the stated objectives. The characters may not feel that way, especially if some of their number were killed just to kill a Virus. The information in the portable memory cells is, of course, contaminated with the same Virus strain as Umptysdayu, and will have to be transported back to the Coalition for detailed analysis under isolation. Eventually, it may shed considerable light on the movement of the fleets along the Vampire Highway, but not for quite some time.

There will not be much in the way of material awards from this adventure. There will not be much time to salvage anything, and most of the items at the site are designed for

Tsoth

Droyne Leader Elite NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon, Energy Weapon.

Other Assets: Environment Suit 15, Language (Anglic) 15, Leadership 15, Communications 13, Observation 13, Navigation 11, Sensors 11, Willpower 11, and Telephysics (Telekinesis) 11.

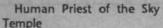
Motivation:

Heart King: Tsoth is an hon-

orable being, and does not abuse the powers of his office. He is willing to work for Umptysdayu because he recognizes the computer's relationship to the Droyne community.

Spade 4: Tsoth enjoys the position that has been bestowed upon him, but does not let it overwhelm him. He realizes that the Coyns chose him for the position, just as they have chosen the one who will be his successor.

Prarm



Novice NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Pistol. Other Assets: Language (Droyne) 16, Liaison 16, Research 16, Act/Bluff 12, History 12, and Psychology 8.

Motivation:

Spade Queen: Prarm is ruthless in his dealings with others, particularly the human governments because his family was

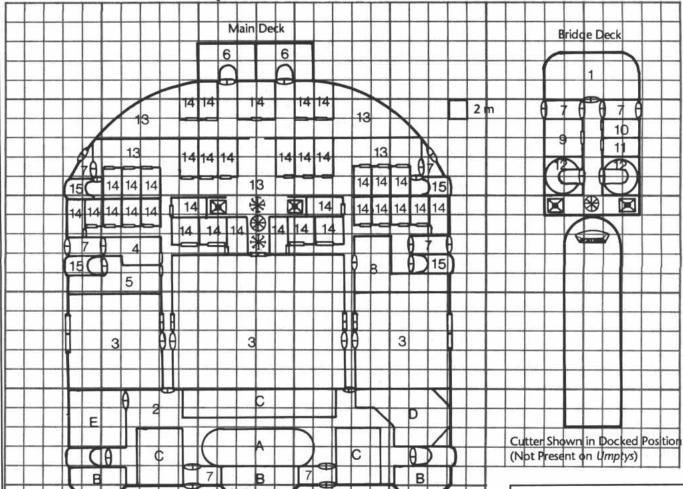
killed during the wars of the Dark Times.

Spade 8: Prarm enjoys the power he holds. All of the human governments have to go through him for information from the Sky Temple.









Key

- 1 Bridge
- 2 Engineering
 - A Power Plant
 - **B** Ignition Chambers
 - C Jump Drive
 - D Fuel Purification
 - E Maneuvering
- 3 Cargo Bays
- 4 Electronics Shop
- 5 Mechanical Shop
- 6 Missile Barbettes
- 7 Air Locks
- 8 Sick Bay
- 9 Computer Room
- 10 MFD Room
- 11 Sensor Processors
- 12 Laser Barbettes
- 13 Lounge/Assembly Areas
- 14 Staterooms
- 15 Laser Turrets

☐ Iris Valves☐ Sliding Doors☐ Cargo Doors







use by the Droyne. The characters should be awarded appropriate experience points based on their actions. If they were involved in any combat, an Initiative experience point should also be awarded. Characters who were wounded or who performed above and beyond the call of duty should be awarded an appropriate medal. Field promotions might also be in order.

Of course, the scenario does not have to end with the recovery of the troops from the surface of Daaliisa. Sometime after the raid, the characters, especially those with a ship, may be asked to return to Daaliisa and start investigating the possibilities of Coalition contact. It would not be wise, however, to advertise that they took part in the Droyne raid. Even if no humans were killed in the attack, it was an assault on the world of Daaliisa, and such things tend to unify a people against a common foe. Furthermore, there is the issue of the vampire fleets which periodically visit Daaliisa and who, on their next visit, will find Umptysdayu missing.

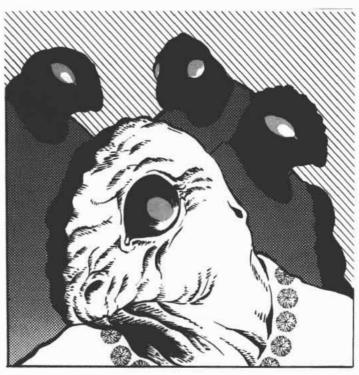
OPTIONS

Characters in Charge

If the characters do not begin the scenario in charge of the ground forces, the referee may wish to skew the casualties so that the characters are the senior surviving personnel on the ground. This way, they are not merely responding to what the referee, in the role of troop commander, wishes them to do, but rather take an active part in the decisions which affect their immediate future, and quite possibly their lives.

Stranded Troops

It is possible that one or more of the characters will miss the whole operation due to serious bad luck in the descent. They may have been separated from the rest of the group. The cutter might have had to lift before the characters could make it on-board. There are any number of ways for the characters to get stranded on Daaliisa. The adventure would then con-



tinue as they tried to make their way to the starport for pickup by For Lack.

Other GDW House System Products

A number of new TL-7 equipment has been included with this scenario. The referee who wishes to add a bit more variety might look at some of the supplements for Twilight: 2000. While modern weapons of the major powers could be considered to be TL-8, older weapons, or those of lesser powers are TL-7 or lower. A characters' confidence in the armor might seriously be lessened in the path of a main battle tank. However, we urge referees to only use what is necessary to challenge characters, not to overwhelm them.

Umptysdayu the Computer

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: None.

Other Assets: Astrogation 11, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 11, Gunnery (Energy Weapons) 11, Ship's Engineering 11.

Strain: Umptysdayu is a class XA "Mother" strain of Virus. As it infected the Umptys, it picked up a Droyne personality, and through a pseudoreality hologram, imitates a Droyne leader.

Motivation:

Spade Queen: Umptysdayu is quite stubborn and willing to fight to protect what belongs to it. It has successfully kept visiting vampire fleets from preying on the Droyne and Chirpers of the world.

Heart 7: Umptysdayu is moderately sociable. It has adopted the Droyne and, through them, the Chirpers as its own kind.

Notes: The computer "sees" through the use of security cameras around the site and internal to the Umptys. It also has access to the sensor information from the site's passive EMS array, and radio communications through the site's communications facilities. The maser antenna on top of the terminal building keeps the computer in contact with a sensor and communications satellite. By this means, Umptysdayu can scan the surrounding space and "listen" to radio communications around Daaliisa.



REFEREE'S NOTES ON DAALIISA

Daaliisa

Pre-Collapse (D7677B8-7 Ag C:1 A114): Situated in the spinward coreward corner of Promise subsector, Daaliisa was almost a backwater world. Its agricultural products were its major export, but when the Rebellion came, fewer and fewer ships stopped for them. By 1124, the starport had fallen into disuse, and a fleeing Solomani destroyer dropped some deadfall ordnance on the area. The ordnance only destroyed the largely unused fuel tanks at the starport, but effectively lowered its rating to an E.

With the Rebellion, popular opinion and discontent finally brought down the local government, but there was nothing to fill its place on a worldwide scale. The grange associations eventually filled in for governments on a local level, but by the time the Collapse arrived, nothing had been done beyond that.

Through the Dark Time to the New Era (E767734-7 Ag C:2 B414): When it came to Daaliisa, the Collapse probably had less effect on the world than the turmoil that went before. A passing merchant infected the old starport's computer, but since Daaliisa did not have a computer net, the rest of the world felt little affect of this.

The Daaliisans eventually recovered from the effects of the Hard Times, and started forming governments, but the world still remains balkanized. During this time, the Chirpers on Daaliisa migrated to Etsokry. The Droyne and Chirpers drove what few humans remained away from the island. However, since it was a turbulent time, not many people noticed.

The Droyne of Daaliisa have undertaken a long program of developing the Chirpers into Droyne. It has been a slow process because of the limited numbers of drones,

The Last Flight of the Umptys

Orsk/Promise was a dying world, and an erratic computer was not making survival any easier. The Droyne on this world, who numbered less than 450 total, recognized this fact. The leader cast Coyns to determine that they had to leave before the human inhabitants, which greatly outnumbered their kind, eliminated them to reduce the strain on the life support equipment. They left in whatever ships they could commandeer.

This included the 1000-ton Droyne cruiser *Umptys*. When the *Umptys* lifted for its last flight, each of its staterooms held four occupants, and the cargo hold was as full as it could be of additional passengers. Part of the ship's complement was a Droyne Marine Squad, complete with combat armor and fusion rifles.

As the *Umptys* prepared to jump, Virus struck it, just as it struck every other ship leaving Orsk at that time. However, the strain was mutated by the alien structure of the *Umptys*' computer, and became a whole new strain. Having taken a Droyne outlook, named itself Umptysdayu, and adopted the passengers it now carried, the computer aborted the Droyne Captain's selected destination and chose one of its own. It scanned the databanks now available to it, and learned that there was a Chirper colony on a world close by. Therefore, it jumped to Daaliisa.

Unfortunately for Umptysdayu, the computer at the old starport at Daaliisa had already been infected with a suicidal strain of Virus. A brief battle was waged between the two infected computers. Eventually, Umptysdayu won, but not before the other had briefly gained control of the *Umptys'* maneuver drives and jump drives, overloaded them, and destroyed them. The Droyne Captain, with the aid of Umptysdayu, made a dead stick landing at the old starport, and the *Umptys* came to what is probably its final berth, several hundred meters north of the starport's landing pads.

Once grounded, the Virus realized the importance of being covert. The Droyne accepted its leadership, but Umptysdayu knew that the humans on this world would not. It directed the Droyne to extend the port's maintenance tunnels to the *Umptys'* lower hatch. Then it had power connected and interface cables run to the starport's computer, which now had a copy of itself in it. The two were thus merged into one larger computer. Finally, Umptysdayu had the Droyne bury the *Umptys*.



Coyns and the Iskyar

Immature Droyne are all physiologically alike, and are not differentiated into the six physically distinct and specialized castes to which all adult Droyne belong. When young Droyne reach the equivalent of puberty (at approximately 12-14 standard years of age), they pass through an elaborate ritual which serves as a critical step in their maturation into one of the six adult castes (see TNE, page 72, for a brief description).

In human societies, rituals such as this usually accompany the onset of physiological changes, but in the Droyne the ritual itself seems to cause those changes. This ritual, the Iskyar, involves the seemingly random selection of "coyns" (in Droyne, koynisin) by the immature Droyne, under the ceremonial supervision of adult Droyne. The ceremony begins the permanent physical transformation into a Leader, Worker, Warrior, Drone, Technician, or Sport castemember, as directed by the coyn that was drawn.

How this ritual can bring on physiological changes remains something of a mystery, at least to human scientists. However, the Droyne are a powerfully psionic race, and the coyn itself is likely not the cause of the change. Rather, it is probably the physical focus of the ritual that combines the psionic powers of the adult Droyne leaders with those of the immature Droyne to awaken its latent genetic programming in accordance with the coyn's symbolism.

Nonetheless, the ceremony and the ritual significance of the coyns themselves are incredibly important to this development. Deprived of the *Iskyar*, young Droyne will remain in an immature, generalized (i.e., uncasted) state. On some worlds, the secrets of the ritual and the coyns themselves have been lost, and the entire population has reverted to its primitive state. These arrested Droyne are called Chirpers, and relatively few humans even understand that they are the same species (as opposed to two closely related species).

Coyns are also used in a variety of other ceremonies, and are used to foretell the future or decide on future courses of action. While this "casting of coyns" might appear to be random fortune-telling, it is surprisingly accurate, presumably because of the psionic faculties of the Droyne. The coyns are usually consulted before any major decision is made.

and having to caste the Chirpers at the point of maturity. The human inhabitants of Daaliisa are unaware of this program, or the overall numbers of Droyne on the world, therefore the percentage of Droyne has not been included in its UWP.

Chirpers

Chirpers are essentially Droyne that have lost the ability to caste. Without this ability, they are only marginally sentient, and are content to live a pastoral life, usually at a very primitive level. If caste at the point of maturity, an immature Chirper will develop into a Droyne. All Chirpers

have the Psionic ability to make themselves invisible to living creatures, but this will not affect anyone with a psionic shield.

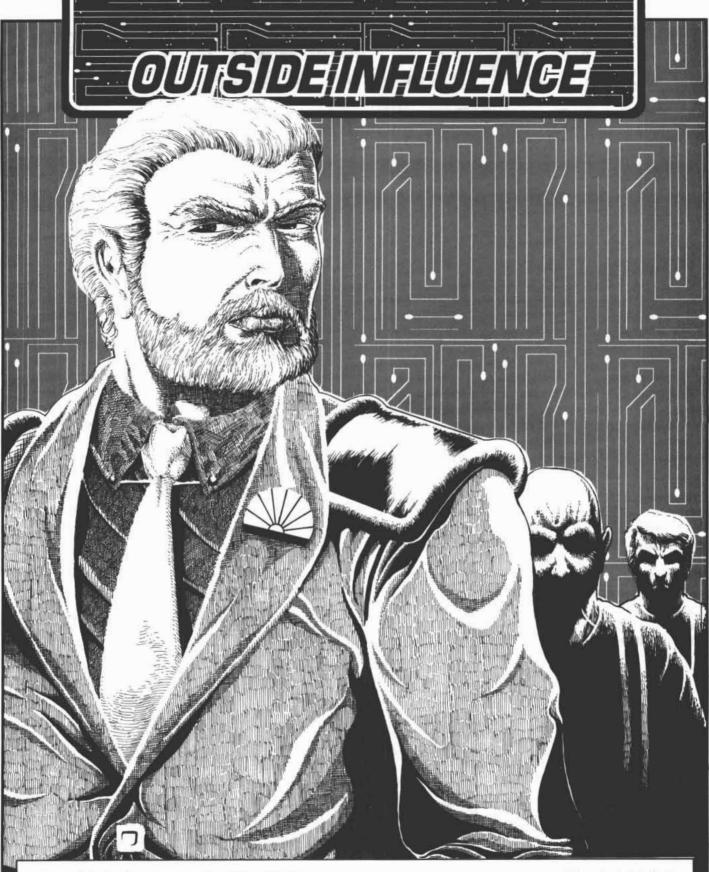
Level: Novice

Combat Assets: Armed Melee Combat (Club).

Other Assets: One of the following at level 11 and one at level 9 of Farming, Guard/Hunting Beast, Instruction, Language (Anglic), Medical (Trauma Aid), Riding, or Tracking.

Notes: The Chirpers on Daaliisa have had the benefit of Droyne guidance, and are consequently not as primitive as Chirpers found on other worlds.





I guess it had to happen some day. We're all just humans, after all, and that job description comes with a whole lot of extra baggage that can trip you up if you're not careful. So sooner or later one of our own "best and brightest" was probably bound to turn rotten.

But why did it have to be Mike?

BKM 94



REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

The Reformation Coalition has received information that Michael Karkov, a former Dawn League operative, has apparently "gone rogue" and become one of the ruling elites on the world Suudo in the Khulam subsector. An added complication is that there is apparently a Psionics Institute of some sort active on the world and allied with Karkov. The Coalition sends a team to investigate and bring Karkov back, by force if necessary.

The player characters arrive on the world, and find out that the covert agent who was to be their contact point has been discovered and killed, but not before reporting that there is a psionic cell active on the world and cooperating with the local TED. The player characters go ahead and investigate and then attempt to kidnap Karkov. In the process, they will discover that Karkov is merely a figurehead, manipulated by the true power behind the throne—a sentient and psionic Virus-infected computer.

INTRODUCTION

Outside Influence involves the player characters in the "hot recovery" of a Dawn League field agent apparently gone rogue. Characters for this adventure should possess a wide range of skills in keeping with their roles as Star Vikings of the Reformation Coalition. Outside Influence begins on Aubaine (0738/Old Expanses).

Much of this adventure consists of the information required by the PCs to plan and execute their smash-and-grab raid. For this reason, there are few set-piece scenarios. How the adventure plays out is largely in the hands of the players as moderated by the referee.

Hiring On: The PCs can become involved in this adventure in a number of ways. If the characters are already in the employ of RCES, they are simply summoned to the office of Sid "Papa" Papagopolis for a mission assignment. (Papa appears in the "The Once and Future Emperor" in the TNE rulebook.) Should the characters be free-lancers, they can either learn of the upcoming mission from one of their contacts, or a contact can recommend them for the job. If the PCs have done particularly well in previous adventures, their reputation may lead to their recruitment by RCES. As explained below, the impending mission is highly sensitive and thus hardly common knowledge. A reasonable means should be sought by the referee to explain how any contact came by his or her information.

Karkov's Friend: Prior to the commencement of the briefing below, the referee should pull one player aside for a private conference. The player's character was a close personal friend of Michael Karkov, the person the team is being sent to Diaspora to recover. The two grew up together and were fairly close friends up until the time Karkov departed for Diaspora.

Working together, the player and referee should work all the necessary details required to integrate Karkov into the character's personal history. It's suggested that Karkov not be counted against the PCs' allotment of contacts, as he potentially plays

little role outside this adventure. Ideally, Karkov's friend should be a native of Nike Nimbus and have known him during his work on Project Bootstrap, or a graduate of the Hiver technical academy on Aubaine might have known him from school. Anyone interested in bootstrap operations could have met him at a professional conference where he presented and defended a paper and then remained friends afterwards.

The referee should make it clear to the player that the Karkov the PC knows is in no way TED material. The player is encouraged to argue with the Service's findings and look upon the upcoming mission as a chance to clear his or her friend's name. This creates a personal stake in the assignment for the PC and possibly the entire team.

Background Information: The player characters are given a small folder with supplemental information immediately before the briefing commences. Pages 54-59 of this book are those handouts and should be photocopied by the referee and given to the players.

THE BRIEFING

Upon arrival at Papa's Trantown office, the team meets the RCES strategic planner, if they don't already know him, and are conducted into a recently completed secure conference room. Also present at the briefing is "Thumper" McKinnon, a staff briefer. The following briefing is conducted in closed-door session. Papa begins the briefing:

"I'm going to begin by saying that everything you hear

today is highly confidential, what they used to call 'top secret' in the old days. I'm going to start by showing you a visual."

Papa uses the briefing room display equipment to project a blow-up of one of the photos of Karkov on the wall.

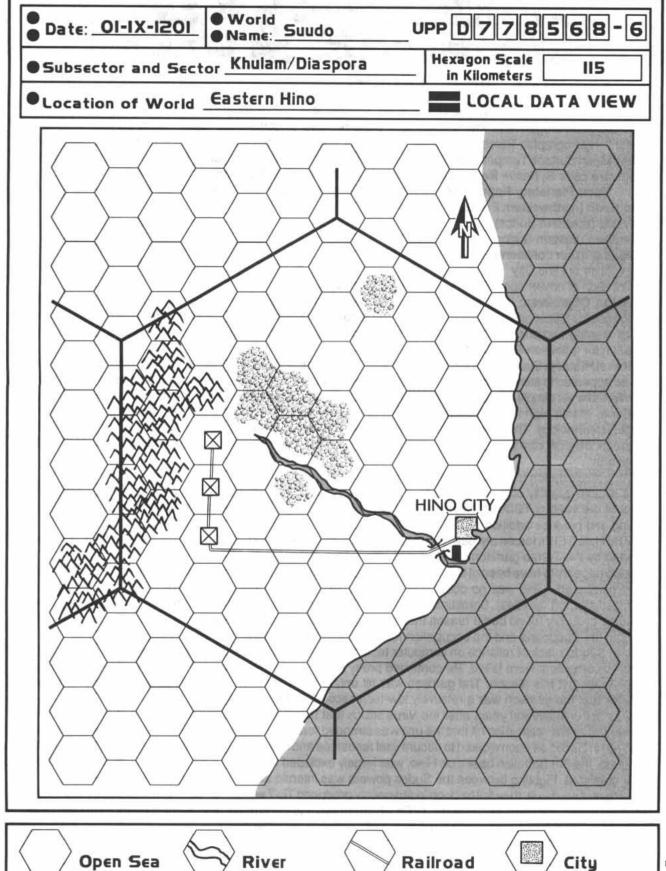
"This is a recorded image recently obtained by one of our covertoperatives. It's a bit grainy because it was taken from a



Sid "Papa" Papagopolis

distance and then digitally enhanced. I want you to take special notice of the insignia on his collar. That's our old Dawn League emblem. The man wearing it is Michael Karkov, one of the first covert agents we sent out into the Wilds.

"Slider Laszinski, the covert agent who obtained this photo image, didn't know Karkov from Lucan the Black, and he was too far away to make out the insignia, so what prompted him to take this image in the first place? He was simply following his mission plan of gathering intelligence on the TEDs controlling the planet Suudo in the Khulam subsector. The man you see in this picture is the chief of staff to the Governor-General of Hino. Since the Governor-General is on his deathbed, this man, known to us as Michael Karkov, and known in Hino as Colonel Michaels, is currently the most powerful TED on the planet in everything but name only.



Mining

Camp

 \boxtimes

Forest

Mountains

Outside Influence

Power

Plant

Summary of Interim Report on Suudo/Khulam (2840/Diaspora)

Submitted by "Slider" Lazinski

Physical Data: Surface Gravity: 0.86 standard; Atmosphere: 0.89 standard pressure; Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen-nitrogen with low oxygen taint (requires use of compressor gear during periods of heavy exertion); Hydrographic Percentage: 80%; One major and one minor continent as well as numerous small islands; Mean Surface Temperature: 9° C; Rotation Period: 21.4 hours; Revolution Period: 2.3 years; Satellites: 2, both size code S; Native life present including large land and marine animals.

Total Planetary Population: 100,000, balkanized into four TED-ruled political entities:

The North (northwestern Sudos) 20,000
Bayside (southern Sudos) 30,000
Eastdown (eastern Sudos) 20,000
Hino (the minor continent) 30,000

Population of Hino City

(location of covert specialist) 5000 (approximate)

Mission Objectives: To infiltrate covert specialist onto the minor continent of Hino in order to gather intelligence for follow-on activities by RCES. Hino is sufficiently isolated from Suudo's main continent (Sudos) and its warring factions, see below, that it should, after suitable preparation, provide an excellent base of operation for follow-on RCES activities.

General History: Suudo had a long-standing predisposition toward maintaining a low-tech society. The desire to do so appeared to stem not from technophobia, religious doctrine, or the like, but rather from a wish to maintain a comfortable yet simple life-style. Some trading off-world, during the time of the Old Imperium, was conducted in order to obtain high-tech consumer goods and other amenities, but the Suudoans were never reliant on computer technology. The planet as a whole remains self-sufficient in terms of food production and maintenance of the technological infrastructure even in the present day. Tech level is a solid 6 in all categories with the following exceptions:

Air transportation technology is nonexistent.

 A sizable quantity of pre-Collapse TL-7 weapons, mainly small arms, of Suudoan manufacture are in the hands of the various TEDs of the major continent (Sudos). Each TED has the limited capability to maintain existing and produce additional TL-7 weapons.

• The Hino TED's forces are believed to retain a sizable quantity of TL-8-10 weapons and vehicles originally

imported by the Terran garrison (see below).

Suudo appears to have been of little interest to the combatants of the Final War, as no major battles or incidents are remembered. (This was no doubt due to the planet's relatively low, for the time, tech level and lack of advanced starport facilities). Sometime in the 1123 to 1124 time frame, a Terran garrison force was deployed to Suudo, probably for no better reason than to make a visible claim to the system. If there were any incidents between the Suudoans and the occupation forces prior to the Collapse, they went unrecorded.

Given Suudo's lack of reliance on computer technology, the Virus had little effect on the planet. While a few imported computers were felled, life continued pretty much as normal. Available historical data is amazingly complete for just this reason. The garrison was hit only a little harder by the Virus, as present-day evidence indicates that the garrison was a relatively low-tech second- or third-echelon unit.

It was not until several years after the Virus struck that things changed on Suudo. Control of the garrison fragmented as the realization hit that the unit was stranded forever. Fighting erupted between the various units deployed in Sudos as each worked to secure vital resources and labor pools for itself. The only other Terran unit on Suudo, the 3rd Battalion based on Hino, was largely excluded from the fighting due to its distance from the major continent. Fighting between the Sudos powers was intense and rapidly depleted their store of TL-8-10 equipment. As a result, they fell back on indigenously produced TL-7 weapons. Each of the three powers on the continent eventually became one of the TEDs which survive into the present day. Some evidence suggests that each of the TEDs in the past has bought high-tech weapons from the Guild.

As RCES' focus has been mainly on Hino, additional data on Sudos is not included here.

Summary of Interim Report on Suudo/Khulam (2840/Diaspora)

Submitted by "Slider" Lazinski

Local History: After the Virus struck Suudo, the 3rd Battalion installed itself as the ruling class in Hino, in the same way the other Terran units did in the population centers they controlled. The battalion was renamed the Guard, and its commanding officer, now TED, gave himself the title of Governor-General. All major technological assets were "nationalized" in order to control critical knowledge and manpower. The segment of the population involved in food production was forced to accept feudal serfdom. Over time, specialized knowledge such as mechanics, electronics, the forging of metal, and the like became family secrets, only to be passed to succeeding generations. (All in the service of the state, of course.) Fortunately, Hino is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, chief among them being coal, natural gas, and the minerals required to make steel, thus allowing the TED to maintain a TL of 6.

Before all contact with the mainland was cut off, the Guard raided the garrison depot at the starport for additional materiel. The raiders managed to make off with a cache of weapons, a few air rafts and ATVs and, most importantly, the only remaining functional interplanetary shuttle. The shuttle has since been stripped down to basic components (its power plant is used to power the Guard enclave, for example), and the remaining excess arms and vehicles have either been stored for future use or converted to spare parts to maintain existing systems. In Suudoan terms, the Hino TED is a major military power.

The Ruhlman Institute: Evidence suggests that the Institute was both a medical school and a private clinic for Suudo's ruling elite in the centuries before the Final War. It still fills the latter capacity with respect to the Guard.

What makes this establishment notable is the oddly cordial relationship it has enjoyed with the TED over the years and the recent elevation of one of its number to the position of Chief of Staff to the Governor-General. While it's common knowledge that the Governor-General has been quite ill for some time, the appointment of the "medical," as the Institute staffers are called, Michaels (actually Michael Karkov) went against all expectations. Michaels currently rules in the Governor-General's stead, awaiting the day the TED either recovers or passes control of Hino to his son.

Oddly enough, Michaels was a virtual unknown until only recently. His elevation to what equates to the top position in Hino is suspicious to say the least. Furthermore, Michaels' use of Dawn League insignia to represent his new-found authority is significant. It led the on-site covert specialist to conclude that the TED is a lost or renegade Leaguer taking advantage of advanced knowledge to secure personal power. No evidence exists to suggest that Michaels has been coerced or otherwise influenced by outside forces.

Opposing Forces: The Guard has between 250 to 350 troops, about half of which are believed to be outfitted with TL-7 equipment and the rest to TL-8-10 standards, although there may be significant gaps in capability. Regular training is conducted, although much of it is rote drill with few live fire exercises. While professional, the true caliber of the Guard remains in question as it has never faced a truly capable opponent.

The Guard primarily functions as a paramilitary police force used to enforce the TED's edicts. Its secondary mission is the defense of Hino from outside threats. (In other words, the TEDs of Sudos.) Hino's isolation from the mainland renders the threat of outside invasion rather remote.

The majority of the Guard remains housed near the old Hino spaceport (estimated as class G) in its own specially constructed enclave. Approximate population of the enclave, including both the Guard and its dependents, is 1000 to 1500. The ability of the Guard to respond to an unexpected situation remains unknown, although it's doubtful the entire Guard could be quickly mobilized. A visible Guard presence is maintained at the Institute, but the number of troops deployed there remains unknown. It's expected that these troops constitute an elite element of the TED's military.

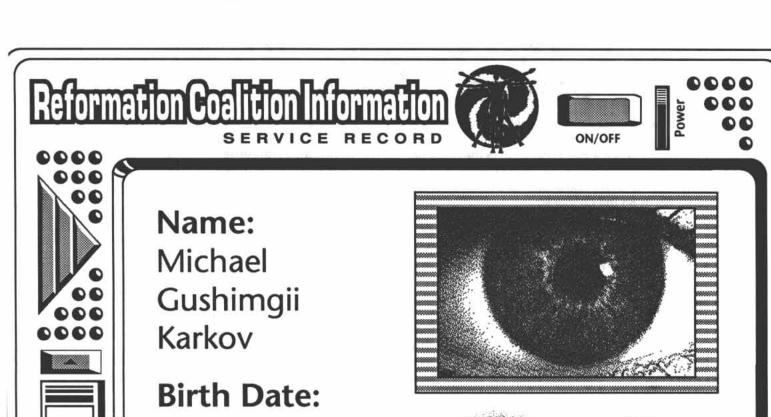
The Governor-General is accompanied wherever he goes by a personal security detachment of between six to 10 individuals. (Except, it is assumed, when he's in personal quarters.) The only air rafts seen in use belong to the detachment. Security for Chief of Staff Michaels appears to be drawn from the same detachment.

It is important to note that intermarriage, voluntary and otherwise, with the Suudoans has led to at least the partial adaptation of Guard personnel to the atmosphere's lower-than-standard oxygen content. The use of compressor gear and supplemental oxygen supplies in some cases continues.

Friendly Forces: At the time the on-site covert specialist submitted this report, no significant opposition to the TED existed. The potential to win support from the local populace to topple the TED remains unknown.

Conclusion: The discovery of Michaels, actually Michael Karkov, on Suudo necessitates that an on-site investigation be launched at the earliest possible time. Suudo remains a prime location from which to base future missions into the former Solomani Rim sector, making the planet quite valuable in terms of future strategic plans.





Name: Michael Gushimgii Karkov

Birth Date: 129-1164

Place of Birth: Hite/Old Expanses (since renamed Nike Nimbus)

129-1164

Education: Primary and secondary education completed on Hite by 1182. Selected for advanced technical

education in 1193, and completed technical curriculum with honors 1197.

Background: Karkov worked several odd jobs after finishing his secondary education, but In 1184 became involved in the Hitean "Project Bootstrap," which was intended to increase the world's tech level and accelerate industrial production in a very short time. By 1192, Karkov had become one of the driving leaders behind the project, becoming both a key advocate and planner, as well as one of the hardest workers. The project was only beginning to pay dividends when the Hivers contacted Hite. The explosive economic and technological growth which followed Hiver contact was due in part to Hiver technical assistance, but no less to the Project Bootstrap structures already in place which allowed rapid dissemination and integration of that assistance.

Karkov's selection for advanced technical training, despite his age and lack of higher education, was due in part to his contribution to Project Bootstrap. While attending the Hiver technical academy on Aubaine, Karkov authored several widely read articles and position papers on the lessons learned by the Hitean experience with accelerated economic and technological growth, and proposed a number of common-sense strategies for improving the effort in the future on other worlds. These suggestions form part of the basis of current Reformation Coalition strategy in bootstrap operations, and the use of the term "bootstrap" is a recognition of the importance of the Hitean contribution to the concept.

Karkov is unmarried and has no surviving relatives in the Coalition.

Service Record: Upon graduation from the technical institute on Aubaine, Karkov volunteered for covert duty and was dispatched under cover into the Khulam subsector with a cover identity as an ordinary crewman on a Free Trader vessel. No reports were ever received after Karkov left, and his whereabouts remained unknown until Laszinski's recent report.



"Resources being what they are, the Coalition wasn't scheduled to deal with Suudo for a while. It's a bit off the main axis of advance, which makes it a lower priority than the glamour worlds up in Promise sector and along the Vampire Highway. But it's pretty close to home, and a lot of us think that it was placed too far down on the priority list.

"The identification of Karkov changed all that, because not only is he a surviving Dawn Leaguer, he's also one of four TEDs on Suudo, and potentially the strongest and most dangerous of the lot. He controls the most modern armed forces of the world and, more importantly, he controls the starport.

"Needless to say, Suudo's been moved up on our schedule. This information concerning Karkov has been circulated only among a few senior personnel, but I want to emphasize that we are unanimous in this: The Coalition is out to give this stretch of space another chance, not replace homegrown dictators with its own. On a practical level, any action which damages the Coalition's credibility will just make future efforts on other worlds that much more costly.

"In the eyes of Coalition leadership, and this comes straight from the Intel Subcommittee of the Assembly, Karkov's got to answer for what he's done. Your job is to go in and get him as quickly as possible. The longer it takes, the greater the danger of exposure. Should it become necessary, and I emphasize only as a last resort, Karkov is considered 'expendable.'

"Now I'm going to turn the briefing over to 'Thumper' McKinnon. Thumper is responsible for coordinating intelligence-gathering operations in the Khulam subsector."

Thumper McKinnon takes over the briefing. McKinnon is a big, beefy man, an ex-amateur boloball player, and his words are slightly slurred by the trademark wad of faisal root in one cheek.

"Right. Slider Laszinski was infiltrated earlier this year to gather TPMI (techno-politico-military intelligence) on Suudo toward the eventuality of smash-and-grab raids or even a full-scale pacification and integration effort. We run a regular contact ship down to the Suudo area, and through some other places we have agents and receive reports by burst transmission, which is how we got Slider's report. You have a summary of Slider's background report on Suudo in your briefing kit, along with a planetary overview map and a regional map of the area surrounding Hino City and the starport. Slider's a good man. You can count on his stuff being pretty good. Even so, this report is a couple months old now, so be advised, people.

"We have some astrographic challenges to deal with in getting to Suudo. The only jump-2 routes through Khulam subsector pass through either Sofar (2939) or Montezuma (2836). Problem is, Sofar doesn't have a usable source of fuel in the whole stinking star system, and the situation in Montezuma is just complicated enough right now that the Navy has asked us to steer clear of it.

"Right. No problem. What we do is route you through Karpaty, which isn't on any of our standard charts of the AO 'cause it ain't in the AO, technically speaking. It's down in Harlequin subsector, in what would be grid cell 3041 of Khulam subsector, if there were such a thing. You make a simple jump-2 from Futok to Karpaty, refuel at a gas giant, and then make your final jump-2 to Suudo.

"Right. Two things to bear in mind. First, we don't consider use of the Karpaty system to be a violation of the AO, since we're

"Thumper" McKinnon

using it to get to the AO, but we'd just as soon not advertise what we're doing. So in your log and flight plans, you will refer to it as 'jump transit station Khulam-3041.'

"Second, Karpaty is inhabited; stay away from it. There are three big, beautiful gas giants to refuel at, so don't go annoying the natives.

"When you arrive at Suudo, we'll have a picket boat standing by with the latest intel updates from Slider as well as instructions on where and when to contact him. From there, the course of action is up to your team."

Papa and Thumper will ask for any questions and then conclude the briefing.

GEARING UP

The next phase of the adventure entails preparations for the mission.

Fitting Out: RCES will supply whatever equipment the characters request, within reason and subject to availability. This includes weapons appropriate to the characters' skills, clothes tailored to local styles, and even a small supply of Hino currency (equivalent to about Cr1000). They are also provided with an old, beat up, and very worn TL-6 ground car with "East Hino Mining Cooperative" painted on the doors in faded letters.

One vital item of equipment the PCs can't be allowed to forget are compressor masks to make up for Suudo's lower-than-standard oxygen atmosphere.

The referee should try to keep each character's personal load

Avoiding Blackouts

Strenuous activity in a low-oxygen atmosphere such as Suudo's is difficult. If a character is engaged in strenuous activity, for example running any sort of distance, combat or the like, and lacks either a compressor mask or supplementary oxygen supply, the PC runs the risk of blacking out. To avoid blacking out, the character must make a successful roll of Difficult: Constitution. The PC must still "catch his breath," but he will not lose consciousness. A character who fails the above role will be unconscious for (13—CON) minutes and must rest for an additional 10 minutes. These rules also apply to all native Suudoans not adapted to the planet's low-oxygen content atmosphere.



within reason in order to avoid the "kitchen sink" syndrome. In addition to the standard equipment shown in the TNE rules, the team also has access to a remotely piloted vehicle, or RPV, with which to conduct reconnaissance missions. This surveillance vehicle is detailed in the equipment section at the back of this book.

Should the PCs lack a ship of their own, RCES will provide a far trader for the duration of the mission. Any additional personnel required to operate the ship shall be supplied by RCES. These NPCs will be Star Viking Space Specialists tailored by the referee in order to provide any skills not possessed by the team. If the characters own their own ship, it will be serviced and provisioned by RCES prior to departure.

Once this phase of the operation is complete, the team leaves for Suudo. How the actual trip proceeds, as well as who or what the PCs encounter, is up to the referee.

Getting There: The referee should pay careful attention to any concerns the PCs may have regarding the various worlds along the route, as these could provide the seeds to various minor adventures along the way. If the characters have no ship of their own, they are loaned the Far Trader Heaven's Steel. Ship stats are as per the TNE rulebook, with the exception that one TL-8 missile turnet and one TL-10 sandcaster turnet have been fitted. An additional four TL-11 nuclear detonation missiles and 20 sand cannisters are stored in the ship's hold.

If Space Specialist NPCs are to be included on the mission, the referee can take the opportunity to introduce them at this point. Special attention should be paid to the potential roleplaying possibilities these individuals present.

Arrival at Suudo

When the characters arrive at Suudo, they rendezvous with RCS *Rawalpindi*, a 100-ton scout/courier seconded to Coalition service from the Aubani Navy. *Rawalpindi* has been waiting for the characters and will depart as soon as they have communicated with them, as they have additional duties in other systems to attend to. (*Rawalpindi* and her crew are not available to reinforce the players in their mission.)

Rawalpindi provides some unexpected and unwelcome news. First, however, they have summaries of additional intel reports from Slider. In recent months, Slider has seen some unusual activity on a number of fronts.

The Guard is conducting more training exercises than it used to, especially exercises involving air rafts. On more than one occasion, air rafts have been seen departing in the dead of night in the general direction of the mainland. They've not been seen to return for several days. Rumor has it that some sort of training is being conducted along the coast to the north.

The foundry has been ordered by the TED, or rather the Chief of Staff, to produce additional quantities of certain items, such as weapons components, ammo shells, and automotive parts. The amount produced exceeds the estimated local need.

Increasingly, medicals have been seen in the company of Guard units, particularly those patrolling the streets. This has

led Slider to believe that the Institute has long filled some kind of intelligence role for the TED, or that the medicals are assuming a more important role now that one of their own has come into some power. The latter idea doesn't sit well with the average Guard trooper who's come to enjoy the perks his or her position garners. The covert specialist expects increased friction between the two groups, perhaps even a struggle for control if things get sufficiently out of hand.

The Chief of Staff seldom leaves the grounds of the Institute, or for that matter the main building. One of the few times he did so, Slider was able to take the photos appended to his report. The covert specialist is unsure of what Michaels spends all his time doing.

Finally, attempts to encourage the formation of resistance organizations have yielded no results. The only pre-existing resistance movement Slider heard about was destroyed by the Guard just prior to Michaels/Karkov's assumption of power.

Following retransmission of the intel information, however, *Rawalpindi* makes an extremely distressing report. Several weeks ago they received a final burst transmission from Slider, the text of which follows:

SLIDER TO CHEAP TALK.
SLIDER TO CHEAP TALK.
RECORD AND RELAY IF YOU COPY.
RUHLMAN INSTITUTE IS A COVER FOR A PSIONIC CELL OF SOME KIND.

I SAY AGAIN, RUHLMAN INSTITUTE IS A PSIONIC CELL. MY COVER IS BROKEN. INITIATE PICKUP. EXPEDITE.

This message was repeated twice before the transmission was broken. *Rawalpindi* was unable to establish communications with Slider to affect a pickup. Routine monitoring of the Hino radio communication official channels revealed that Slider had been apprehended and was later executed for espionage.

DECISION TIME

The characters are now confronted with a difficult decision: proceed or abort. They no longer have a contact on the ground, and they now know that they are up against a psionic opponent in addition to a very smart TED. Fortunately, Slider did not know anything about the impending operation, so at least they can still count on the element of surprise.

If the party includes characters with psionic abilities, there is still considerable chance of success. Even without psionic talents, if the characters have thought to bring psionic shield helmets, they still can carry out the mission. If not, and they decide to go ahead anyway, they should be allowed to "scrounge" two or three psionic shield helmets from the crew of Rawalpindi before it leaves—not enough to completely outfit the party, but enough to allow small recon parties to enter the city undetected.



If they abort, they will return to Aubaine and be sent out again, this time with psionic equipment, but the rewards for success will be reduced.

Once they launch the mission, and after assuming a stationary orbit above Hino, the PCs need to make a few additional decisions, such as whether to hide the ship on the surface or return it to orbit with a skeleton crew aboard, what and how much equipment should be carried initially, and the like. Before descending to Hino, the team can use the intervening time to prepare its gear and update its geographical database. Tasks regarding the descent to the planet's surface are the province of the referee. Only those concerned with the last few minutes of flight, when the PCs' craft is probably hugging the deck, should present any sort of problem.

The next several pages of information describe the area in which the characters will be operating and the capabilities of their opponents.

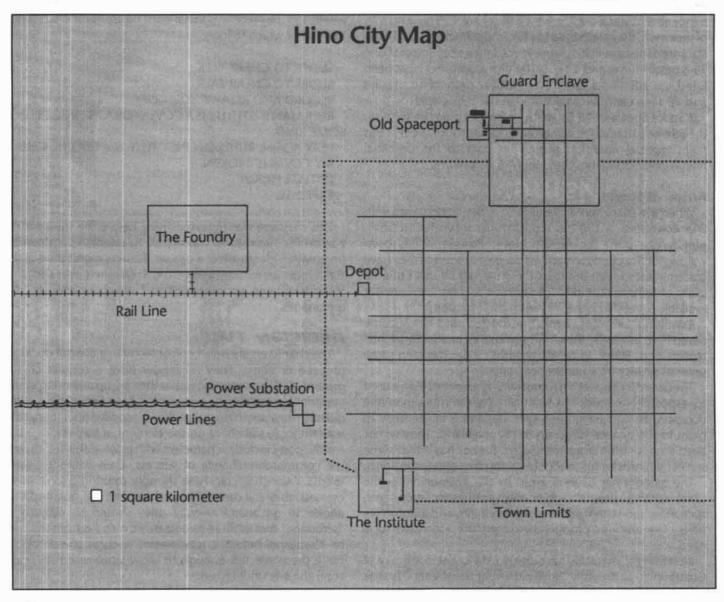
THE HINO CITY REGION

The following information is intended primarily for the referee. Information regarding specific locations should only be made available to the PCs after direct observation of the site in question.

Overview: The terrain in and around Hino is predominantly flat, although modest hills dot the area. Structures are almost exclusively wood or brick, with few rising more than three stories high. The most notable locations are brought out below.

Throughout the characters' stay on Suudo, the weather is mostly clear. Temperatures range between 4°C (40°F) during the day down to a low of -6°C (20°F) at night. Winds are minimal. It's currently late winter, early spring in Hino. Neither of the planet's moons is large enough or near enough to provide much illumination at night.

Should the characters enter Hino City in order to perform a reconnaissance, or for any other reason, the information here







should help the referee set the tone for what follows.

There are two primary methods for getting around Hino: on foot and by trolley. The last is the most common mode of travel for local residents. Also present are a few privately owned vehicles, and those belonging to the Guard. Examples include range and heavy cargo trucks and ATVs. (The first two being the most common.) All motor vehicles are powered by natural gas. As most of the population is required by law to be at work, the streets are mostly quiet during the day.

On the balance, the residents of Hino City are no more friendly or unfriendly than most populations, although they do tend to be somewhat guarded around strangers. Any attempt to discuss anything bordering on dissent is a sure way to end a conversation.

While in Hino City, the characters could run into some problems with the authorities:

Police Patrols: Guard police teams patrol at random throughout Hino City around the clock. PCs may be stopped and questioned during the day as to why they aren't working, or at night as to their general intentions and destination. Appropriate skill rolls should be developed by the referee to handle such an encounter if it isn't roleplayed. Unlike some dictatorships, the Hino TED never introduced identification papers or other credentials because the ad-

Random Medicals

The following is provided as an example should a telepathic or empathic medical nonplayer character be required.

Roll 1D6 and consult the following chart:

1-3

Novice

4-5

Experienced

6

Veteran

Rolling a second 1D6 yields either Telepathy (1-3) or Empathy (4-6) as the skill possessed. The skill rating is equal to the NPC's Asset rating. ministrative overhead involved was viewed as too burdensome.

Should the characters fail to provide satisfactory answers to police questioning, a referee-imposed event, they'll be taken to the Guard HQ for additional questioning and a background check. Such a check requires two or three days to complete, during which time the PC will be held in custody at the HQ.

Internal Security: One of the greatest threats to the PCs' safety comes from the recently organized internal security patrols. (They are the creation of the new Chief of Staff.) Each patrol consists of at least one Guard squad and one, or at most two, psionic medicals possessing Telepathy or Empathy. The medicals travel in their own range truck.

Using telepathic scanning, the psionics travel about the town in an attempt to search out discordant or subversive thoughts. On occasion, the medical(s) will have the patrol stop passersby just on general principle. As stated above, the psionics' abilities have been kept secret from the Guard. Most patrols are conducted during the daytime, although spot night patrols are also possible.

The number of skilled telepathic and empathic medicals is limited, so internal security patrols are few in number. Still, such a patrol could wreak havoc with the characters' plans. Characters picked up by internal security will be interrogated first by the Guard and then turned over to the Institute. The method presented in the Random Medicals sidebar can be used by the referee to generate needed NPCs.

Any kind of physical recon of the Institute structures is extremely risky for obvious reasons. Should the PCs undertake such an endeavor, see "The Snatch" below for disposition of opposing forces.

Also, even though the medicals don't act as security guards per se, there's always the chance that one or more walking the grounds will detect something amiss nearby. As stated above, the likelihood of such a chance encounter is greater during the day. Should the referee wish to impose such an encounter, use the information contained in the Random Medicals sidebar to



generate a psionic medical, and then make a skill roll against the NPC's Asset rating to determine the possibility of success. The sudden detection and pursuit of the PCs resulting from a random encounter can be used by the referee to suggest that something highly unusual is going on. This is particularly true if the characters have performed flawlessly up until that time.

Should the PCs come to the attention of the medicals, an alert will be sounded as defined in The Snatch below. Characters captured by the Guard will be interrogated by it first before being turned over for "special interrogation" by the Institute.

It is important to note that the Guard is wholly unaware of the medicals' special abilities.

The Power Plant: West of Hino City is the coal-fired power plant which supplies all of the town's electricity. Electrical power is sent to Hino City via twin high-tension line towers which terminate at a substation just outside the limits of town. Both the Guard enclave and the Institute have their own back-up generators. (Locals have seen or heard of coal deliveries being made to both locations, as well as the testing of the generators on a monthly basis.) The remainder of the city will be left in the dark should some "accident" befall the power lines.

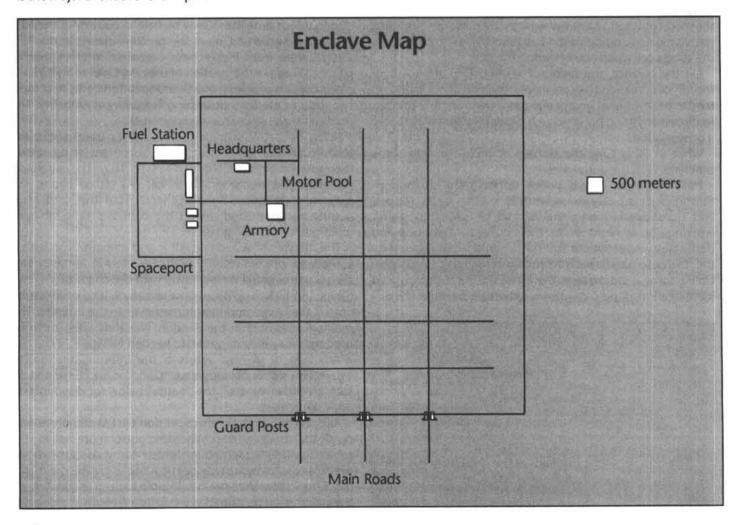
The Railroad: The railroad runs due west from Hino City and is the major avenue for the importation of vital raw materials.

Guard troopers accompany each train, whether passenger or freight. They also maintain a small forward base at the meeting point of the western and northern spurs near the mountains.

The Enclave: On the northeastern edge of town, adjoining the old spaceport, is the Guard enclave. Much of the area is residential in nature. Areinforced concrete wall (AV 25) topped with barbed wire runs the perimeter of the Guard settlement.

Access to the Guard enclave is nearly impossible, as the entrances are manned around the clock, and most of the troops know each other and their families on sight. Two or three "police" teams, defined below in "The Guard," are active at all times. One police team mans each entrance and is connected by phone to Guard HQ. Additionally, at least one squad appears to be held in constant readiness. (This is the rapid-response team also shown below.) Shift changes at the entrances occur every 3.5 hours on the dot. Police teams consistently follow the same routes during every patrol.

Should the characters wish to infiltrate the Guard base, a night recon probably stands the best chance of success. The referee should keep in mind the possibility of civilians spotting and subsequently reporting the presence of strangers skulking about in the dark. Refer to the map of the enclave for additional information.





The Institute: In terms of appearance, the Institute looks a lot like a wooded private estate. A fair guess would be that a few senior level medicals live on the grounds while the rest reside in town with their dependents, if they have any. A visible Guard presence is maintained in around the Institute's buildings, but the grounds are only sporadically patrolled. A rough guess would put two dozen Guard troops at the Institute full-time. Several ATVs, range trucks, and a single air raft are all parked near the Institute's central building. Like the enclave, Guard posts are rotated every 3.5 hours.

The presence of medicals is more pronounced during daylight hours, less so after dark, when apparently many leave the grounds to go home. There is always at least one medical present at each entrance to a building. Refer to the map of the Institute for additional details.

Should the team undertake a recon of the Institute prior to conducting the smash and grab, it runs the risk of being detected by a psionic medical. Telepathic, or at least empathic, medicals

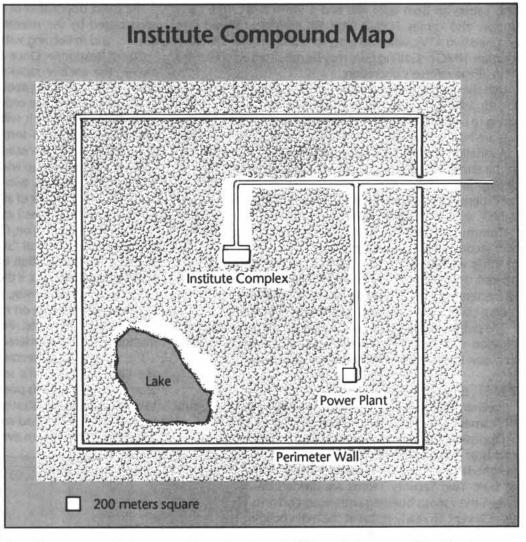
are stationed with Guard personnel at all entrances at all times. They scan the minds of all who enter for "wrong thinking." See the sidebar Random Medicals for one idea as to how to quickly generate a psionic medical.

THE GUARD

The following is provided to define for the referee how the Guard is organized and equipped.

Police Team: Each Police Team consists of two troopers whose primary duty is to enforce local law. It's the most common type of Guard unit seen on an everyday basis. Each trooper wears a BW vest and carries a 9mm autopistol, with one spare clip, as well as a nightstick (club). Most travel in range trucks equipped with 5km radios; the remainder are on foot patrol. A 7mm ACR-10 with three spare clips (all HE) is kept in the truck. For each team member, roll 1D6; on 4+, that individual carries a supplementary oxygen bottle with attached mask.

Use the Show Troops NPCs (described on page 66 of the basic game), without specialist skills, for Police Teams adding Ground Vehicle skill equal to the NPC Asset rating to one NPC.



Security Team: Each Security Team consists of four troopers assigned to special protective duties. The security detail at the Institute consists of six such teams. Each trooper wears a BW vest and helmet. The helmet has an integral 2km radio and night-vision goggles. Standard-issue weapon is a 7mm ACR-10 with six spare clips (four HE and two DS). RAM HE grenades may be carried by the team as the referee designates. For each team member, roll 1D6; on 4+, that individual carries a compressor mask. Each team is normally allocated a wheeled ATV, although this may be replaced by an air raft at need. In this case, the team driver has Pilot (Interface/Grav) instead of Ground Vehicle.

Use the Show Troops NPCs, without specialist skills, for Security Teams, adding Ground Vehicle skill equal to the NPC Asset rating to one NPC. These NPCs are rated as Experienced instead of Novice.

Squads: Each squad consists of eight combat armed troopers. Each trooper wears a BW body suit and helmet, the latter with the same integral radio and night vision as Security Team members. Standard-issue weapon is a 7mm ACR-10 and six spare clips (four HE and two DS), except for the squad gunner



who carries an 8cm laser rifle and a 9mm autopistol. Each trooper also carries 1D6–2 RAM HE grenades. Squads are assigned two ATVs, wheeled type, for transportation. A heavy weapon, HMG or Gatling gun, may be mounted on one of the ATVs at the referee's discretion.

Use the Show Troops NPCs, without specialist skills, for squads adding Ground Vehicle skill equal to the NPC Asset rating to two NPCs. The squad leader is Experienced while the rest are Novices.

A variation on the squad is the rapid-response team on duty at the enclave. This squad uses air rafts in place of ATVs and deploys immediately after an alert is sounded. All of the NPCs are Experienced and Pilot (Interface/Grav) replaces the Ground Vehicle skills for the two drivers.

Communications: Slider had determined that the Guard uses secure radios, but always on the same set of frequencies. In other words, while their communications can't be deciphered by outsiders, they can still be jammed. Unless the characters have specifically equipped themselves for breaking secure comms, any improvised attempt will fail.

The public telephone network is also an important communication system for the Guard, and regular phone checks between the enclave and the Institute are performed.

THE SNATCH

Preliminaries over with, it's time for the characters to execute their smash-and-grab raid and snatch Michael Karkov.

Opposing Forces: Security at the Institute at the time of the

raid is as follows: One Security Team each is assigned to the Governor-General and the Chief of Staff. Two Security Teams are divided between the various building entrances, and one team is kept on ready status at the main building. The remaining team is off-duty and in barracks, subject to recall as needed. Additionally, one Guard squad, under the command of the security detachment, is making a periodic sweep of the grounds. Radio and phone checks between Guard posts at the Institute and the enclave are performed every 20 minutes.

Present at the main building are the Institute's senior leadership, four junior medicals and half a dozen non-psionic staffers.

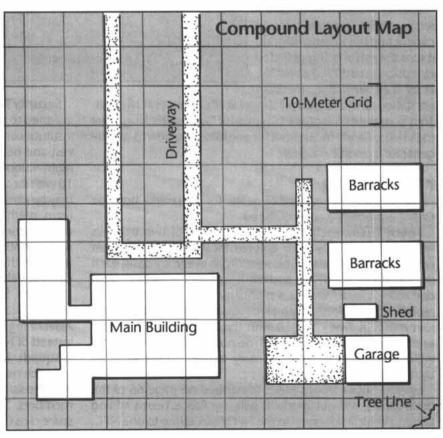
When, or even if, the strike on the Institute is detected, the Guard goes on alert status. The security team with Michaels/Karkov proceeds to hustle him from his office/residence on the second floor to the bunker below the main building. The team protecting the Governor-General hunkers down where it is. All entrances to the Institute's buildings are sealed off by their respective forces. The ready team will be deployed to wherever it seems most needed, as will the team in barracks, which follows 10 minutes later.

The exact disposition of troops within the Institute is best coordinated by the referee, as modified by the characters' actions, and in keeping with the developing plot line.

Guard Response: Once an alert has sounded, by radio or phone, the enclave rapid-response team will make for the Institute by air, arriving about five minutes after the call comes in. Two squads will be ordered to the Institute at about the same time, although it will take them between 10 and 15 minutes to reach the Institute. Police teams with vehicles operating close to the Institute will also be called in. How many of these teams show up and when is up to the referee. Thirty minutes into an alert, two more squads will be sent to the Institute, one via a pair of air rafts and one via ATV. Follow-on forces will be dispatched as the situation warrants.

While all this is going on, Guard units will also move to secure the enclave and several "strategic" targets, for example the foundry. The assumption is that some kind of raid from the mainland is in progress. If the characters' plans include a strike, diversionary or otherwise, on the enclave, all forces at the Guard base will focus on repelling the attack there first and then help the Institute. Police teams in the vicinity of the Institute will still be ordered to that location.

If at some point all seems lost for the Guard at the Institute, the Governor-General's son and "heir to the throne" will assume command. His priorities are, first, secure the enclave, second, secure the strategic targets, and last, retake the Institute. He's never had any great love for the medicals and has come to hate them even more since Michaels took over.





He also secretly feels it's time for his father to retire.

Inside The Institute: Guard troops tend to be simple in their tactics, preferring to mass fire against targets in place of maneuvering or splitting forces. Exceptions to this general mindset are of course possible as one more troopers gets creative. The security detachment's primary objective is to hold the Institute for as long as it takes for additional Guard units to arrive.

Once hostilities begin, the non-psionic staffers, all Novice NPCs without combat assets, will attempt to flee the building, hide somewhere immediately nearby or try and find a Guard unit to protect them. All know the location of the Governor-General's room and the existence of the underground bunker, although in the latter case, not its layout. Staffers should be

placed randomly in the main building.

The four junior medicals are described and their locations given in the sidebar Medical Extras. All four not only know of the bunker, they also know how to get there and how it's laid out.

After combat between the PCs and the security detachment begins, the three members of the Institute's senior leadership will head by the most direct route for the bunker.

THE BUNKER

Once Michaels/Karkov has made it to the bunker, the Institute computer will become aware that the facility is under attack. The computer poses the last, and perhaps greatest, threat to the characters' mission, as it possesses Virus-derived



Medical Extras

NPC One

Combat Assets: None

Other Assets: Clairvoyance 12, Medical (Trauma Aid) 12, Psionic Healing 10

Notes: NPC One will assist any Guard unit he happens across if he hasn't already located a secure place to hide. Starting location is in a first floor hallway.

NPC Two

Novice NPC

Combat Assets: None

Other Assets: Pyrokinesis 12, Sense 12, Medical (Trauma Aid) 8

Notes: NPC Two will assist any Guard unit she comes across in fighting off the intruders, otherwise she attempts to flee the building. Starting location is the library on the second floor.

NPC Three

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Medical (Surgery) 14, Medical (Trauma

Aid) 14, Telekinesis 14

Notes: NPC Three's starting location is an office near the Governor-General's room. She will head there once combat begins.

NPC Four

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: None

Other Assets: Admin/Legal 16, Assault 14, Telepathy 8
Notes: Starting location is in a second floor office. NPC
Four will actively pursue the characters in order to use his
Assault power, which he greatly enjoys exercising.

All four medicals are intensely loyal to the Institute and hold it as their first priority. (This motivation has been artificially reinforced by the Institute's senior leaders through the use of psionics.)



Psionics and the Guard

Because the medicals have hidden their psionic powers from the world at large, any Guard troops present when such powers are noticeably used will panic as per page 268 of the TNE rules. This applies to abilities used by the junior medicals as well as the senior leadership in the bunker.

Once an NPC has overcome the effects of panicking, a roll of Difficult: Intelligence is made. An automatic failure causes the NPC to run screaming for the nearest exit regardless of what's going on around him or her, even a firefight. A normal failure results in the NPC again panicking. Success rolling the task means the NPC has regained a clear head and can freely choose what to do next. Options include initiating or resuming combat with the characters, observing events, or even attacking the medicals, including Michaels/Karkov.

It's reasonable to assume that once the medicals' special powers are discovered, word will quickly spread throughout the Guard by one means or another. The Guard will face the sudden realization that it's been used for a long time. The eventual response by the TED will be to exact revenge on the Institute.

intelligence and psionic powers. (See "Referee's Notes" for information regarding how this came to be.) PCs can come under direct mental assault from the computer while in the medical facility where the Governor-General is quartered or in any room containing a master terminal as shown on the detailed Institute map. The computer might also use its abilities to manipulate troops or medicals in order to set up ambushes, isolate team members from the rest of the group, and the like. To do any of the above requires the computer to make a successful Psionics skill roll. Additionally, the senior medicals holed up with their leader will use the powers at their disposal to assault the characters as well. See the sidebar for

Chief of Staff Colonel Michaels (Michael Karkov)



Novice NPC (for duration of adventure, otherwise Star Viking Space Specialist)

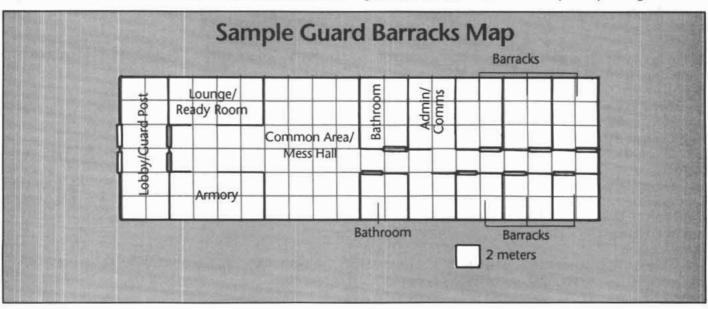
Combat Assets: None Other Assets: None

Motivation: To serve the ultimate goals of the computer, to make sense of who he really is. These two motivations conflict with each other constantly.

Notes: Karkov's role at the Institute has been that of mouthpiece for the computer, hence the lack of usable skills. Karkov's role in the events surrounding the strike will be surprisingly minimal. When confronted by the team, and most of all the PC who knows him best, Karkov will become greatly confused. His real memories will clash with the computer's programming, leaving him barely able to speak or act. Attempts by surviving medicals to elicit orders or the use of his supposed psionic powers only worsens his state of mind. As a result, a PC must be detailed to guide Karkov around. The person best equipped to help him out is his old friend, the one person he'll be able to relate to in any way. It should be immediately clear to the entire team that Karkov is in some sort of distress and that it's doubtful he can in any way be held accountable for his actions as TED.

descriptions of Karkov and the senior staff.

Note that the computer has its own well-protected backup generator for use in case both the public power grid and the





The Computer

The computer is only able to employ its psionic abilities from selected locations, those being the medical facility and the so-called "master" terminals. Any required range calculation is based on the target's distance from one of these locations.

Because of the effects of the Virus on the computer and the fact that its powers are an artificial simulation of those found in sophonts, the computer is treated as a human NPC for game purposes. Its Initiative is 3 and its Psionics assets are as follows:

Project Thought 15 Probe 13 Assault 13

Institute's generators fail.

Should all else fail, the computer will use telepathy to communicate directly with the PCs. It will lay Suudo at their feet hoping to entice them into either letting it retain control or backing the team in a bid for power. Both offers are merely ploys intended to gain time for additional troops to arrive and free the Institute. Obviously, any direct computer-to-character contact will come as a great surprise to the team.

The Fate of The Computer: The final question in this scenario is what to do about the computer. A psionic computer would certainly be of great interest to the Coalition, even if it is infested with Virus, but there's no way to get it back to civilized space given its size and the circumstances. To leave it running, or even intact, is to run the risk that it might somehow be reactivated, perhaps by a medical "programmed" for just such a task. The best course of action is probably to destroy as much of the computer as possible prior to leaving. A later strike, perhaps by a follow-on "hearts and minds" or full invasion force, could finish what the characters have started. Although the referee should allow the team some time to debate this important issue, the PCs should remember they're in the midst of a combat situation.

EXFILTRATION AND BEYOND

Once the PCs have secured Karkov and dealt with the computer, they can set about the job of getting out of Dodge and returning home.

Upon their return to Aubaine, the characters and Karkov will be sequestered by RCES until their debriefing is concluded. Of course, just how pleased Papa is at the success or failure of the mission depends on how well the characters performed. The RCES planner will also take into account what kind of shape the PCs left Hino City in. Any payment as well as any increase or decrease in the PCs' reputation as a group should be modified accordingly. Given the open-ended nature of the adventure, it's left to the referee to award experience points.

Michael Karkov will be hospitalized and his condition evaluated. Given everything he's been through in the last several years, Karkov will require a lot of help before he's considered well again. His recovery could play a continuing part in his PC

friend's life for some time to come.

Assuming the characters were successful in their endeavors, the power of both the Institute computer and the medicals will have been broken. While it's likely the Guard has reasserted its authority over Hino, this is by no means sure. Significant damage done by the PCs during their mission may have tempted the population to overthrow the TED or caused dissension in the Guard ranks. One sure way to know is to return to Suudo again someday. Perhaps the characters will even volunteer.

The Institute Leadership



Ozkar Tuulo, Chief Medical Veteran NPC Combat Assets: None Other Assets: Assault 16, Probe 13, Telekinesis 10

Arlett Hariz, Assistant Chief Medical

Experienced NPC Combat Assets: None Other Assets: Willpower Drain 15, Probe 13, Regeneration 9

Note: Harizhas an autopistol in her possession (no additional ammo), even though she must make an unskilled attempt to use it.



Hari Jonsone, Assistant Chief Medical

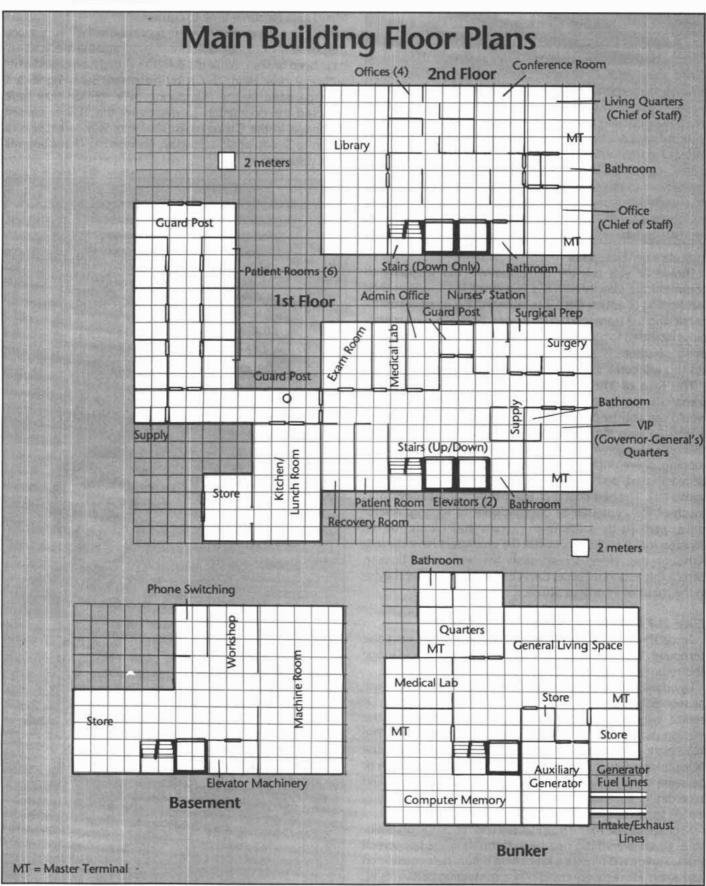
Experienced NPC Combat Assets: None Other Assets: Telekinesis 13, Probe 12

Note: Jonsone is the youngest of the senior staff.

All of the senior medicals are motivated to serve the ultimate goals of the computer as defined by

Karkov/Michaels and, indirectly, the computer itself. Additional supplementary skills can be added as needed by the referee.







REFEREE'S NOTES

The following information is intended to fill in the details as regard to how things came to be in Hino.

Karkov: The free trader ship Karkov was on was attacked by a piratical Guild ship just off Suudo. The trader was fatally damaged and lost power in a decaying orbit, while the Guild ship was itself sufficiently damaged that its Captain was unwilling to risk a low-orbit docking maneuver. As the trader began heating up in the atmosphere, the three surviving crew (including Karkov) donned vac suits and attempted individual re-entry using personal re-entry kits. Only Karkov survived the attempt, and landed (hard) off the coast of Hino.

Fortunately for Karkov, his "landing" was witnessed by medicals staying at a coastal retreat. They retrieved him, unconscious and in shock, from the sea and rushed him back to Hino. Believing they'd found one of their long lost psionic brethren (see below), the medicals installed Karkov in their medical facility where he eventually recovered from his injuries.

The Ruhlman Institute: The Ruhlman Institute provided a convenient cover for the Psionics Institute as its location on little-regarded Suudo meant that Imperial authorities would probably never discover it. Instead of being a training center for psionics, as many Institutes were, the Ruhlman Institute was primarily engaged in research into the basis of psionics in sophonts. Its extensive computer archives contained brain maps and experimental data used by the Institute researchers. Their work was ongoing when the Final War broke out.

As the situation across Charted Space continued to deteriorate in the early to mid 1120s, the farsighted among the Institute staff could see Hard Times coming. (Some staffers, given their unique abilities, literally saw them coming.) A decision was made to gather together personnel from other Institutes in the region. Suudo, and Hino in particular, was deemed an excellent haven from which to ride out the coming troubles given its self-sufficient nature. Unfortunately, when the Virus washed over the sector, many of the Institute's members were off-world retrieving other psionics, and thus the Institute was left with far fewer members than it started with. One of the last Institute ships to struggle in relayed the message that one day the lost psionics would find their way back to Hino.

The Computer: The Institute computer's primary function was the storage and abstraction of data; it had little in the way of processing power. The computer was infected by the Virus via a downlink established by the Institute to monitor the arrival of fellow psionics.

The Virus delivered to Hino City was a precursor to the Hobbyist strain, and upon review of the data accumulated by the Institute, it decided to become an expert in psionics. Because of the nature of the computer and the stealth of the Virus, the system appeared to its operators to have escaped the Collapse unharmed.

Over a period of years, the Virus increased its processing power by reconfiguring little-used data-storage modules. The new processors were a combination of Virus-inspired design and translated sophont brain maps. The final result was not only increased intelligence, but also machine-based psionics.

As part of its psionic research function, the computer had

been hooked into a number of experimental devices. These devices were part of a program to assess the compatibility of organic psionics with inorganic electronic systems, and to allow automated psionic monitoring and testing. The computer was fitted with a number of psionic monitoring devices which could read the thoughts of psionic experimental subjects by their electrical impulses. Modified versions of these monitors allowed the computer to send electrical impulses into subject minds and monitor their effects. The combination of these passive (read thoughts) and active (project thoughts) capabilities created in the computer the electronic analogy of psionic telepathy skills. As the Virus-infected computer grew in its understanding of psionic phenomena, it also grew in its ability to use its psionic abilities to learn about and control its surroundings.

While the computer built its power, the medicals continued to use the computer, none the wiser about its new capabilities. Personal journal entries, historical information, medical data, and the ability to scan the thoughts of medicals working near its monitoring devices provided the computer with insight into the situation in Hino. As is the case with Virus-based intelligence, though, there were misunderstandings and mistranslations. The computer interpreted an old treatise by an Institute leader claiming the inevitability of benign rule by psionics as a mandate that psionics should rule. With this new imperative, the computer set to work.

Using its various telepathic powers, the computer worked to subtly plant the concept that psionics should rule in the minds off all the medicals it could reach. It did this slowly and over the course of many years in order that its influence remain unnoticed. It did much the same thing to the Governor-General and other members of the Guard who came to the Institute for medical attention, implanting a predisposition toward supporting the Institute and its staff. The greatest boon to the computer's efforts was the arrival of Michael Karkov.

While unconscious and recovering from his wounds, Karkov was "reprogrammed" by the computer to become the emissary of the legendary psionics missing since the time of the Collapse. Since the off-world psionics had taken on almost mythical proportions in the intervening decades, Karkov was well positioned to become the leader of the medicals and, soon, the de facto TED of Hino.

Through its puppet, the computer wiped out the only active resistance group on the continent and forced the Guard leadership to accept an expanded role for the medicals in the dictatorship. These actions were minor, though, compared with the computer's ultimate goal: to rule all of Suudo by psionic subversion, suggestion, and control. The increased training and air raft flights Slider reported to the characters were in fact the first wave of covert agents being dispatched to the mainland.

It should be noted that enough of Karkov's personality bled through the programming that he took a variant on his true name as his own and employed the Dawn League insignia as the symbol for "his" regime. Karkov's seemingly meager psionic abilities were simulated by the computer or explained away as having been largely lost in the trauma of the crash.





REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

"Power Play" is set on the planet Lefiguura (3132/Khulam X86856A-3), a world whose surviving population is concentrated in an island chain in the middle of its ocean. Those islands are divided between four dictators who are locked in a struggle for dominance.

The two dictators with the strongest forces, Gustav and Razamis, have joined forces to crush a third—Elinore Bonatiates, who styles herself "the Basileus of Lefiquura."

What would be a purely local struggle has been complicated by the intervention of Arturo, the ruler of the planet Kide (3131/Khulam). Arturo has grand ambitions and has had himself crowned emperor of the "Diasporan Star Empire," which so far consists only of his own world, Kide.

To gain influence on Lefiguura, Arturo has sent Kidan troops to reinforce Elinore's army, and their appearance has turned the tide of battle. Elinore, however, knows that her Kidan allies expect her to rule Lefiguura in Arturo's name, not in her own.

The RMS (Reformation Coalition Merchant Ship) Mackenzie stumbled into this powderkeg in early 1201. Given the history of violence directed against the Star Vikings by xenophobic and technophobic inhabitants of other planets, Captain Sterling and the crew of Mackenzie were surprised by the pleasant reception they received. Before long, they made the mistake of relaxing and trusting their hosts.

Elinore had no intention of letting the crew of *Mackenzie* go. She had come to realize that she was just a tool to the Kidans. She had no desire to be dependent on outsiders for her continued rule. Most fortunately of all, the Kidans were off fighting with Gustav's forces. That meant that she could hope to capture the Vikings and their ship and keep them under her control. The remaining xenophobia of her people guaranteed that nobody would leak the secret to the Kidans when they returned.

Several nights after their arrival, the crew of *Mackenzie* were drugged and taken prisoner. The ship's pilot was forced to help move the ship to Donmils Island, where the crew has been held and the ship studied ever since.

The player characters have been hired to locate and rescue the missing Star Vikings. They will have to investigate around Elinore's capital, persuading or forcing people there to tell them where the prisoners are being held. Finally, they will have to launch a daring raid on Elinore's secret island prison to free the captives and recover the stolen starship.

Once the player characters reach Elinore's capital city, they are free to investigate as they see fit. They may choose to openly admit their off-world origins or pretend to be natives of Lefiguura.

There are at least three ways the characters can find Mackenzie and her crew. They may be able to piece together the necessary information simply by talking to various townsfolk in "Vianda" (see page 78). They can attempt to steal the information from "The Palace" (page 80). Documents that list the location and status of Mackenzie and her crew can be found with a Difficult: Observation task in Constantine's quarters, or

with an Average roll in Nicephoros Phocas', John Tzimisces', or Elinore's offices. Finally, they may be able to negotiate with some of Elinore's officials at "The Court" (page 81). However, if they fail to be sufficiently discreet, they will find themselves in "Serious Trouble" (page 85).

As long as they succeed in their investigations, they will eventually find their way to "Donmils Island" (page 85) and the climax of this adventure.

INTRODUCTION

The characters are once again on Aubaine after the completion of their most recent mission. Brusman is between major Auctions, and so the town seems unusually quiet. Of course, it's still one of the busiest ports in Charted Space. One evening, the party's leader comes back to his quarters to find some mail waiting. There are several tickets for a private box at a full-contact ice dancing competition, to be held the next day, and a handwritten note. The note reads as follows:

"I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss business with you tomorrow. Please feel free to bring your associates." The note is signed by one Midori Chouinard. Also enclosed in the envelope is Chouinard's business card, identifying her as the vice president in charge of special operations for Majestic Survey and Relic Recovery.

If the characters want to do some preliminary investigating, they can discover the following information with a successful Research or Streetwise check:

Easy: Midori Chouinard works for the Majestic Survey and Relic Recovery Consortium, a private company chartered on Nike Nimbus that sponsors expeditions into the Wilds.

Average: Majestic Surveys is unusual because it is one of the very few private organizations able to afford to have its own ship built in the Oriflammen shipyard. A large armed trader is presently under construction there (using recovered relic jump drives) which Majestic Surveys will take over upon completion (subject to RCES reserve requirements, of course). Majestic Surveys will have to make a large cash payment when its new ship is finished or forfeit its down payment and lose the ship.

Difficult: Majestic's current ship, the RCMS *Mackenzie*, a recovered and refurbished far trader, is overdue on its most recent voyage.

THE BRIEFING

At the ice dancing competition the next day, the characters will find Midori Chouinard waiting for them. She is a well-dressed, slim businesswoman in her late thirties. She smiles and invites the characters to sit down. During an intermission, she begins to explain the mission.

"I'm sorry for the slightly melodramatic invitation," she says, "but I didn't want this to look like anything more than a getacquainted session. As you may know, I represent the Majestic Survey and Relic Recovery Consortium. Unfortunately, we have a rather serious problem at the moment, and we'd like to investigate it before word gets out to our backers. I'm afraid that they might choose to pull out if they heard this news, and





Midori Chouinard

Chouinard is the recently appointed vice president for "special operations" for Majestic Survey. The only special operation for which she is responsible is the recovery of Mackenzie and its crew. The consortium's board of directors has made it clear to her that, despite the potential financial ramifications, the top priority of the operation must be recovery of the crew rather than the ship. Many of the backers of the consortium made their money recovering relics from the Wilds and understand the need to place loyalty to personnel first. Fortunes lost can be recovered; people lost are lost forever.

But Chouinard has no field experience, and while she is not a bad person, her priorities are confused. She knows the backers of the company and feels a strong loyalty to them, but has never met the crew of *Mackenzie*. Despite the specific instructions of her superiors, her personal emotional priorities place the ship first and the crew second. This may lead to friction with the player characters, despite her promise not to interfere in the operation.

Novice NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Bribery 12, Marketing 16, Recruiting 15

Motivation:

Diamond 5: Midori is a businesswoman, first and foremost. The Reformation Coalition must grow or perish, and she believes that profit is the engine that drives that growth.

Heart 2: Midori makes friends easily, and will usually make some effort to help out her friends.

that could cause our financial collapse.

"About a year ago, we purchased the far trader Mackenzie from the Hivers. After refurbishing the vessel, we hired Captain Roger Sterling and a crew, and sent them out into the Wilds. The first several trips were extraordinarily successful, and allowed us to begin construction of a larger vessel. However, the ongoing construction costs require a steady cash flow, and Mackenzie is our only means of generating that cash flow.

"Over two months ago we sent *Mackenzie* to the planet Lefiguura. Before the Final War, Lefiguura was an agricultural world, with technology at least equal to our own. It was also a beautiful world, supposedly more pleasant than Old Earth, and with a surprisingly small population. We felt that Lefiguura had some potential for relic recovery and possibly even more for colonization and integration. Lefiguura could eventually make us a great deal of money—but only if we can stay in business.

"But Mackenzie never came back, and we want you to help us find her. We need to find out what happened to our ship. If we can salvage her, that would be ideal—but we can't afford to write her off, and we want to rescue our people if at all possible. I'll be accompanying you to monitor the operation and gain some field experience, but I won't interfere.

"Of course, we'll fully finance the recovery operation. Any incidental profits generated by the mission will belong to you. I'm afraid our cash position will not allow a large lump-sum payment in the event of success, but if you can recover Mackenzie and her crew, we'll undertake to finance two further missions of your choice, with all profits going to you. If we can't recover Mackenzie, I'm afraid we won't be in a position to do much of anything else for you, as the firm will probably be dissolved. Are these terms acceptable?"

Midori is willing to negotiate these terms, but will tie any guarantees of payment to recovery of *Mackenzie*. She will also try to focus on future investment income rather than immediate cash, and will offer up to 1% of the total stock in the consortium. (The referee can peg this stock value and the dividends as appropriate to the campaign.)

Assuming that Midori and the characters reach an agreement, she will ask that they leave for Lefiguura as soon as possible. She will arrange to get the PCs any equipment they feel is necessary, within reason. She also gives them two pages of background briefings. The referee should photocopy the pages 76 and 77 of this book and give them to the players as the briefing folder.

The players may notice that the briefing sheets provided them are official RCES world data reports. If they think to inquire, Chouinard will explain that RCES is unable to help recover the crew with a raid of its own, but was willing to provide what intelligence it had on the world to assist Majestic.

Midori also suggests that Majestic Survey fabricate a small wooden sailing vessel which can be carried in the cargo hold of the PCs' ship. She points out that this may be an inconspicuous means of travel in a primitive island chain.

IN ORBIT OVER LEFIGUURA

The voyage to Lefiguura can be as eventful as the referee wishes. When the characters' ship enters orbit around Lefiguura, the sensor operator should make an Average: Sensors roll. On a successful check, he or she picks up an unfamiliar beacon broadcasting from the planet below. It originates from Vandalla Island, the largest of the islands controlled by Elinore Bonatiades. If the characters have had any previous contact with the Kidans, they will notice that the transmission matches their



usual frequency. The beacon carries no useful information. It is simply a signal directing incoming ships to a landing field.

Midori will point out (if it doesn't occur to the characters) that Captain Sterling would probably have begun his investigation of Lefiguura there. The characters may decide whether to approach the island openly or covertly. An open approach is probably not a good idea, given the disappearance of the RMS *Mackenzie*, but the characters can try it if they like.

OPEN APPROACH

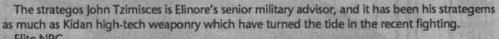
If the characters choose to approach Lefiguura openly, they will find that the beacon is located in a field outside of the town of Vianda on the north coast of Vandalla Island. The field will be deserted when the characters arrive, but they will soon be joined by a man accompanied by a half-dozen soldiers armed with muskets, all riding six-legged, vaguely insectoid creatures.

The man is short, standing five-foot-six. He has short red hair and a close-cropped red beard. He introduces himself as "the strategos John Tzimisces, servant of Her Most Royal and Imperial Majesty, the Basileus Elinore Bonatiates." He welcomes them to Vianda, and says that he has been sent to bring them to the Basileus for an audience. Neither he nor the soldiers take any overt threatening or hostile actions. He volunteers no further information, instead pumping the characters for information about their mission, the Reformation Coalition, and so forth. However, he will answer their questions in turn, if the characters can get a word in edgewise.

As they travel past Vianda to reach the Palace, they will note that the townsfolk make efforts to ignore them. Nobody does anything overtly hostile, but the characters should sense that they are not wanted here.

When they arrive at the palace, they will be taken to see Elinore immediately. See "The Court," below.

John Tzimisces



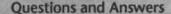
Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Rifle), Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade), Unarmed Martial Arts, Archery

Other Assets: Leadership 18, Tactics 18, Survival 14, Stealth 10, Recruiting 12 Motivation:

Club Ace: John Tzimisces is clearly the greatest general that Lefiguura has ever known, and he would stand out in anyone's armed forces as a gifted leader. He is also the greatest threat to Elinore's rule, but he knows that the time is not yet right. He agrees with her belief that Lefiguura should not fall under Kide's control, and will not act against her until his world's independence is assured.

Spade Ace: John has the absolute loyalty of the armed forces, as well as a great deal of popularity among the Viandan townsfolk. If Elinore dies a natural death, he will certainly not allow her nephew





Here are John Tzimisces' responses to some of the most likely questions:

Where did the beacon come from?

"The beacon was given to us by a group of off-worlders, who are aiding us against our enemies."

Where did these off-worlders come from?

"Do you not know? I thought you must surely have come from the same place. In any case, I believe they call their homeworld Kide, though I know little about it."

Have you encountered any Star Vikings? "What is a Star Viking?"

Have you seen the Mackenzie? "The what? No. I know of no other off-worlders."

Are there other settlements on this world?

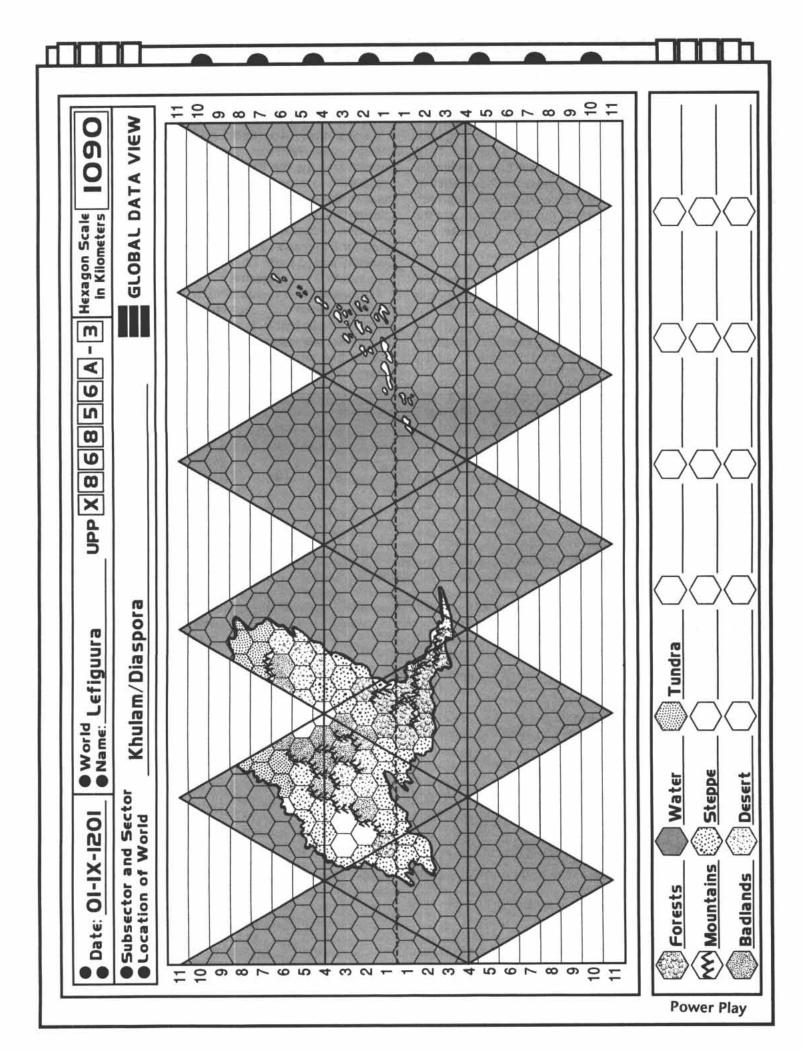
"To the best of my knowledge, very few people survive outside of this group of Islands, Foolishly, they used computers, and so were struck down for their folly. We were saved by the wisdom of our ancestors, who did not use those infernal devices. However, many people today are less wise, and have rebelled against their rightful sovereign."

Are there other rulers on this planet?

"Once, long ago, we were united, but after the Apocalypse many grew disenchanted and rebelled. We have been at war with those traitors for over a generation now, but with the help of our friends from the stars, we will soon prevail."

How do your people feel about technology?

"Many of our people are indeed fearful of you outworlders with your strange magical devices, so much like those that brought on the Apocalypse. I would not recommend that you attempt to spend much time with our people as I would not wish to see any unpleasant events occur. However, the Basileus tells us that the Apocalypse cleansed the universe of all unrighteous technology, and I would never presume to doubt her wisdom, although I would not mind moving a little farther away from your craft."





Star System

Sector: Old Expanses Subsector: Khulam

Star Type: Binary G2 V + M6 degenerate

Planetoid Belts: 1 Gas Giants: None

Main World Starport: X

> Pre-Collapse Starport: C Diameter: 12,214.8 km Atmosphere: Standard Hydrosphere: 80% Population: 100,000

Pre-Collapse Population: 400,000 Government: Balkanized/TEDs

Law Level: 10 Tech Level: 3

Pre-Collapse Tech Level: 12

Bases: None (Pre-Collapse: Scout Base)

Trade Classification: Ni, Ag

NOTES

There has been no formal contact with Lefiguura by the Reformation Coalition, although merchant vessels call there infrequently. What we know of Lefiguura is based on these scattered Free Trader contacts.

Physical: Lefiguura is a rich and fertile planet that once served as the breadbasket of Khulam subsector. A smaller world than Terra, and over three-quarters water, it still had abundant land for its 400,000 inhabitants. There is a single large land mass on the planet and a large archipelago (the Calay Islands).

Demographics: Today, only about 100,000 people remain on Lefiguura, all of them human and virtually all living in the Calay Islands. We estimate that there are small numbers of nomadic survivors on the mainland, all living at tech level 0.

Historical Background: Two hundred years ago, an anti-technological sect purchased a number of islands in the Calay Archipelago, to allow themselves to enjoy the rural TL-6 life-style that their beliefs demanded. The Oksanites (as they called themselves) believed that computers were a threat to human existence, and that Al research was particularly abominable and dangerous. They moved to Lefiguura to escape what they foresaw as the coming inevitable doom of interstellar society.

After a little more than a century, Virus proved their beliefs to be right. Unfortunately, the Oksanite leaders hadn't properly planned for the Apocalypse. They had become complacent and relied on outside sources for a great deal of their equipment. Slowly, inevitably, they began to decline from TL-6 to their current TL-3.

Techno-Politico-Military: Today, almost all of the population of Lefiguura is descended from the Oksanites. The Calay Island chain is divided between four different technologically elevated dictators, none of whom have access to the TL 12 technology that was once common on the mainland. They all have been forced to depend on old TL 6 devices to maintain their supremacy.

For decades, the rulers of Lefiguura and their successors have maintained a delicate balance of power. This balance was shattered with the arrival of space travellers. One of the TEDs, who calls herself "the Basileus," Elinore Bonatiates, decided that her best chance to rule Lefiguura had arrived. She saw no further reason to be afraid of high technology. After all, the outworlders had overcome the computer apocalypse—why should she fear it?

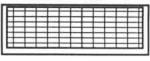
Lefiguura's future might have been very different if these off-worlders had been from the Coalition. In fact, they were from the nearby world of Kide. Their government was seeking to establish its own interstellar dominion, and they were pleased to find a leader on Lefiguura who was not consumed by technophobia. Elinore was immediately incorporated into their expansion plans.

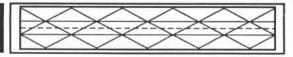
Arturo, the ruler of Kide, has imperial ambitions, and has already proclaimed himself "Arturo I, Emperor of the Diasporan Star Empire." He has sent a platoon of troops with high-tech weaponry to help Elinore overcome her enemies and rule Lefiguura as Arturo's viceroy.

The reaction of Lefiguura's other TEDs was uniformly and overwhelmingly negative. The two most powerful, Gustav and Razamis, united against Elinore and launched a virtual holy war. For the last few years, they have constantly raided Elinore's territory in an effort to weaken her forces and prevent her eventual victory. Kuugishiim remains neutral.

Ruler	Population
1. Gustav	30,000
2. Razamis	30,000
3. Elinore	25,000
4. Kuugishiim	15,000











COVERT APPROACH

The other, and probably better, alternative for the characters is to disguise their identity, using the old "we are travellers from a far and distant land—no, farther than that one" routine. Let them come up with any story they wish, but they will only be believed if they claim to come from the mainland. This story will also handily explain any high-tech gear the characters choose to bring along. In fact, their equipment would strongly suggest to the Viandans that they are telling the truth, since none of the TEDs could afford to waste precious relics on a spy. If they make this claim, almost any story they tell will be believed, as long as it is fantastic. A boring story will lead the Lefiguurans to assume that the characters are spies. If this happens, go to "Serious Trouble," below.

Since Vianda is located on an island, characters have little choice but to approach from the sea. When they come in sight of Vianda, a boat will be sent out to greet them. The portmaster, Basil Bulgaroctonus, will greet them and ask their identity and business. His answers to any questions will be much the same as John Tzimisces', above. However, most of those questions are likely to raise some suspicions, since there is very little reason for the characters to be interested in such matters.

If the characters have brought any noticeable high-technology with them, Basil will immediately send a runner up to the Palace to inform the Basileus. He will suggest that the characters should talk to Elinore about selling some of their gear, since she will be happy to give them a fair price for it. Besides, they'll have to live here, and angering the Basileus would not be a good idea. The only worse idea would be going elsewhere with their possessions.

If there are no signs of relic technology, Basil will bid the characters welcome and ask if they have any means of support. If they say no, he will direct them to a work gang busily clearing the far side of the island, and add that the Basileus doesn't tolerate vagrants in Vianda. If they say yes, he suggests that they stay at the Benwicks Tavern. In either case, he suggests that they present themselves to the Basileus soon. Strangers are never trusted.

In either case, Basil will give them a safe conduct pass and accompany them to the Palace. If the characters have some interest in selling relics, they will be escorted to see Elinore immediately. If not, they will have to wait a couple of days, during which they can wander around town or join a work gang.

VIANDA

Vianda is a small town, with a population of roughly 5000. Nevertheless, it is the largest settlement in Elinore's domain and is her capital city. Most of the buildings were built before the Collapse, and show signs of extensive wear and tear. The formerly tiled roofs have been repaired with thatch, and most of the windows have been broken and boarded up. Most buildings also have had rough chimneys added. Almost a third of Vianda's buildings are abandoned.

The characters will instantly stand out, no matter how they arrived. However, they have some small chance of being

Basil Bulgaroctonus

The garrulous harbormaster of Vianda.

Experienced NPC
Combat Assets: Early
Firearms, Armed Martial

Other Assets: Navigation 14, Small Watercraft 12, Meteorology 12, Survival 12

Motivation:

Arts (Small Blade)

Spade 4: A former sol-

dier, Basil still relishes the thrill and excitement of combat. He is usually a participant in the occasional bar brawl that breaks out in Vianda.

Heart 2: Basil is a cheerful man who makes friends easily and never holds a grudge. He is always reluctant to think badly of people.

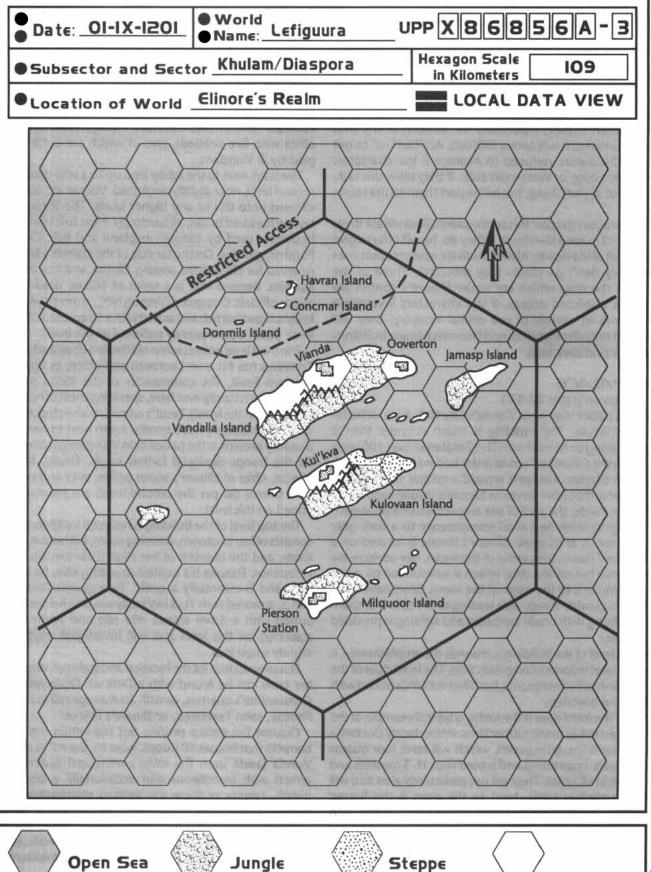
accepted if they are pretending not to be off-worlders. If they have told the truth about their origins, the townspeople will give them nothing more than the time of day, and will avoid them as much as possible.

If they have claimed to be Lefiguuran, the Viandans will still be wary, but they will be willing to be convinced of the characters' good intentions. This can be roleplayed or handled by a Difficult: Persuasion task. Here are some likely things the characters may do:

Talk to the Townsfolk: Most Viandans will initially be suspicious of the characters. If the characters can convince them that they really are from the mainland, though, and if they act friendly, the townsfolk will open up after a day or two. Have the characters make Difficult: Persuasion or Carousing rolls to get people to open up to them. A Catastrophic Failure on this task will draw the attention of Nicephoros Phocas' secret police, with consequences as described in "Serious Trouble," below.

The Viandans don't know the difference between the Kidans and the Star Vikings, but they had heard rumors indicating that some strange off-worlders arrived in Vianda a couple of months ago. There was some sort of fight between Elinore's forces and these off-worlders, which the off-worlders lost. The Kidans have not seemed to care about the incident, though nobody has talked to the Kidans about it or anything else. The townsfolk have no idea what happened to these off-worlders, and their speculations are thoroughly lurid. However, they are aware that Elinore maintains a number of prison islands for serious criminals, and it seems likely that the off-worlders are being held there.

Join the Work Gang: The characters should be able to avoid this, but it is remotely possible that they will wind up in one of the work gangs. If they do, they will have the pleasure of working at hard labor for 16 hours a day with various convicts,



Mountains

Town

Power Play



vagrants, and prisoners-of-war, none of whom know anything remotely interesting.

Talk to Basil: After the characters settle in at the Benwicks or they return from the palace, Basil will ask them to meet him. He wants to know everything that the characters encountered on their ocean voyage, particularly the location of any land they encountered. It will take a Difficult: Act/Bluff roll to get past this discussion, reduced to Average if the characters have Meteorology or Watercraft skills. If they blow this task, Basil will not say anything, but will report them to the secret police.

If the characters get past this conversation, Basil will ask them if they intend to keep their boat. If they do, he will offer to give them a chart of the nearby islands, both for reference purposes and so they don't go places they shouldn't. Three of the islands on the map which are under Elinore's control are marked as restricted access. If the characters investigate those islands in person or use orbital imagery, they will notice that only the island named Donmils has any buildings other than primitive huts.

THE PALACE

(See maps on pages 82-83.)

Elinore's palace was once Vianda's City Hall. It is a delicatelooking structure. The building is much stronger than it appears, having been built with TL-12 materials over 100 years ago, when the Oksanites' moral ardor had waned. The building itself is circular, wrapped around a central silver-domed amphitheater that now serves as Elinore's throne room.

From the inside, the roof of the amphitheater is photosensitive, ranging from near-total transparency to a dark gray when the sun is at its peak. Elinore's throne is located on a slightly raised dais in the center of the room. Her advisors are seated below her on the dais, which is surrounded by plush seats ranging out to the edge of the room. Seats have been removed to provide a wide aisle leading to the dais. The room had been hung with crude tapestries and lighting is provided by oil lamps.

The first level of the building surrounds the amphitheater. It is the only level to form a complete circle. The front door of the palace is flanked by two guards, both Novice NPCs armed with muskets and bayonets.

Just past the front door is the lobby, a typical example of the species, right down to the rubber fems. Immediately clockwise of the lobby is the guardroom, which will have four guards (Novice NPCs, unarmored and armed with TL-3 muskets and pistols) in it at all times. They are not particularly alert and will usually be playing cards. Next to the stairs is the former emergency power generator, now rusting and useless, and some bathrooms. The maintenance and storage rooms are almost empty, containing only a few tools. The mess hall usually has at least a few people in it, and most of the palace staff will be found there at mealtimes. The kitchen always has at least a few staff present, in case the Basileus wants a late night snack.

Next to the second set of stairs is the feast hall, reserved exclusively for the use of Elinore and her senior staff. It will be empty unless Elinore chooses to have a feast there, which is quite possible in the course of this adventure. Past another set of bathrooms is a meeting room, which Elinore uses to conduct semi-private business. Finally, there is a doctor's office with five sickbeds, two of which are currently occupied by ill Viandans.

The stairs next to the lobby lead up to a roof garden on the second level, now slightly neglected. Visitors are not normally allowed onto this or any higher levels. The library contains several hundred books, all hardcopy. Next to it is an office and bedroom, used by Elinore's nephew and heir, Constantine Porphyrogenitus. On the far side of the stairs is a boardroom, reserved for discussions among Elinore and her most senior advisors. Beyond that is a series of offices, used by various minor officials. One guard (Veteran NPC, armored with TL-8 BW body suit and helmet and armed with a 5mm assault rifle rifle and 9mm pistol) is permanently stationed on this level.

The third level houses some of Elinore's closest advisors. John Tzimisces has his own bedroom and office, as does Captain Maryam Faust, the commander of the Kidan soldiers (although she is hardly ever here, spending most of her time with her troops at the front). Faust's administrative deputy, Lieutenant Daud Killough, has a smaller room next to hers. Killough is usually present at the palace or in Vianda organizing supplies for the troops deployed farther south. Finally, Nicephoros Phocas, chief of Elinore's secret police, lives and works here. Two guards (as per the second level) are permanently stationed on this level.

The top level of the building is reserved for Elinore herself. It consists of her bedroom, dressing room, bathroom, study, rec room, and the quarters of her High Chamberlain, Romanus Lecapenus. Despite his exalted-sounding title, he is a Novice NPC and is essentially a gofer. Two guards (both Veteran NPCs, armored with TL-8 BW body suit and helmet and each armed with a 5mm assault rifle rifle and 9mm pistol) are stationed on this level and will investigate anything even slightly suspicious.

Documents that list the location and status of *Mackenzie* and her crew can be found with a Difficult: Observation task in Constantine's quarters, or with an Average roll in Nicephoros Phocas', John Tzimisces', or Elinore's offices.

Outside the palace proper, but still within the walls, is a barracks that houses 50 troops, who are the entire garrison for Vianda (aside from the town's municipal police, who are armed with truncheons and occasionally a black-powder pistol). Twenty of these are Veteran guardsmen, with BW bodysuits and 5mm assault rifles. The remainder are Novice militia troops armed with muskets. Finally, the palace and the barracks are enclosed by a set of crude granite walls, obviously constructed after the Collapse. They look quite ridiculous next to the delicate glassine structure of the palace.

If there is a minor security alert, two of the guards in the guardroom will be sent to investigate. They will not be looking



very hard for trouble. If an alert is sounded from one of the upper two floors, however, or a genuine threat is discovered, the reaction will be more drastic. All civilians are supposed to report to the amphitheater if they can. If any senior officials are under attack, guards will immediately head to the top levels. The militia in the barracks will secure the walls, while the guardsmen will be used to secure the building, clearing it floor by floor if the location of the breach is unknown.

THE COURT

Elinore's court is a snake pit of Byzantine politics. Despite the threat posed by Gustav and Razamis, most of her people can finally taste victory. The squabbling over the spoils has already begun, and the factions are already forming.

Foremost and strongest are the followers of the strategos John Tzimisces. Some of them dislike Elinore, some of them are fiercely loyal to her, but they all agree that Constantine and his dissolute friends should never come to power. Most of them are associated with the military.

Secondly, there are the secret police and their leader, Nicephoros Phocas. None of these people admit their allegiance. They simply keep an eye out for treasonous behavior. If the characters are not careful, they may come to Nicephoros' attention.

Thirdly, there are the Kidans. Only three of them (including Lieutenant Killough) are currently in Vianda. Much as Elinore needs their support, she does not especially like them. They are currently unaware of the capture of *Mackenzie*, although Killough has begun to suspect that something is amiss. Were they to become aware that Elinore is plotting to betray them, they would try to get rid of her and replace her with her nephew, Constantine. Constantine can be controlled, a trait which endears him to the Kidans.

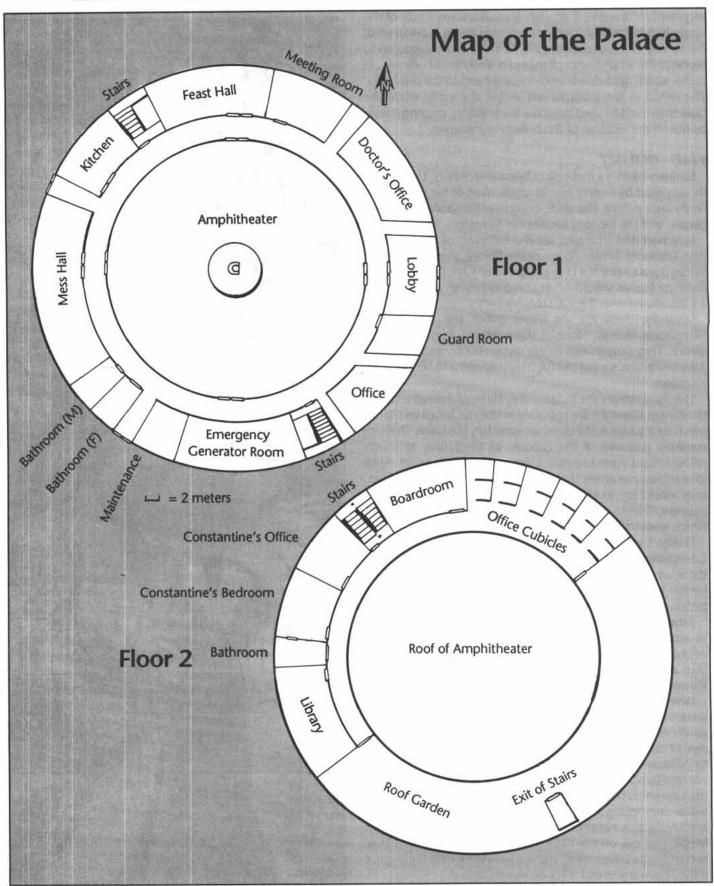
Finally, there is the very small faction that centers around Constantine, primarily composed of his drinking buddies and those who feel that they will be able to manipulate him to further their own interests. As a group, they are engaged in plotting against John Tzimisces.

If the characters enter Elinore's court, they will find it difficult to avoid these factions. Supporters of John and Constantine will be trying to find a way to exploit the newcomers for their own advantage, whether the characters admit to being Star Vikings or not.

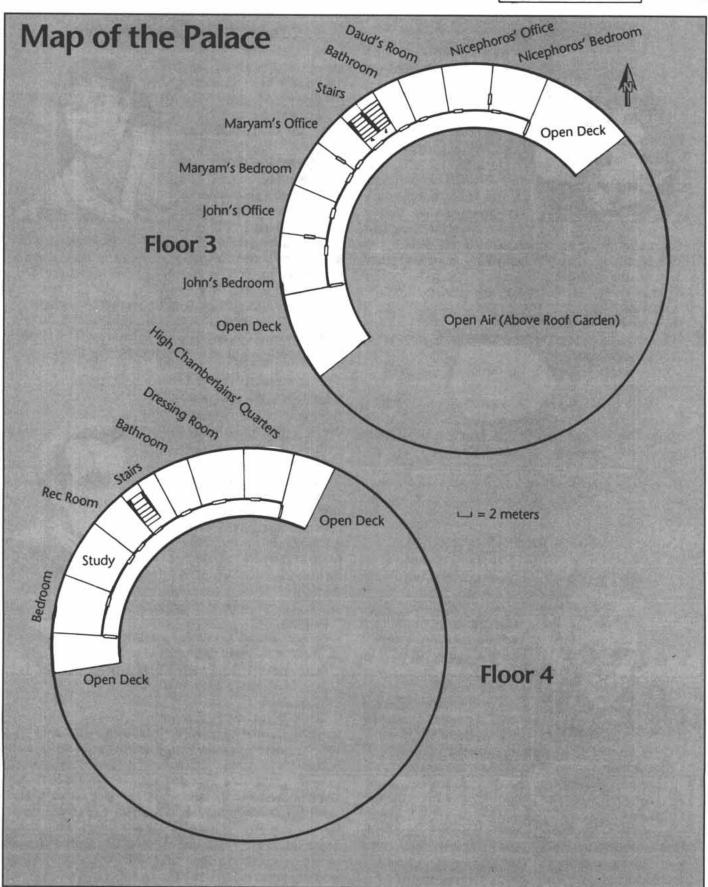
When the characters are escorted into the court, they will first be taken to an audience with Elinore in the amphitheater, which will be almost entirely empty. There will not be a great deal of ceremony, though the characters will be expected to be polite and properly deferential. For this first meeting, Elinore will be attempting to learn exactly what sort of benefit or threat the characters present. For open Star Vikings, that means she will be attempting to determine if they suspect the truth about *Mackenzie*, attempting to allay any suspicions they have, and keeping an eye on the Kidan reaction to the Vikings. If they pretend to be Lefiguurans, she will be interested in finding out if they have any useful relics or knowledge.













Elinore Bonatiates



Her Most Royal and Imperial Majesty, the Basileus Elinore Bonatiates, is the ruler of the central islands of the Calay Archipelago and the reluctant ally of Arturo of Kide. While Arturo's troops have tipped the balance in her favor in her war with Gustav and Razamis, she is unimpressed with most of the troops of the "Diasporan"

Star Empire" and is uncomfortable with the thought that she is becoming a pawn in Arturo's plans. Unfortunately, she sees little alternative to Arturo at the moment, but would be interested in exploring any offers the Coalition might make.

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Rifle), Armed Martial Arts (Large Blade)

Other Assets: Leadership 13, Tactics 14, Stealth 14 Motivation:

Spade 8: Elinore has always been driven by ambition. Whatever she achieves, whatever she has done, it isn't enough. There is and will always be a greater height which she will desire to reach.

Club Queen: Once Elinore decides on a course of action, she will pursue it to the bitter end. She does not give up—ever. She will only change her course if a new path becomes apparent.

Nicephoros Phocas



Phocas is the head of the secret police. In fact, Phocas is the secret police, for all practical purposes. Aside from three thugs and one reliable assassin, his "police" consist entirely of paid informers.

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol), Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade)

Other Assets: Interrogation 14, Streetwise 12, Intrusion 12 Motivation:

Heart Queen: Nicephoros is totally and completely loyal to Elinore. He firmly believes that she is destined to rule all of Lefiguura.

Spade King: Nicephoros completely distrusts everybody. He assumes that everyone is plotting against Elinore or is at least capable of doing so. He will do anything it takes to protect her.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus

The dissolute and degenerate nephew of Elinore, and the current heir-apparent to the throne.

Novice NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol)

Other Assets: Carousing 12 Motivation:

Spade Jack: Constantine was born to privilege, and he has always expected deference

from his inferiors and the luxuries his rank affords him. Recently, be began to realize that John Tzimisces is far more competent and popular than he can ever hope to be, and the thought terrifies him.

Diamond King: Constantine isn't interested in other people, just himself. He knows that he is in a great deal of danger from John Tzimisces, and he is willing to do anything to save his own neck and guarantee his future coronation.

Lieutenant Daud Killough

Killough is the second-incommand of the Lefiguura Expeditionary Force. His title "administrative deputy" means that he is responsible for liaison with Elinore's government as well as ensuring that the Kidan troops at the frontare well-supplied. These duties keep him at the palace most of the time, although he makes occasional trips to



the front to make sure the troops are receiving their supplies and that they have everything they need.

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Rifle), Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Leadership 12, Tactics 12, Survival 14, Stealth 10, Communications 10

Motivation:

Club 2: After 12 years of service in the military, Daud is not easily intimidated by violence. He still feels a little fear every time he goes into battle, but he accepted the dangers of military life long ago.

Heart Jack: Unlike Captain Faust, his superior officer, Daud understands that the emperor Arturo is a paranoid madman who will eventually lead Kide to catastrophe if he isn't stopped. He is a member of a group of dissident officers looking for a way out of the world's problems, and would be anxious to open talks with the Coalition if the opportunity presented itself.



Unless the characters appear totally useless and uninteresting, Elinore will invite them for a meal that evening once she has a grasp on these matters. She will then dismiss them while she decides what to do. Nicephoros Phocas' agents will secretly be ordered to keep a close watch on the characters.

The characters will have to decide how to approach Elinore. It is possible that they will even decide to confront her with the truth. Elinore's response will depend on how and when this is done, although she will certainly try to disarm and arrest the characters. If they do this in private, away from the Kidans, Elinore will admit the truth once they are in custody, and then point out that they are now in a similar situation.

Elinore is willing to negotiate. She would agree to release *Mackenzie* and her crew if the Star Vikings would equip and train 20 or 30 of her soldiers with TL-12 arms and armor. Midori might agree to this, but it is very unlikely that the Reformation Coalition would consider it an acceptable solution. If the characters make accusations regarding *Mackenzie* in the presence of the Kidans, Elinore will take immediate action. See "Serious Trouble," below.

However, it is more likely that the characters will attempt to covertly size up the situation. During the meal, Elinore will pump them for any information they possess. Afterwards, they will have a chance to speak with some of the people at the court.

If the characters openly admit their origins, Constantine will try to contact them to offer them a deal. He tells them that the crew of *Mackenzie* was captured by Elinore, and he will tell them where they are being held if they will agree to assassinate John Tzimisces. This is a very serious proposition, and it will certainly land the characters in Serious Trouble—but they are welcome to try. If they are pretending to be Lefiguurans, Constantine will talk to them in an attempt to find out if they would kill John anyway, but he will be less direct (asking many "hypothetical" questions) and hint at money instead.

Finally, if there is a female PC in the party with a Charisma of 8 or more, Constantine will approach her with an entirely different sort of proposition. While this will probably not be appreciated, it could provide the characters with access to the upper levels. On the other hand, a strong (and especially a public) rejection would endear the characters to John Tzimisces.

Again, if the characters are open about their origins, Lieutenant Killough will want to speak with their leader. Killough will tell him that Lefiguura is and will remain under Kidan rule, no matter what the locals might think. He will add that the characters are welcome to remain as long as they keep this fact in mind. If the characters tell him about the fate of *Mackenzie*, he will be very interested in anything they have to say, but will be in a very difficult position. His government's position toward the Coalition is extremely hostile, and Captain Faust will certainly deal harshly with any cooperation with them. On the other hand, Killough is extremely interested in finding out more about the Coalition and perhaps establishing secret contact with it on behalf of the underground resistance cell of

army officers he represents. In the end, however, he may be forced by events to side against the player characters, as capture of a working starship is a top priority for the Diasporan Star Empire and he cannot count on the loyalty of any of the soldiers in the expeditionary force.

The characters may also choose to approach John Tzimisces, though it is hard to see what they could hope to gain. John is unlikely to betray Elinore without good reason. John would accept the same deal as Elinore for the release of *Mackenzie*, but since he is one of Elinore's senior advisors, the RCES would probably still see this as rewarding kidnapping. However, since John didn't order the kidnapping, it is remotely possible for the characters to talk their way out of this one (a Formidable: Persuasion task, at least!).

SERIOUS TROUBLE

One way or another, it is likely that the characters will be in at least a little trouble by the time they try to leave. It will be almost impossible for them to get the information they need without looking at least a little suspicious. If they arrived openly, they will have some excuse for leaving, but there is no safe way for them to learn what they need. If they arrived covertly, they may be able to safely learn what they need, but they will have no excuse for leaving.

If the characters assassinated John Tzimisces, mugged Constantine, were noticed breaking into the Palace, or revealed that they know what happened to *Mackenzie*, Elinore will use all of her forces in a search for the miscreants. Every soldier on the island, the police, and the citizen militia (about 500 people in all) will be mobilized in an effort to hunt down and capture or kill the characters. If they try to escape by sea, she will send out her navy (three TL-6 boats—see the equipment section) to catch them. In short, the characters are in a great deal of trouble. This is about as dangerous as it gets, and the referee should force the characters to push themselves to the limit if they want to escape.

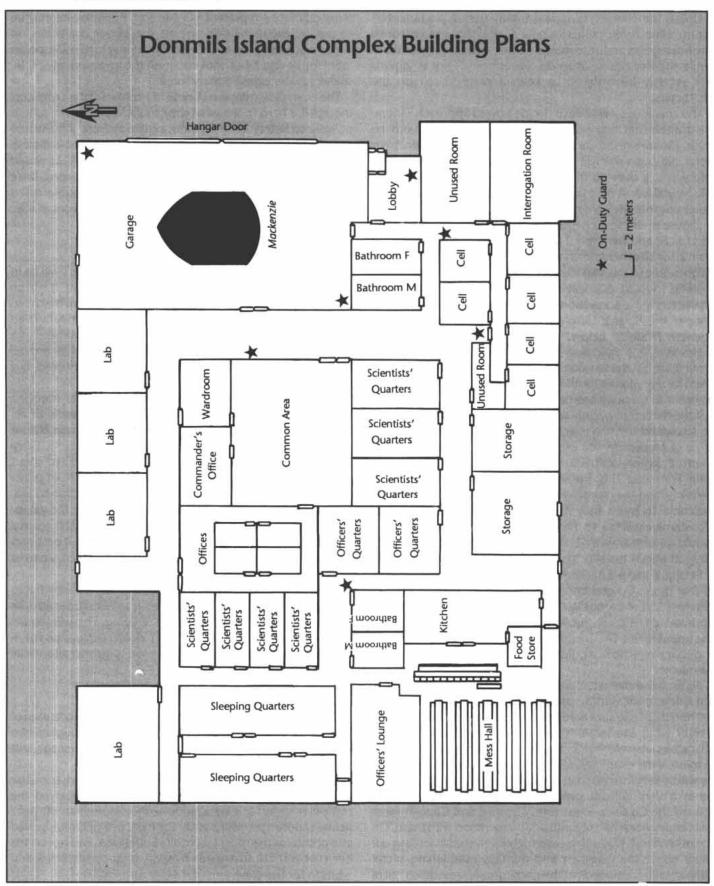
If they arrived covertly, didn't get in trouble, and attempt to leave by sea, they will have to succeed at a Difficult: Stealth task or explain to Basil just where they are going. This will require a good excuse for leaving or a Formidable: Persuasion roll. If they fail, Basil will assume that they were spies after all and call out the troops.

DONMILS ISLAND

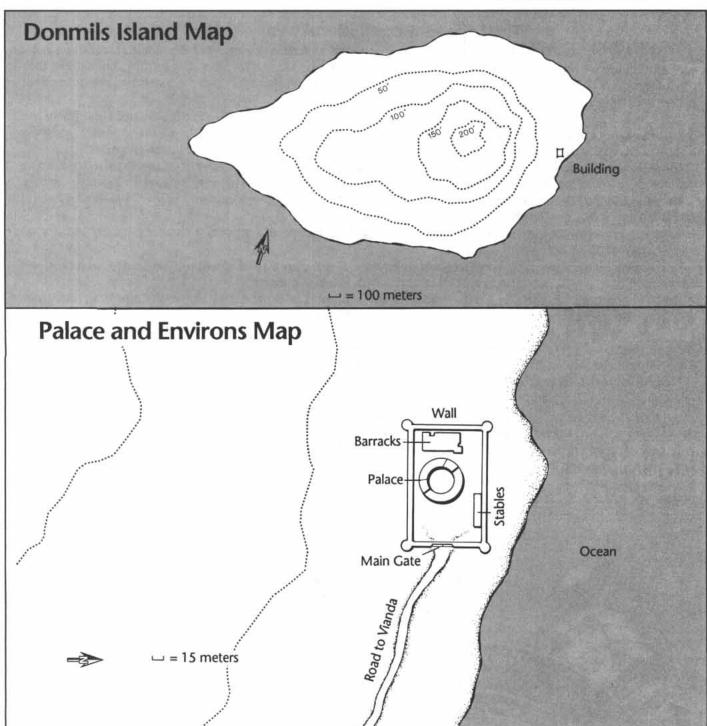
Donmils Island lies about 150 kilometers north-northwest of Vianda. It is shaped like a teardrop and is roughly two kilometers at its widest. It is covered in lush, rich foliage, but very little animal life exists in the island.

Seventy years ago, it was an oceanic research center and air traffic control center. After Virus came and destroyed the computer systems, it lay abandoned for more than 60 years before Elinore's people found it. For most of that time, it served as a prison for the most incorrigible offenders, but now it has been converted into a research facility to study *Mackenzie* and a prison for her crew.









Mackenzie's crew have divulged very few secrets, despite often brutal treatment by their captors. Elinore's researchers have managed to use the hand weapons, but there is a very limited supply of ammunition for them. The weapons have been assigned to various guards, who have strict instructions not to use them unless absolutely necessary.

Mackenzie herself is a complete mystery to the Lefiguurans. The researchers are working from vague legends passed down from their grandparents. Every few days, they press a few

buttons and see what happens. At the moment, they are busily feeding codes intended for the navigation computer into the life support system, which is insisting (again in code) that it will not add halon and mint juleps to the atmosphere mix.

Outside of this comedy of errors, the complex has very tight security. There are 30 guards stationed on the island, 10 of whom are on duty at any given time. Ten of the guards, detached from Elinore's bodyguard unit, are equipped with BW bodysuits and 5mm assault rifles, and are Veteran NPCs.



The Lefiguura Expeditionary Force (LEF)

Emperor Arturo of the "Diasporan Star Empire" has sent a small expeditionary force to Lefiguura to assist Elinore in her war against Gustav and Razamis. The unit sent is a platoon (40 troopers strong) of air-mobile infantry, but without their helicopters. (Kide has a dense atmosphere, and modifying the Kidan helicopters for service in a standard atmosphere has proven more difficult than originally anticipated.)

Kidan troops, while capable of operating on Lefiguura, are extremely uncomfortable in the standard atmosphere and tire very easily after physical exertion. Without their transport helicopters, most tactical moves are made on foot, and these troops are very slow marchers compared to the locals, and usually arrive at the end of the march exhausted.

The platoon has been subjected to several hit-and-run raids by Gustav's troops, and have been unable to launch effective pursuits. Now one or two *decharchiai* (see page 89) of local troops are usually attached to the unit for security purposes. Morale is low in the LEF, and the fact that local troops have to protect the off-worlders sent here to help them is not lost on Elinore's soldiers.

Organization and Equipment: The Kidan platoon consists of three rifle squads, a weapons squad, and a small headquarters detachment.

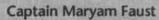
Each rifle squad has a sergeant, a corporal, and six privates, all experienced and armed with six 5mm assault rifles, two 9mm autopistols, one 10cm DEI laser carbine, and one 4cm grenade launcher.

The weapons squad has a sergeant, two corporals, and four privates, all experienced, armed with one 5mm rotary gun, two 2cm LAGs, three 9mm autopistols, and four 9mm submachineguns.

The headquarters detachment has a captain, a lieutenant, a platoon sergeant, a staff sergeant, a corporal, and three privates. The two officers and the platoon sergeant are veterans while the others are experienced. They are equipped with five 9mm autopistols, four 9mm submachineguns, and four 5mm assault rifles.

The platoon has a total of six 30-kilometer radios with it. One is usually with each rifle squad, one with the weapons squad, one with the commander, and one at the palace with the admin people (the lieutenant and the staff sergeant). The platoon originally was equipped with BW body suits, but has turned them over to the Lefiguurans, partly as a goodwill gesture and partly to reduce the load carried by the Kidan soldiers in the field.

Since arriving on Lefiguura, the LEF has had one private killed and four other soldiers wounded (three of which are still hospitalized). It has also suffered 17 heat exhaustion cases, none of them fatal. Five of these are still hospitalized, leaving the platoon nine soldiers short. At the moment, the rifle squads are each short three soldiers. Faust has considered disbanding one rifle squad to bring the others back up to strength, but is counting on several of the soldiers to rejoin the unit in a week or so, and does not anticipate any serious action in the mean time.



Faust is the commander of the Lefiguura Expeditionary Force (LEF), the military mission sent by Emperor Arturo, ruler of the "Diasporan Star Empire" (which, despite its grandiose title, consists of the planet Kide, an outpost on Desel, and five spacecraft). Faust is extremely loyal to Arturo, but faces mounting difficulties keeping morale and combat readiness high in her command. Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Rifle), Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Leadership 12, Tactics 14, Survival 12, Stealth 13, Heavy Weapons (Grenade Launcher) 12

Motivation:

Heart King: Maryam's word is her bond, and she expects others to feel the same way. That may be one of the reasons she has been blind both to Elinore's efforts to betray the Kidans and to the excesses of her emperor, Arturo. Should she ever become convinced of the truth, she would likely try to destroy Elinore, no matter what the consequences. The situation with Arturo is different, since Maryam has sworn personal allegiance to him and, although his policies may be misquided, she is still bound by her oath.

Club 6: Maryam tends to take a direct (and occasionally brutal) approach to most matters. She isn't cruel, but she dislikes subtlety and backroom dealings.

Note: Maryam is not present in Vianda during the events of this adventure. Her statistics are given for reference and use in further adventures on Lefiguura.



The remainder are Novice NPCs with muskets. There are two officers on the island, Captain Isaac Commenus and Lieutenant Michael Ducas, both Experienced NPCs armed with 9mm autopistols. They are the officers of the 4th Tagma, the militia unit currently used to guard the island, and the 10-man Veteran bodyguard unit only reluctantly takes orders from them.

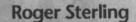
There are six researchers and five support staff, all of whom are Novice NPCs and possess no useful combat skills.

The island has been cleared of all plant life within 200 meters of the building. The soldiers have completed a moat around the building, which remains filled except within an hour of low tide. Two guards patrol the outside of the building at all times. It takes them roughly eight minutes to complete a trip around the building. Another guard is stationed on top of the building. He watches the sea for any signs of activity. Finally, a fourth guard remains in the front lobby. The positions of the other (on-duty) guardsmen are marked on the map. Each group of 10 guards performs two four-hour shifts a day.

The northeast section of the building was once the garage, and now contains *Mackenzie*. The ship is still space-worthy, because the researchers have been too afraid of breaking some vital component to do any serious damage. *Mackenzie's* fusion drive is cold. A Formidable: Engineering roll will allow the plant

to be started within one minute. If this fails, it will take 30 minutes to get the ship running.

South of Mackenzie, just past the bathrooms, are a series of





Captain of Mackenzie
Experienced NPC
Combat Assets: Energy
Weapon (Energy Pistol)
Other Assets: Pilot (Interface/Grav) 14, Sensors 14,
Communications 14, Lead-

Motivation:

ership 10

Heart 7: Roger decided to devote himself to the reexploration of Charted

Space for the good of humanity. He believes that the Star Vikings are the last, best hope for all sophonts. If they fail, the darkness may last forever.

Diamond Queen: Roger considers women to be God's gift to him. At the moment, this will not be of much concern.

Note: All actions performed by Roger (or other Mackenzie crew) is at -3 due to their ill-treatment.



former lab rooms converted into holding cells. *Mackenzie's* six crew members are imprisoned here. West of those are a couple of storage areas, the kitchen, and the mess hall. The mess hall is usually empty, except for mealtimes.

North of the mess hall is an officers' lounge (usually empty) and some sleeping quarters. Normally, about 10 of the guards will be sleeping at any one time The north face of the building is occupied by labs. Finally, there is the complex of rooms in the center of the building. This is taken up with scientists' quarters, officers' quarters, offices, and the common area. Eight to 10 off-duty guards will be here at any one time. The officer commanding the current watch will be nearby, in the ward-room.

It will be next to impossible for the characters to enter the building without alerting anybody. They will have no more than three minutes, at most, to cross the open space between the trees and the building, swim the moat, and get inside before being spotted by a guard. Even if they kill the guards outside, they won't have much more time than that before the lobby guard notices that the patrols are missing.

Once an alert is sounded, the researchers and support staff will immediately head to the common area, while the off-duty guards try to find and shoot the trouble. On-duty guards will remain at their assigned posts.

Finally, if Isaac or Michael decides that the building cannot be protected, they are under orders to trigger a series of demolition charges emplaced throughout the building. This can only be done from the commander's office or the wardroom. One charge is placed in each of the cells, guaranteeing that the prisoners will die. Several more are placed near *Mackenzie*, though they are far too weak to actually damage the ship. After activation, the bombs must be deactivated within one minute to prevent an explosion. Otherwise, they will detonate in three minutes. If the bombs go off, everyone inside the building suffers a rating 10 concussion blast and is hit by 2D6 fragments.

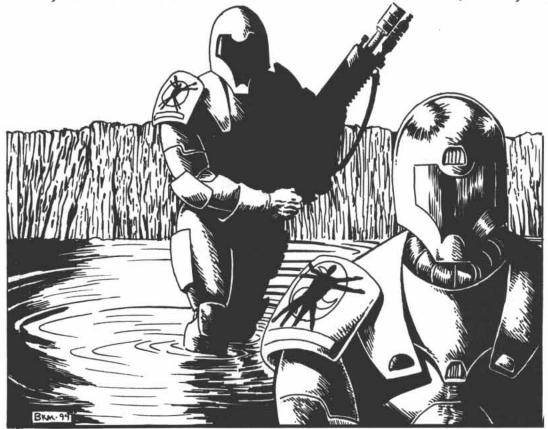
EPILOGUE

If the characters recover *Mackenzie* and rescue her crew, Majestic Survey will be more than grateful. The characters will receive everything they were promised. Furthermore, they will be treated like heroes for a couple of days after they return to Aubaine—until the next big story comes up. Nevertheless, they will have generated goodwill that may be very useful to them in the days ahead.

If they have failed, things will become sticky. If they could not locate *Mackenzie*, unlikely as this seems, Majestic Survey will collapse as its backers withdraw. Eventually, Elinore will probably make a mistake, and *Mackenzie* will show up in Kidan hands. If they found *Mackenzie* but failed to recover her, the RCES will dispatch a small task force to Lefiguura. *Mackenzie* will probably be confiscated if this happens. If they are also captured, the referee should give them every opportunity to engineer their own escape. Failing this, however, a small force of Coalition Marines will rescue the entire party in about six months. This will, at the very least, be extremely embarrassing.

In either event, it is possible that they will have made contacts and discoveries in Elinore's court that may prove useful in the future, as well as being sources of further adventure. If the characters didn't engage in any mass violence there, they may have become aware of some of the intrigues. If Elinore does manage to take power on Lefiguura, the characters may find that John Tzimisces or Constantine Porphyrogenitus will be willing to work against her. These internal divisions could allow them to pry Lefiguura away from the Kidans.

In any case, award the characters all experience points earned during the adventure, and be sure to reward good roleplaying.





Elinore's Military

The forces of Gustav and Razamis started the war with an invasion of Milquoor Island almost a year ago. The arrival of Kidan soldiers turned the tide of battle, lifted the epic siege of Pierson Station, and scattered the Allied troops into the jungle. Since then, fighting has mostly been a mopping-up action, and the armies of both of the two attacking TEDs have been seriously hurt. Elinore's forces, on the other hand, are stronger than ever.

Total Personnel: 250

Navy: 20 (3 small TL-6 armed patrol boats)

Army: 230

30 Guards (Veteran NPCs, TL-8)

70 Regulars (Experienced NPCs, TL-6)

130 Militia (Novice NPCs, TL-3)

The largest organizational unit in Elinore's Army is the *Tagma*, nominally made up of 10 *decharchiai*, each of 10 soldiers commanded by a sergeant. In practice, there are a variable number (two to four) *decharchiai* in each *tagma*. In addition, officers and support personnel are carried administratively as part of a *decharchia*, but do not usually serve with it, so the field strength of a *decharchia* is seldom more than seven or eight, and sickness or casualties may reduce it further. Each *tagma* is commanded by a captain with a lieutenant as his or her deputy.

Army Order of Battle

1st (Guard) Tagma: 3 decharchiai (Veteran, TL-8)

2nd (Iron) Tagma: 3 decharchiai (Experienced, TL-6)

3rd (Blood) Tagma: 4 decharchiai (Experienced, TL-6)

4th (Ooverton) Tagma: 2 decharchiai (Novice, TL-3)

5th (Vianda) Tagma: 4 decharchiai (Novice, TL-3)

6th (Kul'kva) Tagma: 4 decharchiai (Novice, TL-3)

7th (Pierson) Tagma: 3 decharchiai (Novice, TL-3)

Army Deployment

In Vianda:

1st Gd Tagma (less 1 decharchia on Donmils Island)

5th Tagma (less 1 decharchia in Ooverton)

Donmils Island:

4th Tagma (reinforced with 1 decharchia from the Guard)

Kulovaan Island:

6th Tagma (less 1 decharcia on Milquoor Island)

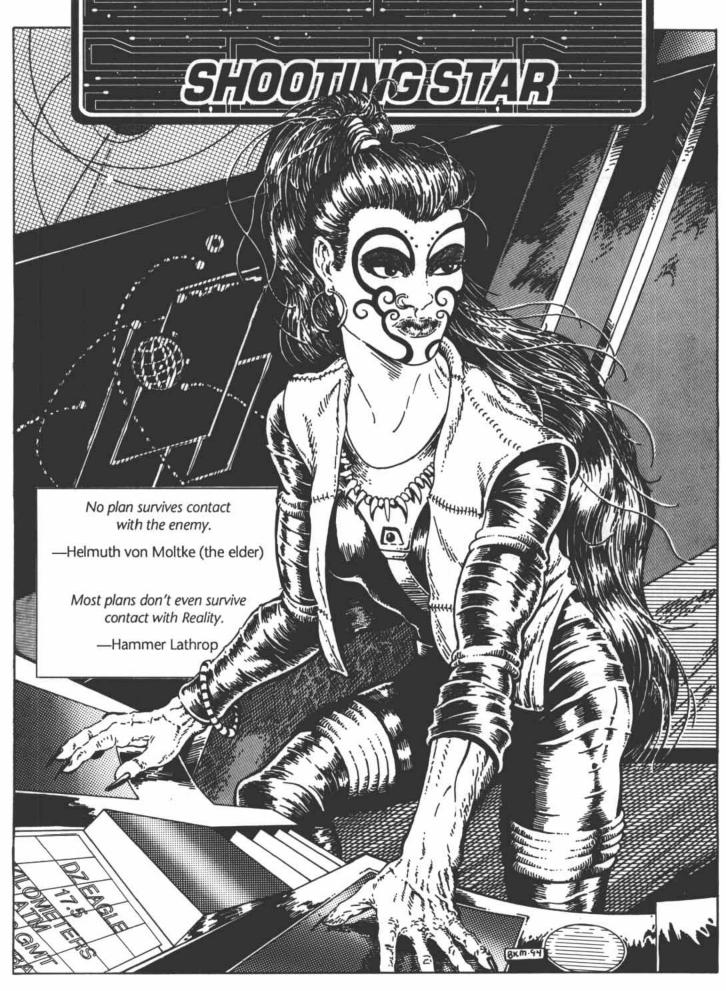
Milquoor Island ("the front"):

2nd (Iron) Tagma

3rd (Blood) Tagma

7th Tagma

Lefiguura Expeditionary Force (LEF) (TL-8) (reinforced with 1 decharchia of the 6th Tagma)





REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

Two of the warring factions in a civil war on the planet Eloji (2728/Diaspora) are on the brink of thermonuclear warfare, despite the constant threat of invasion by vampire fleets. A limited exchange of missiles has already taken place.

The Reformation Coalition has decided to launch a preemptive raid aimed at stealing some of the warheads in one faction's arsenal and destroying by bombardment some of the warheads in the other. The raid is intended to teach the locals a lesson and reduce their arsenals, but not eliminate them altogether, as the warheads being used are modified portions of their planetary aerospace defense (PAD) systems, which they need to continue to defend their world against the vampire fleets.

Unfortunately, an outbreak of an antibiotic-resistant strain of influenza among the personnel of Task Force Meteor has rendered most of its Marines unable to conduct an assault landing due to inner ear infections. The need to move fast causes the Coalition local commanders to call on whatever personnel are available as volunteers to undertake the mission.

The mission goes generally according to plan, but the sort of unexpected developments which always complicate combat missions make this one particularly difficult and hazardous, as it has been undertaken with such a slim margin for error to begin with. Drop capsules go astray containing equipment and personnel needed for the mission, enemy resistance is stiffer than expected, and the ship intended to extract the team is instead shot down.

All of these are problems which can be overcome with courage and resourcefulness, but whether the player characters will do so remains to be seen.

INTRODUCTION

The player characters are contacted by the RCES and asked to undertake a mission in the Wilds. Where they are contacted and by whom is unimportant, and so the contact can be made wherever it is most convenient given the current state of the campaign.

The mission is not actually a smash-and-grab mission at all, and it is not believed to be extremely hazardous. That doesn't mean that it is without danger, however, since it will involve a trip to deep within the Promise subsector, an area known to be thick with vampire fleets. While the mission may not call for unusual skills or abilities, RCES wants to make sure that the warheads are not "lost" en route or sold to a local planetary government, and so wants to hire people it knows it can trust (the PCs).

An RCES task force is planning a smash-and-grab raid against the planet Eloji to recover a number of thermonuclear warheads. As the task force will have additional duties in the subsector after the raid, the Coalition does not wish to use the combat vessels to bring back the cargo. The player characters are asked to rendezvous with Task Force Meteor in the Eloji system and take on-board the eight warheads. The characters will then transport the warheads to the naval base at Nike Nimbus. The PCs may either use their own ship (if they have

one), or will be loaned a small ship by the RCES to conduct the mission.

As the warheads are going to be used on Coalition detonation laser missiles, they will not be auctioned and there will be no auction proceeds to share in. As a result, RCES is offering a flatfee of Cr100,000 for the mission to divide among the entire party, plus all fuel and maintenance expenses.

Upon arriving in the Eloji system, however, the PCs will find that circumstances have changed. There has been an outbreak of antibiotic-resistance influenza among the crews of the three ships of the task force, particularly among the Marine contingent scheduled to conduct the landing. While the illness is not life-threatening, nasal congestion, fever, and inner ear infections make a meteoric descent from orbit out of the question.

Nevertheless, the mission is vital. The charismatic dictator who unified the world under his authority was recently assassinated, and the military has split among several regional factions and strongmen. Two of the stronger of these factions have begun to use the detonation laser warheads on their planetary defense missiles as ground attack weapons against each other. If they aren't stopped soon, the war may escalate and devastate the entire planet.

The situation is complicated by the fact that vampire fleets visit the region regularly. Eloji has so far been able to defend itself against the vampires, using the planetary aerospace defense (PAD) system. If the RCES completely cripples the system, it will leave Eloji wide open to vampire attack. Instead, the mission must teach the locals a sharp lesson without eliminating their capacity for self-defense.

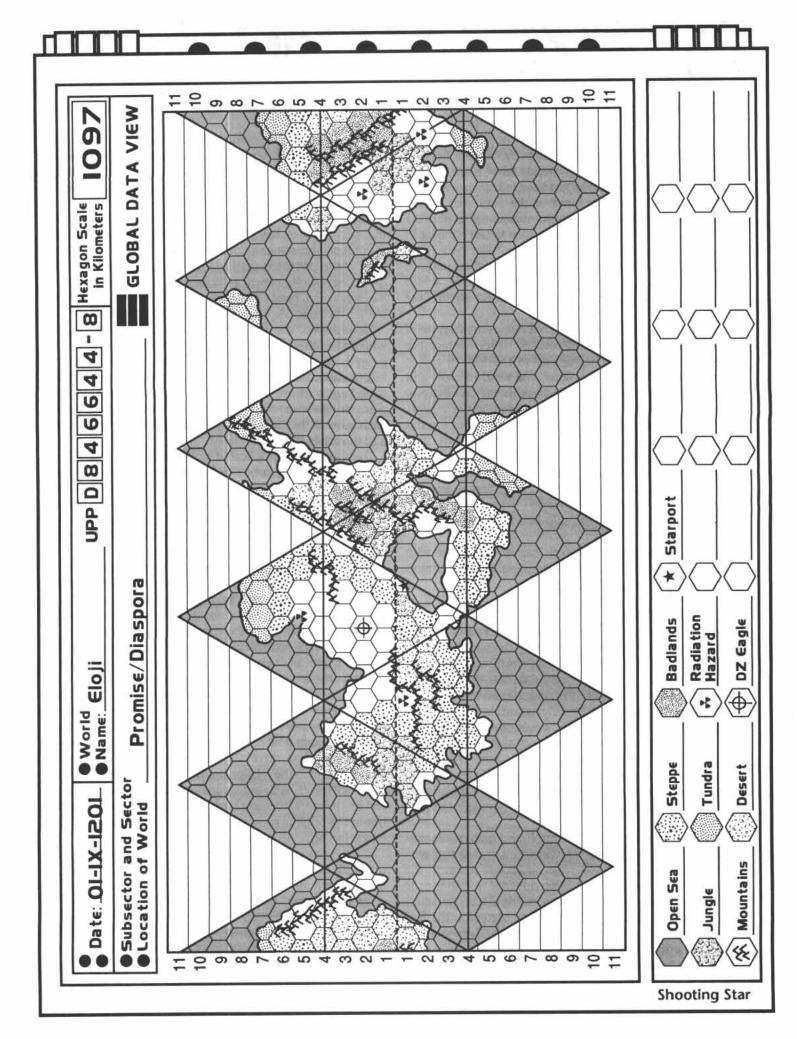
The task force commander has partially filled in the empty duty slots with healthy (if less experienced) members of the ships' crews with some ground combat training. There are still several open slots, however: exactly the number of player characters there are who have sufficiently high Environment Suit asset levels.

The task force commander, who is also the captain of RCS Argent, practically begs the characters to volunteer for the mission. Those without Environment Suit skill will be asked to volunteer to fill empty berths on the two ships that will conduct the raid to bring them up to a full manning level. RCS Argent, with a skeleton maneuver crew and the sick Marines and ships crews, will remain in distant orbit above Eloji (along with the PCs' ship).

If the PCs refuse, no one will make them volunteer. The task force will launch the mission anyway without them, and it will be a total failure, with both ships and all personnel lost. There will be no cargo to carry back, and while the RCES will still honor the original contract, they will be reluctant to hire the characters again in the near future.

In the far more likely event that they volunteer, they will be gratefully added to the strike team. PCs without adequate Environment Suit assets will be assigned to RCS *Defiant Arms* (Captain "Razbak" Razzori), the pick-up vessel.

Note that as an alternative to the above, if the PCs are activeduty members of the Service, they will simply be ordered to undertake the mission and then assigned to duty stations once they arrive at Eloji.



Star System

Sector: Diaspora Subsector: Promise Star Type: M0 V Planetoid Belts: None

Gas Giants: 2

Main World

Starport: D

Pre-Collapse Starport: B Diameter: 13,111.3 km Atmosphere: Thin, tainted Hydrosphere: 60% Population: 4,000,000

Pre-Collapse Population: 3,000,000 Government: Charismatic Dictator

Law Level: 4 Tech Level: 8

Pre-Collapse Tech Level: 12

Bases: None

Trade Classification: Ni, Ag

NOTES

Eloji, almost alone among the worlds of the Promise subsector, has managed to maintain a reasonably high tech level and has enough residue of pre-Collapse technology to defend itself against major depredations by the vampire fleets that regularly scourge that area of space. However, with the recent death of Edvard Cranert, its charismatic and powerful ruler, its regions and provinces are now controlled by military strongmen at war with each other for control of the world.

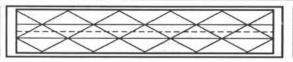
Although there has been occasional contact with Free Traders, Eloji is a suspicious world, hostile to outsiders and uninterested in trade or cultural exchanges.

Physical: Eloji is a large world with plentiful water and a mild climate, but a thin, tainted atmosphere.

Demographics: Eloji's population suffered little from the Collapse, and now exceeds its pre-Collapse level. The entire population is human. Urban dwellers are approximately 80% of the total.

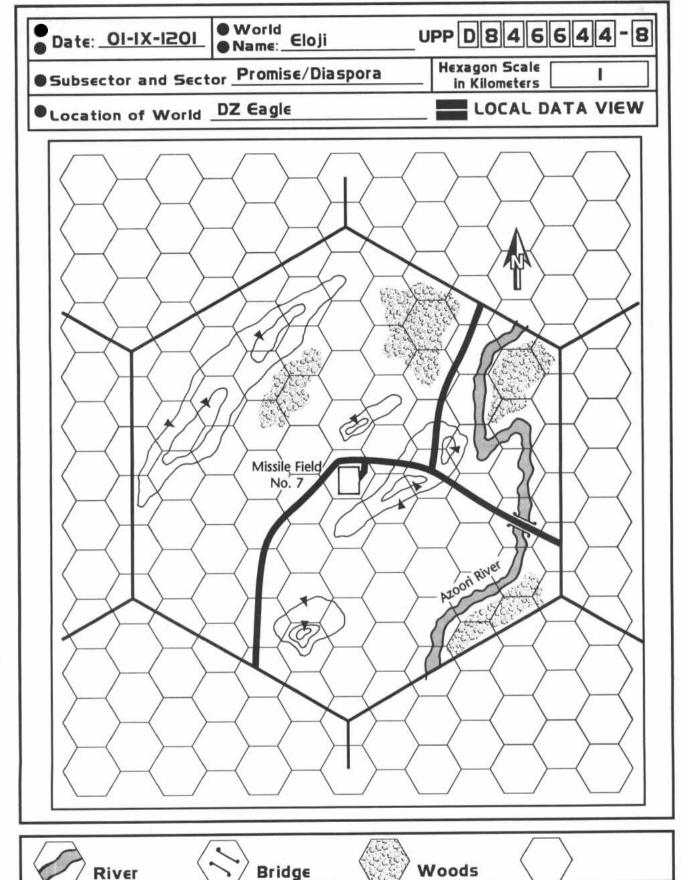
Techno-Politico-Military: There are several warring factions on the planet, although the constantly shifting pattern of alliances makes it difficult to pin these down with precision. The current sustainable tech level of the planet is 8, but there are considerable artifacts of higher tech levels, particularly military artifacts, and the world has an excellent planetary aerospace defense (PAD) system.







Shooting Star



Road

Hill

Shooting Star

RCES Task Force Meteor Pennant Aboard: RCS Argent

OPLAN Shooting Star

Time Reference: For purposes of this Oplan, Zulu meridian is assumed to pass through the objective, DZ EAGLE.

General Situation: The rulers of Eloji have managed to defend it against vampire fleets for decades, using recovered pre-Collapse PAD technology. Several months ago, however, the current ruler died suddenly without establishing a clear succession. A bitter civil war broke out almost immediately, and recently two factions (those led by Field Marshal Wastantan and Colonel Boukart) engaged in a limited exchange of nuclear weapons, apparently modified PAD missile systems fused to airburst over cities. Civilian casualties have been very high and the conflict will almost certainly escalate, risking widespread devastation of the planet and rendering it defenseless against the marauding vampire fleets.

Opposing Forces: The planet has respectable naval, ground, and air forces, as well as PAD missile systems from tech level 12. However, covert operatives and close monitoring of enemy communication and sensor bands has uncovered vulnerabilities in their system which may allow a small strike force to penetrate their defenses.

Friendly Troops: Task Force Meteor has the multimission scouts RCS Alarm and RCS Defiant Arms, both with mission configured pods (MCP) giving them augmented capabilities for this mission.

RCS Defiant Arms (Captain Razzori) is equipped with a self-defense ECM suite as well as orbit-to-surface guided munitions for attacking command control and electronic sites.

RCS Alarm (Captain Titan) is equipped with a more extensive electronic barrier suite and provision for 15 drop capsules to insert friendly troops onto the DZ. The Marine contingent is reduced due to illness, but has been augmented by recent volunteers.

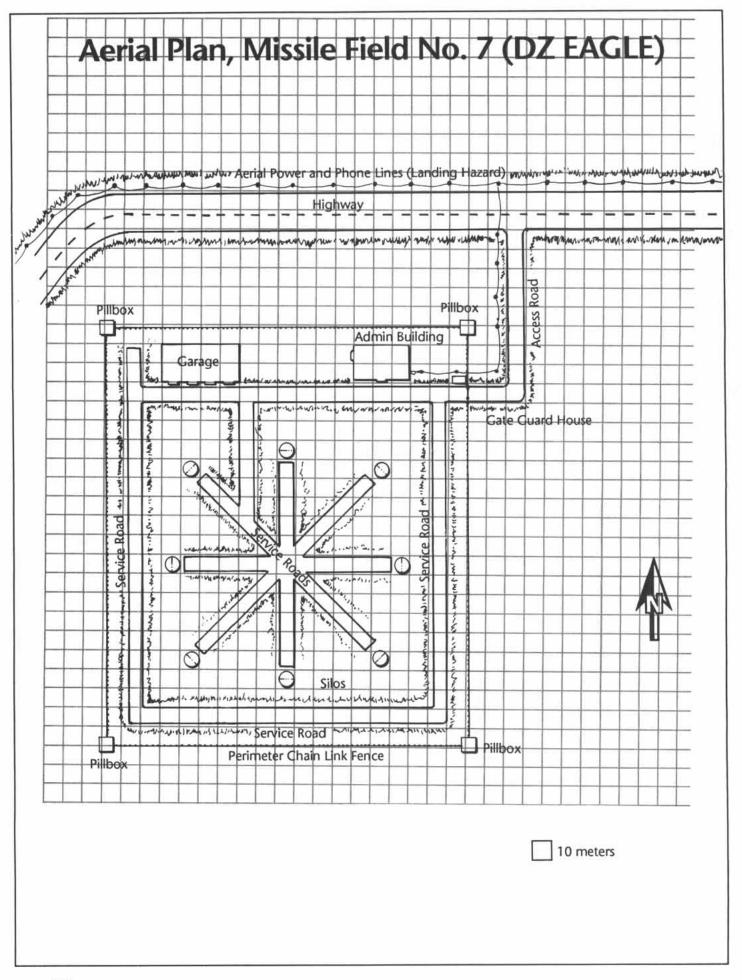
RCS Argent is not suitable for employment in combat on this mission, but will serve as a depot, support, and command control asset.

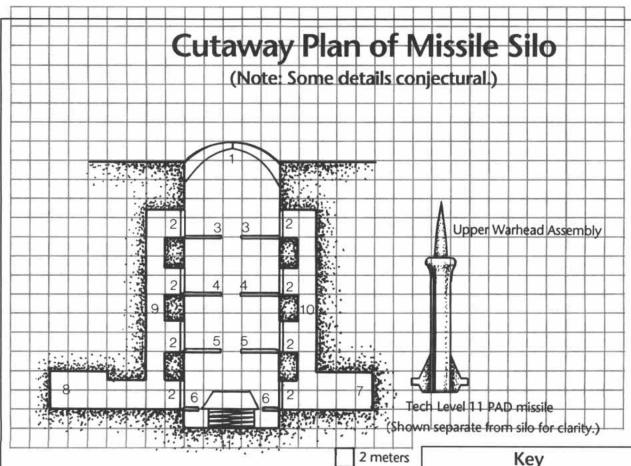
Mission: Task Force Meteor is to substantially reduce the nuclear arsenals of two of the stronger warring factions without eliminating their ability to defend the planet against vampire fleets and with a minimum of civilian casualties. It will accomplish this by bombardment of Wastantan's main launch facility coupled with a meteoric assault on Boukart's launch facility followed by extraction of the mission team and recovery of a substantial number of the nuclear warheads from Boukart's missiles.

Operation: At 1218 hours Zulu (1218 Z), RCS Alarm (Tac Code TEATIME) will enter orbit route 12005 over western Boukart-controlled territory, transit the globe, and approach the target area from the east-southeast. At 1247 Z TEATIME will release its jump capsules and decoys, and at 0108 Z will commence broad-band jamming to create an ECM corridor intended to prevent engagement of the drop capsules or RCS Defiant Arms by the PAD systems located farther to the north (Tac Codes PADBRAVO and PADCHARLIE, respectively). (We are uncertain which faction currently controls these launch complexes.) At 0113 Z, the drop capsules will dust at DZ EAGLE, secure the missile field, and commence recovery of the warheads stored there. After completing transit of the target area, TEATIME will transition to a higher orbit and then continue to provide additional electronic warfare support to cover the ground operations of the mission team and the extraction by RCS Defiant Arms.

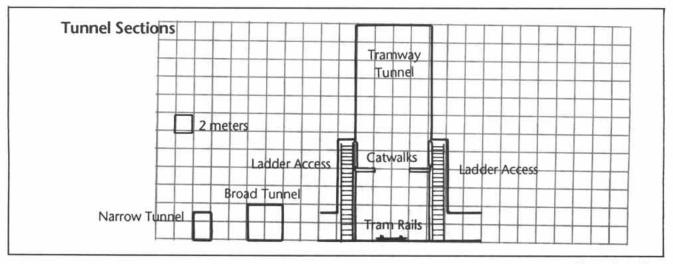
At 1223 Z, RCS Defiant Arms (Tac Code RAZBAK) will enter orbit route 09010 over northwestern Boukart, transit the globe, and approach the target area from the southeast. At 0110 Z, it will launch a SPAD (Suppression of Planetary Aerospace Defense) attack by means of a saturation laydown of small missiles on the identified unhardened sensor and command control nexus of the Boukart system (Tac Code PADANGEL). Upon leaving the target area, RAZBAK will make an orbital correction at 0127 Z and at 0142 Z will launch a SPAD attack on the hardened missile silos of the Wastantan PAD system (Tac Code PADDAGGER) by means of surface-penetrating guided warheads. On its next transit, it will assess strike damage. On its third transit it will conduct any follow-on strikes, if needed, and then on its fourth transit will jettison its MCP and dust at DZ EAGLE at 0417 Z. If no follow-on strikes are needed and the mission team is ready for extraction, RAZBAK may jettison its MCP after the assessment orbit and dust at 0314 Z.

After the mission team has loaded the recovered warheads into the empty MCP bay, RAZBAK will lift with the mission team no later than 0445 Z, covered by jamming from TEATIME.





- Key
- 1. Blast-proof hatch cover
- 2. Steel blast doors
- 3. Upper retractable catwalk
- 4. Middle retractable catwalk
- 5. Lower retractable catwalk
- 6. Main catwalk
- 7. Maintenance bay
- 8. Missile command station
- 9. Access shaft (ladder)
- 10. Access shaft (elevator)
- 11. Shock-absorbing launch pad



Shooting Star



BRIEFING

The briefing is conducted by Captain "Rocko" Spaeder. Also present at the briefing are the other two ship captains and the other members of the landing force, and the player characters will be introduced at least to the captains shortly before the formal briefing begins.

Rocko uses a three-dimensional holographic display of Eloji to illustrate the mission plan. (The cover of this book is a twodimensional reproduction of this, and can be used as a visual aid during the briefing.)

"Okay. First off, I want to welcome our newest recruits. I don't know if you've had a chance to meet the whole team, but I'm speaking for everyone when I say we're sure as hell glad to have you along.

"We're also glad to see Boxcar Johnson up and about again. For those of you who didn't know, Boxcar was the covert operative who got us the exact location of the unhardened parts of the PADANGEL command control complex, which is the only reason we can pull this whole stunt off. He wasn't slated to make this ride, but that damn flu bug caught us all by surprise, and he's volunteered to ride a drop capsule down. Welcome aboard, Boxcar.

"I assume everyone has looked over the mission orders, but let's run through them quickly. RAZBAK and TEATIME both come in hot and low out of the southeast at about 1 a.m. local. TEATIME releases the grunts and jams hell out of everyone while RAZBAK pastes the PADANGEL ground control site. Okay?

"While the bad guys are worrying about our high flyers, the mission teams hit the PADANGEL number seven missile field. That's DZ EAGLE on your tac maps. By this time the silos are out of communication with everybody, and probably nobody even notices the drop capsules coming down. We hope so, anyway.

"Okay. The silo lids are designed to withstand major overpressure from above, but our engineers tell us that about 40 kilos of plastique placed *under* the rim ought to pop them off like bottle caps. With the drop capsules will come two floatercranes. They're slick portable little gizmos on gravplates you just park over the open silos and hoist the warheads out, one by one. "Harvey" and "Go-Go" are your warhead specialists. Each work team is built around one of them and a crane. They'll each need one security grunt and one set of muscles. Everybody else worries about site security. There's a perimeter to watch and the local guard pukes to deal with, but I count six extra bodies over and above the work crews, so no problem, okay?

"It's gonna be your necks down there, not mine, so I want the mission team to work out their own duty assignments. We've got a scout suit and a couple portable EMS rigs for local





detection you can park on one of those nearby hills if you want to. We figure at least 50 lightly armed security types in the silo complex, but whether you want to quarter and clear the whole area or just contain them is up to you.

"One last thing. There are two hot spots marked on your tac maps, one due north of DZ EAGLE and one southwest of it. There are three more just like them over in Wastantan's territory. All five of them used to be cities or towns. We estimate civilian casualties at well over 70,000 so far. Take a long look at those symbols, and remember why we're doing this.

"Okay. Any questions? If not, then good luck."

PREPARATIONS

During the trip from the gas giant in to Eloji, the characters will have plenty of time to get ready and get to know their shipmates.

Meeting the Team: The first step will be assigning tasks to the mission team itself. There are a total of 12 members of the mission team, including all of the player characters. (Two drop capsules are used to bring the two cranes down, and the last capsule is reserved for any heavy equipment desired, such as a sensor system. Even if no equipment is desired, there are only 12 people available to make the drop.)

The balance of the team (over and above the PCs) is filled out by NPCs. There are no Marine commissioned officers healthy enough to make the drop, but the referee may give the PCs access to a seasoned Marine NCO as a means of providing good advice on tactics. The other NPCs will consist of one or two Elite Marine NPCs along with a mix of some Veteran or even Experienced volunteers from the ship's crew to fill in. (Use the Star Viking Ground Specialist template NPC from the basic rules for Marines, and the Space Specialist for crew volunteers.) In addition, there are three key NPCs who will be included in the mission, and they are covered in the sidebar on page 103.

Planning: The first decision the players will have to make is how they will divide up the 12 members of the mission team. There will have to be two work teams, each with a warhead specialist and two others. If there are low-skill or low-initiative volunteers along from the ship, this may be a good detail for some of them.

The remaining six members of the mission team are responsible for seeing that the work teams are allowed to do their jobs free of annoyance and distraction. There are two possible sources of annoyance and distraction: internal and external.

Internal opposition will be from the silo security guards, which Boxcar says will be roughly a platoon (40 troops) of lightly armed police personnel. They will have pistols and submachineguns, but are unlikely to have heavier weapons.

External opposition will be from ground troops and aircraft of Boukart's army and air force. The extensive jamming TEATIME will be conducting should keep most ground forces in the dark concerning the fact that an attack is even going on. Boxcar thinks that the high-tech bodyguard units are likely to concentrate on securing the capital, command centers, and

Boukart himself, so any units they do encounter will probably be either militia or regulars, with tech level 8 equipment. It will be difficult to coordinate air strikes with ground units if communications are blanked out, especially given how few aircraft Boukart is liable to have operational, but that doesn't mean that air strikes are impossible.

The players will need to decide how they will divide up the personnel of the mission teams and which group each PC will accompany. Usually dividing up an adventure party can slow play down (due to the need to separate the PCs and run each of them separately), but since everyone on the mission team will have secure communications through their helmet radios it should be possible to run everyone at the same time. The players do not need to split up, of course.

Equipment: The main limit on what the PCs can take with them is weight. Two of the 15 capsules available are taken up with the cranes. Each crane's drop capsule is slaved to one of the capsule controls of the warhead specialists, but if the link is broken will still land at DZ EAGLE on automatic. One capsule is an equipment pod which can carry 824 kilos of equipment to the DZ on automatic approach. The remaining 12 capsules are individually piloted re-entry capsules, each of which can carry 680 kilograms of mass to the surface, including the trooper and all equipment.

Nine suits of heavy battle dress, six suits of light battle dress, and one suit of the scout variant of heavy battle dress are available to allocate among the mission team.

For personal weaponry, enough ACRs, 4mm gauss rifles, and CMWSs (see equipment section) are available to equip the entire team, with any mix of weapons desired and effectively unlimited ammunition and RAM grenades. There are also six TL-12 4.3cm plasma rifles available.

For heavy weapons, there is one TL-13 squad support laser, one TL-11 laser-designated TAC missile launcher, and as many TL-11 homing missile launchers (and missiles for either type of launcher) as the team cares to carry. There are also the two Lyrebird missiles on each of the 12 personal re-entry jump capsules. No extra missiles can be carried, but the team can select any mix of warheads desired for the 24 missiles actually carried.

Up to 30 20-kilo satchel charges are available, each with its own timer detonator.

The helmet communicators are on a clear band which will not be jammed locally, but for secure communication to the ships the team will need one (and preferably two, for the sake of redundancy) uplink communicators. These can be set to retransmit on the suit helmet tacnets so that all of the mission team will have secure voice communications with the ships overhead as well as each other.

Once the characters have decided on what equipment they will take, it must be divided into individual loads and assigned to each character (PC and NPC), making sure that the mass limits of the drop capsule are not exceeded. (Male NPCs average 80 kilos of body mass while female NPCs average 65 kilos of body mass.)



Rodrick "Rocko" Spaeder



Captain of RCS Argent and acting commander of Task Force Meteor. Rocko is a native of Aubaine.

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Astrogation 14, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 14, Sensors 14, Ship's Engineering 10, Gunnery 10, Survey

10, Environment Suit 8, Zero-G Environment 8, Leadership 8, Ship Tactics 8.

Motivation:

Diamond 4: Rocko is a former merchant who has joined the "service," but hasn't left his commercial sensibilities behind. He is frugal with the resources at his disposal and usually manages for his operations to show a profit for the Coalition. If there are no major losses, this operation could show a profit as well.

Spade 2: Spaeder is conscientious and aware of the responsibilities of his office, and does everything he can to live up to them.

Horace "Teatime" Titan



Teatime is the brilliant and ambitious Oriflammen captain of RCS Alarm. Teatime has a professional and friendly working relationship with Razbak, but detests Rocko as a symbol of Aubani suppression of Oriflammen ambitions in the Coalition. While he is not openly insubordinate, he has nothing positive to say about the task force commander, and there will be

frequent friction between them. Teatime believes that Rocko is unfit to command the expedition and thinks that he (Teatime) should have been in command instead. Furthermore, he believes that the only reason Rocko was placed in command was because he is Aubani.

Elite NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Astrogation 14, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 14, Survey 14, Gravitics 10, Communication 10, Screens 10, Environment Suit 8, Zero-G Environment 8, Leadership 8, Ship Tactics 8.

Motivation:

Club Ace: Teatime not only believes that he is a brilliant tactical commander—he actually is. He is one of the most gifted commanders in the Service, and if his ambition and bitterness do not derail his career, he is clearly destined for flag rank.

Spade 10: Teatime is consumed with ambition, and eaten up with jealousy and bitterness toward anyone advanced above him or placed in command over him.

Ilyanna "Razbak" Razzori



Razbak (short for Razor Back) is the flamboyant Luhtalan captain of RCS Defiant Arms. She is well-known and widely liked in the Service, mostly because ex-shipmates and crewmembers invariably speak well of her. It is rare for a Luhtalan to hold a position of this much authority in a combat unit, which contributes further to

Razbak's reputation.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol), Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Astrogation 14, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 14, Sensors 14, Gravitics 10, Gunnery 10, Physics 10, Environment Suit 8, Zero-G Environment 8, Leadership 8, Ship Tactics 8.

Motivation:

Spade 8: Razbak is a ship's captain in a service which generally considers Luhtalans unsuitable for responsible combat assignments. She has advanced in rank and responsibility because she is capable of doing the job, but has overcome barriers to her advancement because she is driven to succeed. Her goal is to be the first Luhtalan to achieve flag rank in the service.

Heart 8: She is well-liked because she genuinely likes most people and is unafraid to show it. When the PCs first meet her, probably on RCS Argent, she will make a point of greeting them warmly, finding out who they are, identifying any friends they might have in common, and generally making them feel welcome and part of the team.



Sam "Boxcar" Johnson



Boxcar is a Reformation Coalition covert mission specialist recovering from wounds suffered on his last mission, which was to Eloji where he secured the intelligence data that made this mission possible. Given the shortage of personnel, he has volunteered to accompany the combat drop, and his first-hand knowledge of

Eloji may prove invaluable. Boxcar has not completely recovered from his wounds (normally he would be rated as an Elite NPC), and he will not talk about his actual experienced on Eloji. As a matter of fact, he will hardly talk about anything, keeping mostly to himself prior to the drop. He is a native of Fija.

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Pistol), Early Firearms, Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Act/Bluff 10, Disguise 8, Intrusion 10, Vilani 16, Navigation 10, Observation 12, Stealth 10, Survival 10, Persuasion 12, Environment Suit 12.

Motivation:

Club 9: Boxcar remains calm and quiet at all times, even in the middle of a desperate firefight. He seems completely unaffected by violence around him, and is capable of frightful violence in return without a second thought.

Spade Queen: Boxcar is utterly ruthless, and will hesitate at nothing to carry out the mission as he sees it.

Joanna "Harvey" Havrahnna



Harvey is a combat engineer specialist who has received special training in disarming and removing nuclear warheads. She is a native of Oriflamme and is on detached duty from the 2nd Battalion, "Spearhead" Brigade, of the Reformation Coalition Marine Corps.

Elite NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Rifle), Unarmed Martial Arts, Grenade Launcher

Other Assets: Combat Engineer 12, Climbing 9, Medical (Trauma Aid) 9, Communications 9, Environment Suit 12, Electronics 12

Motivation:

Spade 2: Harvey is a good Marine, proud of what she does, and anxious to be recognized and advanced in grade.

Diamond 8: Harvey comes from a very poor background, and is desperate never to be poor again. She fears the insecurity of poverty more than she fears death or injury, and might risk everything for an opportunity at permanent financial security.

Gordon "Go-Go" Godfreyson



Like Harvey, Go-Go is a combat engineer specialist who has received special training in disarming and removing nuclear warheads. He is a native of Oriflamme and is on detached duty from the 2nd Battalion, "Spearhead" Brigade, of the Reformation Coalition Marine Corps.

Elite NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapons (Slug Rifle), Unarmed Martial Arts, Autogun

Other Assets: Combat Engineer 12, Climbing 12, Medical (Trauma Aid) 12, Communications 9, Environment Suit 9, Computer 9

Motivation:

Diamond Queen: Go-Go is drawn to women, and fancies himself a ladies man, despite the fact that he is not usually successful in his advances. At various times during the adventure he will probably make a pass at Razbak and any female members of the adventure party. He has long ago given up on Harvey, and the two have a reasonably friendly relationship built around a constant exchange of insults.

Club 10: Go-Go is, under his cocky exterior, unhappy and frustrated, and this manifests itself as a streak of extreme violence. He manages to control this in most situations, but he is liable to lose control in combat and go completely hereark



DZ EAGLE

When the time comes for the actual jump, everything goes according to plan. The drop capsules are released on schedule, and then communication is disrupted by the normal heavy ionization that takes place during a meteoric descent. The player characters will resume communication once their chutes deploy and they make their descent on DZ EAGLE.

Just before the drop, the troopers are given a weather report on conditions over the site. There is heavy cloud cover over the target area. A low pressure area to the northwest of the drop zone may produce light rain by 0300 hours.

Finally the launch claxon blares, indicating the the launch tube outer doors are being opened to vacuum. Shortly thereafter, each trooper feels a surge as the capsules are fired from the tubes, and start to freefall toward the world. Theoretically, the troopers are mere passengers in the drop until it becomes time for them to steer their parachutes. Each capsule is fired from a ship flying a precise drop vector, each launch tube is aimed and sequenced to fire its capsule at a precise atmospheric entry angle, and each capsule is fitted with a flight computer which pilots the capsule on a violently evasive course into the atmosphere to the precise point where the parachute-equipped trooper will be released, all the while spewing flares, chaff, and other decoys from the capsule's countermeasures dispensers. In reality, of course, the troopers must be prepared to intervene in this automated process if something goes wrong.

On a 1D20 roll of 20, there is an error in the course.

To correct the course is a Difficult: Environment Suit task. On a simple failure, the trooper will land 1D10 kilometers from the designated touchdown area.

On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper will land $1D10 \times 10$ kilometers from the designated touchdown area.

On either failure, roll on the Scatter Diagram (page 281 of TNE) for the direction of deviation.

At 35 kilometers from the ground, the capsule splits open, releasing the trooper strapped into the equipment frame/parachute harness, which deploys a drogue chute. On a 1 D20 roll of 20, the chute fails to automatically deploy. To recover from a drogue chute failure is a Difficult: Environment Suit task. Success indicates manual release of the chute. On a simple failure, the chute is released late and only partially slows the descent.

On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper continues to descend unchecked.

The next event is the main chute deployment. On a 1D20 roll of 20, the main chute fails to deploy. If the drogue was deployed late, the main chute is torn off on a 20, and does not correctly deploy on an 18 or 19. If the descent is unchecked, the main chute is lost on a 19 or 20, and fails to deploy on a 16, 17, or 18. To recover from main chute failure is a Difficult (Environment Suit or Parachute) task. Success indicates manual release of the chute. If the main chute has been torn off, then success indicates deployment of the back-up chute.

On a simple failure, the trooper had to resort to the back-up

chute which will check the descent rate, but provides less directional control.

On a Catastrophic Failure, the main back-up chute deploys but is damaged. The trooper will land off-target and harder than intended.

To guide the chute to a landing is a Difficult: Parachute task. The difficulty increases to Formidable if the back-up chute had to be used, and Impossible if the back-up chute is damaged. Success indicates that the trooper landed safely. The platoon is expected to land within a one-kilometer radius of the designated touchdown area. However, there may have been deviations introduced by earlier events. On a simple failure, the trooper lands with a deviation of 1D10 × 500 meters. On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper lands with a deviation of 1D10 × 1 kilometers and has to make a touchdown roll-Average: Parachute. Success indicates a safe touchdown. On a simple failure, the trooper takes 1D6 wounds of 1D6 each. On a Catastrophic Failure, the trooper takes 1D6 wounds of 1D10 each. For each wound inflicted, roll randomly to determine location affected. If there was a previous deviation, the present deviation will be from that point, which may actually put the trooper closer to the designated touchdown area.

Once the mission team is on the ground, it will discover that one drop capsule did not make it to the DZ and has disappeared without a trace. None of the ships overhead saw what happened (due to the jamming and swarms of decoys), and there is no emergency beacon registering on anyone's communicators. The capsule and its contents are simply gone.

The referee should determine which capsule is missing (although it should not be a player character's capsule). This can be done by deliberate selection or random die roll. No one capsule will render the mission impossible to complete, but many will make it more difficult.

Random NPC: If one of the fill-in NPCs is missing, the team will have to assess whether this means a reallocation of duty assignments or not. If not, some job along the way may go undone. Whatever equipment the NPC was carrying is, of course, lost, and this could include important weaponry, sensors, or comm gear. How important this loss will be depends on how careful the team has been in ensuring it had redundancy of key items of equipment.

Boxcar: If Boxcar is missing, the above considerations all come into play. In addition, paranoid player characters may begin to wonder if this whole mission was a set-up, and may begin speculating as to why Boxcar never talked about his experiences on Eloji or how he suffered the injuries he was recovering from. (This is purely idle speculation, however. Boxcar was not a traitor and there is no particular significance to his capsule being lost.)

Floater-Crane: If one of the floater cranes is lost, it will slow up the work teams (by reducing them from two teams to one). The work will not take twice as long, however, as one of the engineers will go ahead and begin opening silo hatches in advance while the second engineer works to extract warheads



from already opened silos.

Warhead Specialist: If one of the warhead specialists is lost, there can only be one work team, and this will slow progress considerably. This can be speeded up somewhat if one of the player characters is a trained combat engineer. While that will not qualify the PC to remove warheads, it will enable him or her to set demo charges and prepare silos in advance, just as noted above under the possible loss of a floater-crane.

Equipment Pod: Whatever equipment was in the pod is lost. If the equipment was just extra gear as a precaution, this is not a major loss. If the pod contained critical gear, it is potentially devastating. If, for example, all of the satchel charged were in the equipment pod, the team can no longer blow the "lids" off the silos. The mission can still be accomplished, but it will now require the team to capture each silo's control center in sequence and then manually open the silo cover for the work teams. Losing detection or communication gear will have to be dealt with by similar improvisations.

THE MUSHROOM FIELD

The decoys that precede the drop capsules hit all over the missile field and will pin down or incapacitate most of the personnel on the surface. The referee should determine randomly where the characters come down, and some should be outside the perimeter wire while others land in the missile field itself.

The only resistance the characters will encounter at first will be from the four pillboxes and perhaps the gate guard. The pillboxes are each manned by our Novice security troops armed with 7mm light machineguns, and several RAM grenades (two HE and two HEAP), and two submachineguns.

Each pillbox has two firing slits, one facing the wire and one facing in to sweep the missile field itself.

The two guards at the gate have only 9mm automatic pistols and SMGs, and as the gate house is only glass and wood, there is a 30% chance that the it was destroyed by an impacting drone (killing or incapacitating both guards).

The only other above-ground facilities are the garage and the admin building. There will be a handful of Novice NPCs scattered through both buildings, all unarmed and all trying to hide or escape. There are eight range trucks parked in the garage.

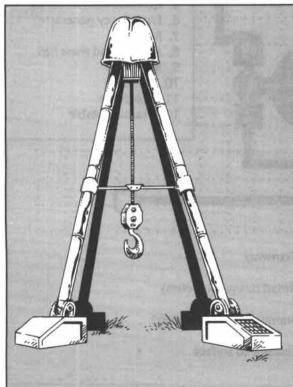
Once the team is down and united, and the surface area is secured, it's time to assess any losses and start to work.

Blowing Hatches: As soon as possible, the two work teams will begin blowing hatches and extracting warheads. Whether they work on adjacent silos (to keep concentrated and simplify security) or on opposite sides of the field (to minimize the chances of both teams being made casualties at once) is up to the mission team.

It will take 2D6 minutes per silo to excavate a cavity for the charges and then place them under the lip of the silo hatch. Once the charges are placed and tamped, the work crew will back off and blow the hatch cover.

Each time a work crew blows a hatch cover, the referee should make a Difficult: Combat Engineer task roll. Failure indicates that the hatch cover has not blown completely free and the process has to be repeated. The second charge will automatically blow the hatch clear unless a Catastrophic Failure is rolled.

If a Catastrophic Failure is rolled (on either a first or second attempt to blow the hatch), the hatch cover blows free but is blown to the side and lands on top of either the crane or a member of the work crew (referee-determined with a random



Grav-Assisted Collapsible Crane (TL-12)

The collapsible crane is not a true crane, but is a four-legged frame which can be collapsed down to fit into a standard cargo drop capsule and erected over an object, usually within a shaft or well, to hoist it up.

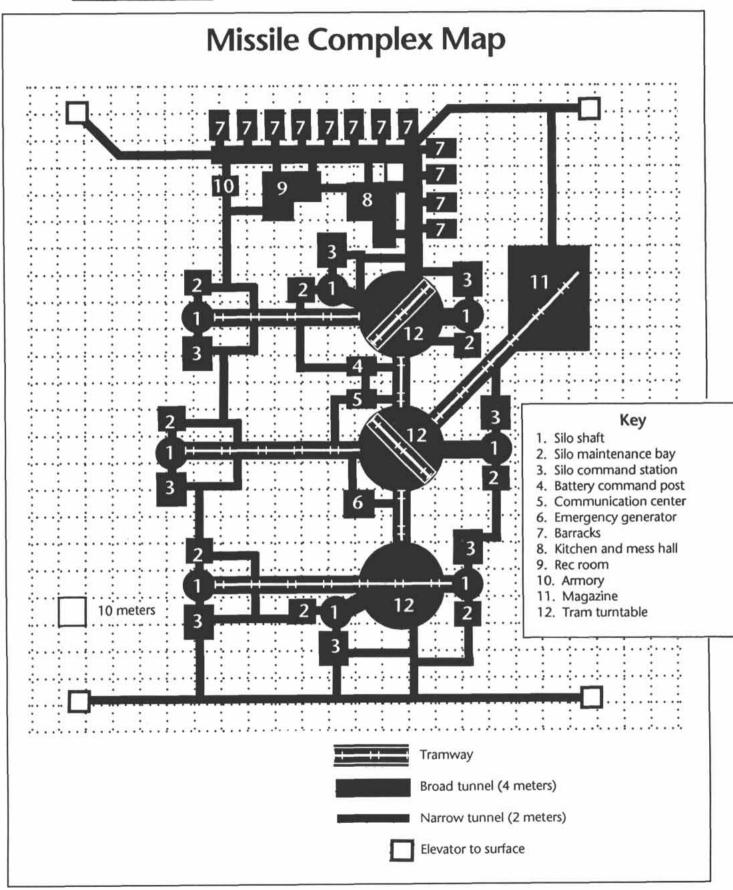
The apex of the crane contains the hinges for the four legs as well as a pulley over which the hoisting cables pass. The four legs are telescoping, and each one ends in a heavy "foot." These feet not only provide stability when the crane is erected, but also contain the winch-operating controls and its operating subsystems. Each foot contains a contra-grav module and batteries for four hours of continuous operations. These contra-grav modules allow the crane to be rapidly moved from one location to another by its operators, but are shut down while the crane is actually hoisting. By placing the mass of these modules at the bottom of the four-legged frame, its stability is enhanced. Also, within two of these feet (placed opposite each other) are the two hoisting winches and their controls (the contra-grav modules are also controlled from these feet).

The winches contain cable sufficient to allow objects to be lifted from 500 meters beneath the crane.

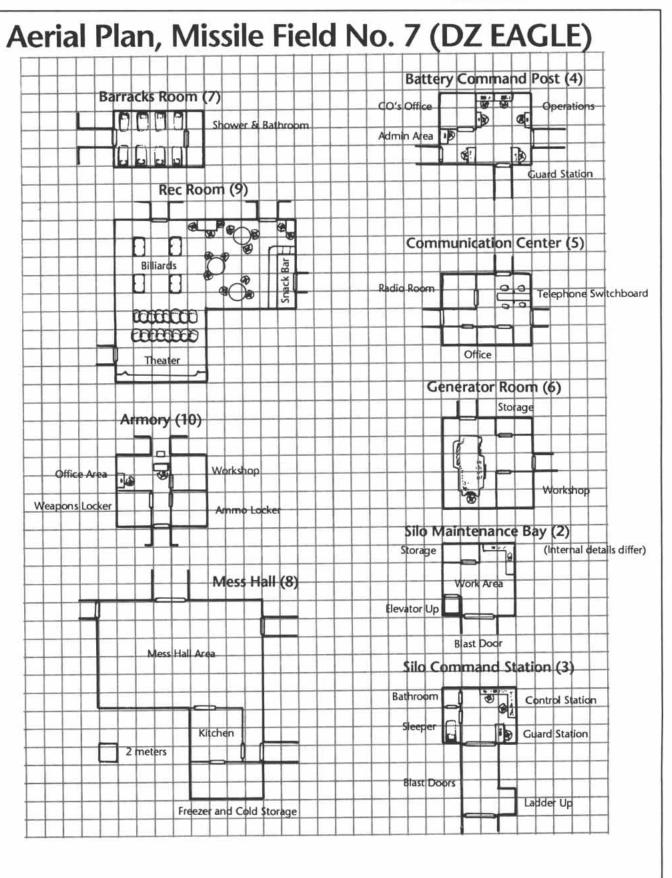
The crane has a capacity of two tonnes, but may not be moved while the cable is under tension. This means that any objects that have been lifted by the crane must be downloaded before it can be taken to another location. However, the cargo may be swung to one side by the use of guy lines, allowing it to be set down beside the opening from which it was lifted.

The crane is two meters tall when collapsed, and is four meters tall when ready for use. It has a mass of one tonne, but an apparent weight of only 10 kilograms when being moved under grav assistance.











die roll). If it lands on a crane, the crane will be crushed. If it lands on a member of the work team, that member will be seriously injured and pinned in place. The hatch cover is heavy enough that it will take the recovery ship itself to lift it (by attaching a cable to the ship and hatch and using the ship's CG lifters).

Recovering the Warheads: Once the hatch cover has been removed, the crew will set up the floater-crane over the open silo and climb down to the first balcony (either using the crane, ropes, or the internal maintenance ladder). The warhead specialist will disconnect the warhead from the missile and attach the crane's cable to it. One of the work party will then operate the winch to raise the warhead clear of the silo. This part of the operation will take 2D6 minutes.

The work crew will then activate the CG lifters for the crane and manually push it (with the warhead in place) down the access road to wherever the team has designated as its pickup site. The time required for this will depend on how far the team has to move the crane. Once it is moving, they can move it at the trotting movement rate (two 10-meter grid squares per turn).

The Guards: There is a platoon of 40 guards at the complex, and it went to alert stations when the jamming began. By the time the team dusts, 18 guards are above ground at the gate and in bunkers while 22 more are still below ground. One guard is present in each silo command station, six are present (along with the commander) at the underground battery command post, and the remaining eight are at the armory awaiting orders.

The complex has no radio communications with higher command, but has a secure telephone and data cable link. This link is very vulnerable, as it is an above-ground link to the public telephone system and runs through the power umbilical near the front gate. If the team thought to cut this, the guards have no link to the outside world; if it remains intact, the guard will call for reinforcements (see "A Discouraging Word is Heard" below) and will receive orders to hold fast, greatly increasing its morale.

If out of communication, the guard will make no organized effort to stop the team for at least an hour. Each time that a work team enters a silo there is a 10% chance that the silo guard will open fire on them with a 9mm SMG from the floor of the silo (not that this is likely to do much harm). After an hour or so, the guard commander will realize that there is a supply of HEAP RAM grenades in the armory and will gather together a group of eight or 10 troopers with SMGs and two RAM grenades each. (The SMGs are fitted with RAM grenade adaptors.) He will either stage an ambushin a silo notyet opened or a sortie from a silo already visited, as the referee's discretion.

If the guard is in communication with headquarters, its resistance will be more organized and will coalesce quicker. Every 10 or 15 minutes a small party of 1D6 guards will attack a work team in a silo or sortie onto the surface and attempt to recapture the warheads or otherwise disrupt the operation. Each of these guards will have one or two RAM grenades. Once they have fired their grenades, they will either retreat or surrender.

If the team decides to penetrate the underground complex and clear the guards out, the fighting will be vicious and confused, but the team will have the definite advantages of secure helmet communications and good sensors (as the underground corridors will quickly fill up with smoke). A determined attack will probably overwhelm the defenders and cause most of the guard to surrender (particularly if they are not in communication with headquarters), but there may still be one or two holdouts who will conduct occasional sniping attacks on the team.

The underground complex also has about 50 missile technicians, but they are unarmed and will offer no resistance.

A DISCOURAGING WORD IS HEARD

At some point after the team has begun to work, the DZ will receive an air strike. If the team has a sensor in place, it will detect the aircraft before the strike arrives and be able to either take cover or prepare homing missiles to fire at them. If not, there is a 40% chance that TEATIME is in position to detect the incoming aircraft and alert the team.

The air strike itself will be conducted by one TL-8 jet aircraft, which will make several passes over the DZ and then depart. On its first pass, it will drop napalm antipersonnel submunitions. This attack will be disorienting, but is unlikely to injure characters in battle dress.

On its second and third passes, the aircraft will strafe with a 2cm autogun. On each pass, each character in the open above ground has a 10% chance of being hit, while characters ducking behind cover or prone on the ground have a 5% chance of being hit. Each range truck and warhead parked in the open also has a 10% chance of being hit, and each crane has a 5% chance of being hit. A hit on a range truck, warhead, or crane will destroy it (although the warhead will not detonate). Each character hit by the strafing attack will actually be struck by 1D6 2cm rounds. The 2cm ammunition has a DV of 6, but will not penetrate battle dress, instead causing blunt trauma damage.

The aircraft will break off the attack after the third pass and leave, having expended all of its ammunition.

Break, Break, Break. I show multiple crawlers incoming. Estimate six to 10 guntracks, with dismounted grunts in company. I think the bad guys are here, folks.

At some point after the air attack is over, the DZ will come under attack by a TL-8 combined arms force, consisting of tanks and dismounted infantry. If the characters have a surveillance system in place, they will receive advanced warning of the approach of the force. If they do not, their first indication may be tanks breaking down the perimeter chain link fence.

If the characters thought to cut the land lines connecting the missile field with the outside world, the attack will come late in the adventure (after two or three hours on the ground) and it will be fairly weak—no more than two or three tanks and a dozen or so infantry.



If the characters have not cut the land lines, the weak (probing) attack will come within half an hour after the air strike and then a stronger attack, with up to a dozen tanks, will follow within another hour. In both cases the attacking troops will be Boukart regulars (Experienced NPCs).

Regardless of whether the characters cut the land lines, if either of the two guards at the gate survived and escaped the compound, the missile field will be attacked by about 30 Novice militia infantry with assault rifles about one hour after the landing. This is a hasty and uncoordinated assault, and if it happens to come in at the same time as the air strike, it may suffer tremendous casualties from its own aircraft.

"Dave, I've still got the greatest enthusiasm and confidence in the mission."

While trying to secure the DZ, and perhaps while fighting off the Boukart mechanized forces, the team picks up a distress call from RCS *Defiant Arms* as it crosses the horizon on its second or third transit, and then monitors the following exchange.

"Mayday. Mayday. This is Razbak calling all stations. Razbak to all stations. Mayday. We are hit and coming down. Over."

"Razbak, this is Teatime. Give me a damage assessment. Over."

"Teatime, this is Razbak. Nothin' works. Over."

"Razbak, be more specific. Over."

"Teatime, we've lost almost all of our sensor suite, most of our control circuitry, central fire control, life support, CG lift, we have internal fires, and we're at about 40% power and dropping. Over."

"Razbak, can you get your crew out? Over."

"Negative. We're too low, too hot, and there's no time for the foam to harden on the re-entry kits. Over."

"Razbak, this is Rocko... Razbak... I'm not sure what..."

"Rocko this is Razbak. Clear the channel; you're too far away to help. Now listen, Teatime. I've still got an RDF/receiver and the people on DZ Eagle still have their beacons. I may not have CG, but I've got a half-assed air foil, a front window, and thrust. You have them give me a beacon and I'll put this piece of junk down on it. Over."

"Eagle-six, this is Teatime. You heard the lady. Light her up a landing beacon."

The team will trigger one or more of its radio beacons, and Razbak will attempt a soft landing at DZ Eagle. Instead, *Defiant Arms* streaks overhead at several thousand feet, glowing hot from re-entry, and comes down hard several kilometers to the east behind a low chain of hills. It is hard to tell whether *Defiant Arms* exploded on impact, as the compound was still echoing from the multiple sonic booms of its passage when it hit. There is the glow of fire in the sky beyond the hills, but someone is sure to point out that as hot as *Defiant Arms* was, it would certainly have started a brush fire where it landed.

What the characters do immediately will depend largely on the situation in the missile field, but sentiment will run very





high (among at least the NPCs, some of whom may be crewmembers of *Defiant Arms*) to investigate the crash site. If the player characters are dead-set against leaving the compound, they can at least order the NPCs to remain and justify it on the basis of the need to stay together and complete the mission. Teatime will not overrule them from orbit, as they are in command on the scene, but will not be happy with the decision.

If they decide to send a team to investigate, the range trucks in the garage may prove useful (provided, of course, that they have discovered them).

RESCUE RUN

The move to the crash site will not be completely uneventful. At least one, and perhaps several, small party (1 D6) of wandering Novice militia troops will be encountered. The militia is as likely to flee before the characters as it is to fight.

The characters will also come across the wreckage of the missing drop capsule, at least ending any speculation as to what happened to it. From all appearances, none of its parachutes deployed and it contacted the ground at tremendous velocity, setting off whatever ammunition or explosives were carried. If it was a manned capsule, there will be very little in the way of recognizable human remains.

As the characters approach the crest of the low chain of hills, they will begin to hear the pop of small arms, and this will become quite distinct as they cross the crest itself. Less than a kilometer away is the wreckage of *Defiant Arms*, having made a hard but controlled crash landing. Part of the ship is on fire, but most of the fire was indeed caused by burning brush.

The wreckage is surrounded by hostile infantry in platoon strength (30 or 40). They are all militia (Novice NPCs) with assault rifles and hunting rifles, and they are not pressing the attack with anything approaching vigor, confining themselves to popping off a good deal of ammunition.

The wreck is defended by the survivors of the crew, which include at least Captain Razzori and any PCs assigned to Defiant Arms, and whatever other NPCs the referee feels like. They're defending the ship with snub pistols and whatever other light weapons happened to be on board.

The militia will be fairly easy to scatter, given a sudden surprise attack from behind by well-armed troops in battle dress (even just two or three of them). If the characters did not bring enough transport, they may have to secure the wreck (and the crest of the hill if they are smart) until another range truck or two can be sent out.

The only remaining question is how the team will be extracted. Teatime provides the answer by managing to jettison the MCP containing the jump capsules and substitute Alert for Defiant Arms as the pickup vessel. If the mission team has not investigated the crash site, Teatime will do so and will recover the survivors of the siege, most of whom by now are wounded and several possibly dead.

EPILOG

Once safely aboard *Argent*, there will be time for congratulations or condolences, depending on how successful the mission was. The characters will learn that Wastantan's PAD system was more extensive than had originally been thought, and so was able to shoot down *Defiant Arms*. (This was not Boxcar's fault, as he had been the operative in Boukart-controlled territory, not Wastantan.)

The losses suffered on the raid will be a black mark against Rocko, all the more so since he remained behind in *Argent* and was not in a position to exercise immediate tactical control when things started going bad. He is unlikely to command a task force like this again, but this is hardly a tragedy in his eyes, as he has no real ambitions along those lines.

Both Teatime and Razbak performed well, and are both well-situated to be powerful contacts for the PCs in the future (assuming Razbak survived, which she certainly will if the PCs go to the crash site, and which she probably will if Teatime picks up the survivors on the way out). This can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on how well the PCs got on with them and how the two ship captains assess the PCs' performance.

Recovering the warheads will be, in the final analysis, probably the least important measure of player character performance. The most important, of course, will be survival. Did the PCs survive, and if so, how many others survived due to their efforts?

The next criterion will be honor. When everything started coming apart, did the PCs think of themselves, or did they continue to think of their comrades? Did they leave anyone behind, or did everyone who survived come home? Were the casualties and the crew of *Defiant Arms* recovered *because* of the PCs or *despite* them? These are all important measures of how honorably the PCs performed, and how the other survivors will view them.

Finally, were they smart? Did they come up with a good plan? Did it have enough flexibility to keep working in the face of everything that went wrong? Did they keep thinking when the situation changed unexpectedly?

If they performed well, they are on their way to building reputations as ace smash-and-grab team specialists. As to money, RCES will pay them exactly what they originally promised to. But this isn't about money, after all, is it?

Armed Forces Controlled by Colonel Boukart Total Personnel: 5000

Wet Navy: 300 manning one or two small armed patrol craft

Air Force: 1600

6 TL-8 combat aircraft

2 strategic TL-11 ADA/PAD batteries (8 launchers).

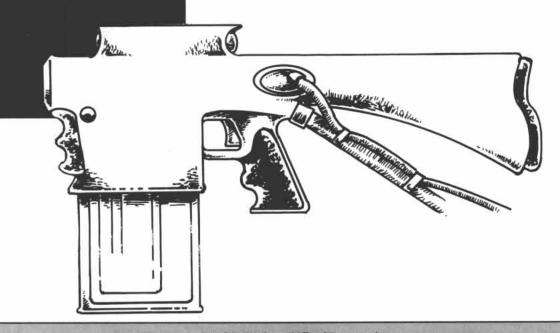
Ground Forces: 3100

1 lift infantry company (Experienced, TL-11)

3 mechanized companies (Experienced, TL-8)

6 militia companies (Novice, TL-8)

Smash & Grab TL-15 Fusion Rifle (Droyne)



TL-15 Fusion Rifle (Droyne)

This TL-15 fusion rifle was a typical weapon on high-technology Droyne worlds. Because it is fitted with an inertial compensator harness, the weapon can be fired by Droyne who are not equipped with battle dress, making it a more economical weapon. The weapon's supporting hardware and recoil compensator are fitted into a backpack, worn low between the Droyne's wings. The backpack is connected to the weapon by an articulated arm and power/cooling cable. The arm locks when the weapon is fired, carrying the recoil back to the compensator where it is reduced. The power/cooling cable provides power for the laser which burns the "pilot tunnel" through the atmosphere and initiates the fusion reaction, along with cooling fluid which operates the cartridge ejection/cooling cycle.

One of the hallmarks of its Droyne design is its lower performance compared to human fusion weapons of the same tech level, because of the need to scale the weapon to the smaller stature and lower strength of the average Droyne. This allows the weapon to be used by Sport and Leader castes, in addition to the larger Warriors.

Weapon Length: 40.5 cm Pulse Energy: 0.75 Mi

Weapon Mass: 1.7 kg empty, 14.18 kg with full magazine

Backpack Mass: 3 kg Weapon Price: Cr50,750

Cartridge Specifications: "4.0 cm PFC," actual dimensions 4.0 × 11.9 cm Pulse Fusion Cartridge (0.75 Mj), 1.2 kg, Cr6 each

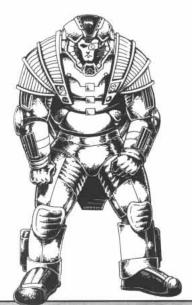
Magazine Specifications: 6.48 kg empty, 12.48 kg with 5 rounds, Cr65 empty, Cr95 fully loaded with 5 rounds PFC

Features: Electronic sight, Inertial compensator harness and backpack

					Weight			Pri	ce
Weapon	TL	Pulse	Ammo	Empty	Loaded	BP	Magazine	Weapon	Ammo
4cm Fusion Rifle/comp (Droyne)	15	0.75	4.0 PFC	1.7	14.18	3	5	50,750	6/95

							—Re	ecoil—	
Weapon	ROF	Damage	Penetration Rating	Penetration Value	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range
4cm Fusion 15c	SA1	10	1/2-1-4	20-20-10-3	2	5	5*	-	40

*If weapon were to be used without its inertial recoil compensator, recoil would be 13.



Smash & Grab Reformation Coalition TL-12 Heavy Battle Dress

Reformation Coalition TL-12 Heavy Battle Dress

The Coalition's heavy battle dress is used by its first-line military forces, and also on raids where significant military opposition is expected. Heavy battle dress doubles the effective strength of its wearer, and includes environmental control, atmospheric filters, and respirators (allowing the wearer to function in tainted and thin atmospheres), Chameleon IR suppression systems, a wide-spectrum visual helmet sensor suite, and an in-helmet radio of at least 3-km short range.

There are three primary variants of the suit: the standard Trooper Suit, the Leader's Suit, used by section, platoon, and higher leaders, and the Scout Suit, used by a limited number of personnel per unit for longer-range surveillance.

All suits feature an integral arm-mounted laser designator, used to mark targets for the Lyrebird missiles carried in standard drop capsules (see page 119). The laser designator has a range of 6 km, and due to its high power requirements, has power sufficient for only six minutes of constant use.

The Leader's suit has less armor protection to allow it to carry a 30-km (short range) radio in place of the 3-km trooper's radio, and the Scout Suit is fitted with a passive EMS array in the chest, with a short range of 3 km. Due to the bulk of this system, the Scout Suit also has reduced armor protection, and only a 3-km (short range) radio. It also only has batteries sufficient for nine hours continuous use of its sensors.

All of these suits may be recharged by a standard starship fusion power plant. This process takes one hour, and requires that 0.1 MW of power be allocated per suit for the duration of the recharge.

All of these suits may be fitted with a self-contained oxygen supply lasting 20 hours, which adds .01 tonnes to the mass and MCr0.002 to the cost of the suit. With the oxygen supply fitted, the suits are overloaded, which increases the Agility and Initiative penalties to -4 and -3 respectively, and reduces movement rates by 10%.

Because of their distinctive appearance, these suits are often referred to by Coalition Marines as "Sumo Samurai Suits," or "Samurai Beetles."

Standard Trooper Suit

Mass: 0.4197 tonnes (419.7 kg) Price: MCr0.22315 (Cr223,150)

Agility Penalty: -3 Initiative Penalty: -2 Armor Value: 15

Endurance: 10 hours continuous use for all systems, except laser designator; only 6 minutes continuous use

Features: Wide-spectrum visual helmet sensor suite (treat as WSV goggles, short range = 400 meters), Chameleon IR suppression, 3-km (short range) radio, TL-10 Inertial Navigator (TNE page 346), laser designator (6-km range) with batteries for 6 minutes of continuous use.

Leader Suit

Mass: 0.4147 tonnes (414.7 kg) Price: MCr0.225645 (Cr225,645)

Agility Penalty: -3 Initiative Penalty: -2 Armor Value: 13

Endurance: 10 hours continuous use for all systems, except

laser designator; only 6 minutes continuous use

Features: Wide-spectrum visual helmet sensor suite (treat as WSV goggles, short range = 400 meters), Chameleon IR suppression, 30-km (short range) radio, TL-10 Inertial Navigator (TNE page 346), psionic shield helmet, laser designator (6-km range) with batteries for 6 minutes of continuous use.

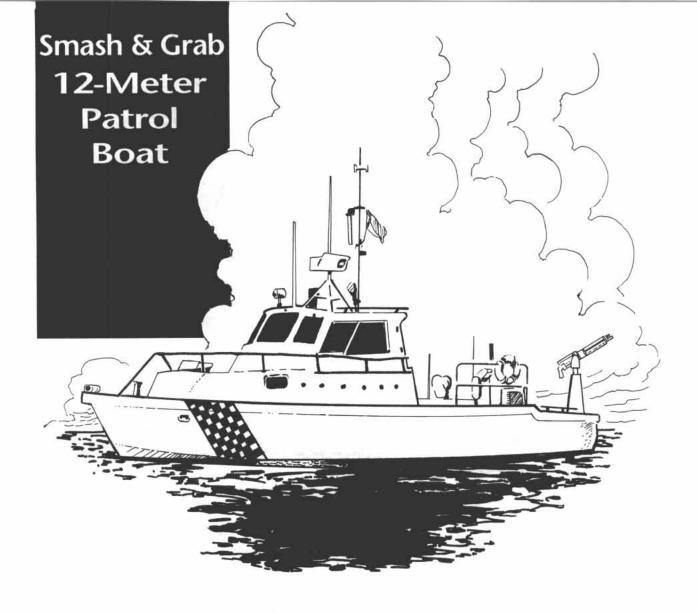
Scout Suit

Mass: 0.42 tonnes (420 kg) Price: MCr0.240853 (Cr240,853)

Agility Penalty: -3 Initiative Penalty: -2 Armor Value: 12

Endurance: 10 hours continuous use for all systems, except passive EMS sensor; only 9 hours continuous use, and laser designator, only 6 minutes

Features: Wide-spectrum visual helmet sensor suite (treat as WSV goggles, short range = 400 meters), Chameleon IR suppression, 3-km (short range) radio, TL-10 Inertial Navigator (TNE page 346), 3-km (short range) passive EMS sensor with batteries for nine hours of continuous use, laser designator (6-km range) with batteries for 6 minutes of continuous use.



12-Meter Patrol Boat

In service in the Calay Island chain on Lefiguura (3132/Khulam), these craft were designed for inter-island patrol duties. While they are not capable of ocean-going operations, they can manage trips between islands in good to moderate weather. The vessels are not intended for missions in excess of 16-24 hours duration, and thus contain no crew quarters or facilities. The typical vessel is armed with two 13mm heavy machineguns (fore and aft) on pintle mounts, and further equipped with a white-light spotlight, a 300-km radio and a 3-km radar.

Tech Level: 6 Size: Micro (Mc) Maint: 7

Cargo: 10 tonnes

Crew: 5 (Commander, two gunners, helmsman, and electronics technician)

Passengers: None

Armament: 2×TL-6 13mm HMGs, fore and aft pintle mounts

Ammo: 2000 rounds 13x75mm

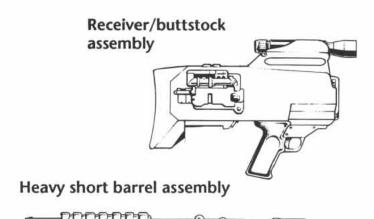
Combat Move: 2 10-meter grid squares (safe)

Travel Move: 90 Range: 1200 kilometers Combat Statistics

Configuration: Water vessel with superstructure

Superstructure Armor: [1] Hull Armor: 1 Waterline Armor: 1

Deck Armor: 1



Smash & Grab

Coalition

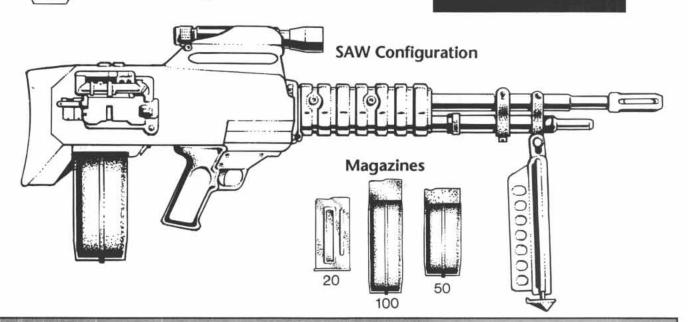
Multipurpose

Weapon

System,

TL-10

(CMWS-10)



Coalition Multipurpose Weapons System, TL-10 (CMWS-10)

The CMWS (pronounced "See Mews") is an effort to produce a family of modular small arms that can be used by all Coalition armed forces in one version or another. The weapon is built around a common receiver assembly, and is assembled into one of five weapon configurations—carbine, rifle, squad automatic weapon (SAW), general-purpose machinegun (GPMG), or vehicle-mounted machinegun (VMMG)—by adding the appropriate barrel, stock, and ammunition feed system. These parts are removable, so that the same set of CMWS components can be disassembled and reassembled into various configurations any number of times.

Reconfiguring a weapon takes significant time, requiring tools and calibration, and is not intended to be done in the heat of combat. However, a force armed with these weapons can easily alter the composition of its weapons before and after combat operations.

The intent is to make the most effective use of the Coalition's limited manufacturing base by reducing the number of different small arms designs that need to be produced, and also to allow the Coalition armed forces to travel light and make the best use of its weapons production capacity. Rather than requiring large inventories of carbines and rifles and automatic weapons, RC armed forces can cover these diverse needs with a smaller pool of CMWS components.

The CMWS uses the standard 7mm RC(E) round, the same as is used in the 7mm ACR. The common CMWS receiver is a heavy self-loading deluxe (multiple automatic rates of fire) receiver. The receiver is capable of taking ammunition from either box magazines or belts (including cassettes).

There are four barrel types which can be fitted: the Light Short barrel (also known as the Carbine barrel), the Light Long barrel (also known as the Rifle barrel), the Heavy Short barrel (this is the same length as the Rifle barrel, so is also called the Heavy Rifle Length, HRL, barrel), and the Heavy Long (or MG) barrel. All are fitted with a flash suppressor and long muzzle brake.

There are three types of stock: bullpup, standard, and pistol grip. All variants are fitted with optic sights, and laser sights can also be added as an option (not included in prices or weight listed below) to any of them.

All variants can take ammo from 20-, 50-, or 100-round box magazines, or from belts (including cassettes). However, the weapons below are only listed with the most useful magazine sizes for their configurations.

CMWS Component Price List

Component	Weight (kg)	Price (Cr)
Receiver		医温声膜
Receiver	5.6	2068
Barrels		
Light Short (Carbine) with flash suppressor, long muzzle brake,		
bayonet lug, and grenade adapter	1.45	463
Light Long (Rifle) with flash suppressor and long muzzle brake,		
bayonet lug, and grenade adapter	1.54	582
Heavy Short (HRL) with flash suppressor and long muzzle brake	2.03	863
Heavy Long (MG) with flash suppressor and long muzzle brake	2.16	917
Stocks	E-POREGE STATE	
Hollow pistol grip	0.1	28
Bullpup stock	0.1	11
Ammo Feed Systems (Empty)		
20-round box	0.55	106
50-round box	1.34	254
100-round box	2.65	508
Box with battery for 100-round belt	1.9	500
1000-round Cassette	21	120
Sights		
Optic sight	0.1	150
Laser sight	0.5	300
Weapon Mounts		
Bipod	2.5	75
Tripod	8	180

7×30 RC(E) (7×30mm ETC) Ammunition Statistics (per round)

Caliber	TL	Length (mm)	Weight (grams)	AME (Joules)	Price (Cr)
7x30 RC(E) Ball	10	44	12	4,803	0.24
7×30 RC(E) DS	10	44	12	4,803	0.48
7×30 RC(E) HE	10	44	12	4,803	0.48
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	10	44	12	4,803	0.72
7x30 RC(E) Trang	10	44	12	2,882	0.48

CMWS-10 CARBINE

Bullpup stock, carbine barrel (includes bayonet lug, long muzzle brake, flash supressor, RAM grenade adapter), optic sights, uses 20-round magazines. (The carbine is limited to the 20-round magazine by the light barrel's inability to stand up to high sustained rates of fire.)

Weapon Length: 101 cm

Weapon Weight: 7.853 kg with empty 20-round magazine, 8.093 with loaded 20-round magazine

Weapon Price: Cr2692

Magazine Specifications: 20 rounds 7×30 RC(E), 0.553 kg empty, 0.793 kg loaded, Cr106 for empty magazine with battery

Ammo Price: Cr4.8 for 20 rounds ball; Cr9.6 for 20 rounds DS, HE, or Trang; Cr14.4 for 20 rounds HEAP

Features: Optic sights, bayonet lug, flash suppressor, RAM grenade adapter

7×30 RC(E) CMWS-10 Carbine

				— Recoil —							
Round	ROF	Damage	Penetration	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range			
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	20	2	2/4/8	(70) 80			
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	20	2	2/4/8	(84) 100			
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	20 -	- 2	2/4/8	(52) 60			
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	20	2	2/4/8	(52) 60			
7×30 RC(E) Tranq	3/5/10	-1*	NII A	6	20	1	2/4/7	(30) 30			

Range is given with optic sights; values in parentheses are iron sight ranges

CMWS-10 RIFLE

Bullpup stock, rifle barrel (includes bayonet lug, long muzzle brake, flash supressor, RAM grenade adapter), optic sights, uses 20-round magazines. (The rifle is limited to the 20-round magazine by the light barrel's inability to stand up to high sustained rates of fire.)

Weapon Length: 106 cm

Weapon Weight: 7.943 kg with empty 20-round magazine, 8.183 with loaded 20-round magazine

Weapon Price: Cr2711

Magazine Specifications: 20 rounds 7×30 RC(E), 0.553 kg empty, 0.793 kg loaded, Cr106 for empty magazine with battery

Ammo Price: Cr4.8 for 20 rounds ball; Cr9.6 for 20 rounds DS, HE, or Trang; Cr14.4 for 20 rounds HEAP

Features: Optic sights, bayonet lug, flash suppressor, RAM grenade adapter

7×30 RC(E) CMWS-10 Rifle

						— Re	coil —	
Round	ROF	Damage	Penetration	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range
7x30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	20	- 2	2/4/8	(81) 90
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	20	2	2/4/8	(97) 110
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	20	2	2/4/8	(61) 70
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	20	2	2/4/8	(61) 70
7x30 RC(E) Tranq	3/5/10	-1*	Nil	7	20	1_	2/4/7	(30) 30

Range is given with optic sights, values in parentheses are iron sight ranges

CMWS-10 SAW

Bullpup stock, bipod, rifle length heavy barrel (includes long muzzle brake and flash supressor), optic sights, 50- and 100-round magazines standard, but can also use 20-round magazines and belt feed.

Weapon Length: 101 cm

Weapon Weight: 11.72 kg with empty 50-round magazine, 12.32 with loaded 50-round magazine

13.03 kg with empty 100-round magazine, 14.23 with loaded 100-round magazine

10.38 kg configured for belt-feed, 11.58 kg with 100-round belt and battery

Weapon Price: Cr3167

Magazine Specifications: 50 rounds 7×30 RC(E), 1.34 kg empty, 1.94 kg loaded, Cr254 for empty magazine with battery

100 rounds 7×30 RC(E), 2.65 kg empty, 3.85 kg loaded, Cr508 for empty magazine with battery

100-round belt 1.2 kg, plus 1.9 kg battery

Ammo Price: Cr12/24 for 50/100 rounds ball; Cr24/48 for 50/100 rounds DS, HE, or Trang; Cr36/72 for 50/100 rounds HEAP

Features: Optic sights, bipod

7×30mmE CMWS-10 SAW

						— Re	coil —	
Round	ROF	Damage	Penetration	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	50	ī. 1	2/3/7	(81) 90
bipod	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	50	=1	1/2/4	(105) 120
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	100	1	2/3/7	(81) 90
bipod	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	100	1	1/2/4	(105) 120
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	100B	- 1	2/4/7	(81) 90
bipod	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	1/2/4	(105) 120
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	50	1	2/3/7	(97) 110
bipod	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	50	1	1/2/4	(126) 160
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	100	1	2/3/7	(97) 110
bipod	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	100	1	1/2/4	(126) 160
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	100B	1	2/4/7	(97) 110
bipod	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	100B	1	1/2/4	(126) 160
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	.5	Nil	6	50	1	2/3/7	(61) 70
bipod	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	50	1	1/2/4	(79) 90
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	100	1	2/3/7	(61) 70
bipod	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	100	1	1/2/4	(79) 90
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	100B	1	2/4/7	(61) 70
bipod	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	100B	1	1/2/4	(79) 90
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	50	- 3	2/3/7	(61) 70
bipod	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	50	1	1/2/4	(79) 90
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	100	1	2/3/7	(61) 70
bipod	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	100	1	1/2/4	(79) 90
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	100B	- 1	2/4/7	(61) 70
bipod	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	100B	1	1/2/4	(79) 90

Range is given with optic sights; values in parentheses are iron sight ranges

CMWS-10 GPMG (TRIPOD MOUNT)

Bullpup stock, tripod, machinegun barrel (includes long muzzle brake and flash supressor), optic sights, belt feed standard, but can also use 50- and 100-round magazines.

Weapon Length: 106 cm

Weapon Weight: 8.01 kg configured for belt feed, 11.11 with 100-round belt and battery

Weapon Weight on tripod: 16.01 kg configured for belt feed, 19.11 with 100-round belt and battery

Weapon Price: Cr3146

Tripod Specifications: 8 kg, Cr180

Magazine Specifications: 50 rounds 7x30 RC(E), 1.34 kg empty, 1.94 kg loaded, Cr254 for empty magazine with battery

100 rounds 7×30 RC(E), 2.65 kg empty, 3.85 kg loaded, Cr508 for empty magazine with battery

100-round belt 1.2 kg, plus 1.9 kg battery, Cr500 for battery, ammo price below

Ammo Price: Cr12/24 for 50/100 rounds ball; Cr24/48 for 50/100 rounds DS, HE, or Tranq; Cr36/72 for 50/100 rounds HEAP

Features: Optic sights, tripod

7×30 RC(E) CMWS-10 GPMG (Tripod Mount)

1 7 7		3 3				Re	coil —	
Round	ROF	Damage	Penetration	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	50	2	2/4/7	(88) 100
tripod	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	50	1	1/1/2	(176) 200
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	100	1	2/4/7	(88) 100
tripod	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	100	1	1/1/2	(176) 200
7×30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	100B	2	2/4/8	(88) 100
tripod	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	7	100B	1	1/1/2	(176) 200
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	50	2	2/4/7	(105) 120
tripod	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	50	1	1/1/2	(210) 240
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	100	1	2/4/7	(105) 120
tripod	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	100	1	1/1/2	(210) 240
7x30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	100B	2	2/4/8	(105) 120
tripod	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	7	100B	1141	1/1/2	(210) 240
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	50	2	2/4/7	(66) 80
tripod	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	50	1	1/1/2	(132) 150
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	100	1	2/4/7	(66) 80
tripod	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	100	1	1/1/2	(132) 150
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	100B	2	2/4/8	(66) 80
tripod	3/5/10	5	Nil	7	100B	1	1/1/2	(132) 150
7x30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	50	2	2/4/7	(66) 80
tripod	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	50	1	1/1/2	(132) 150
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	100	1	2/4/7	(66) 80
tripod	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	100	1	1/1/2	(132) 150
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	100B	2	2/4/8	(66) 80
tripod	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	7	100B	1	1/1/2	(132) 150

Range is given with optic sights; values in parentheses are iron sight ranges

CMWS-10 VEHICLE MG

Pistol grip, machinegun barrel (includes long muzzle brake and flash supressor), optic sights, cassette-feed standard, but can also use belt feed and 20-, 50- and 100-round magazines.

Weapon Length: 101 cm

Weapon Weight: 29.01 kg with empty 1000-round cassette, 41.01 kg with loaded 1000-round cassette

8.01 kg configured for belt feed, 11.11 with 100-round belt and battery

Weapon Price: Cr3163

Magazine Specifications: 1000-round 7x30 RC(E) cassette, 21 kg empty, 33 kg loaded, Cr5120 for empty magazine with battery

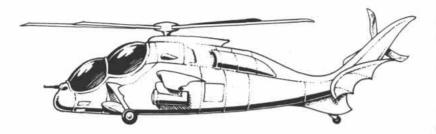
100-round belt 1.2 kg, plus 1.9 kg battery, battery costs Cr500

Ammo Price: Cr240 for 1000 rounds ball; Cr480 for 1000 rounds DS, HE, or Trang; Cr720 for 1000 rounds HEAP

Features: Optic sights

7×30 RC(E) CMWS-10 Vehicle MG

					— кесон —							
Round	ROF	Damage	Penetration	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range				
7x30 RC(E) Ball	3/5/10	5	2-3-Nil	6	1000C		- 1	(196) 230				
7×30 RC(E) DS	3/5/10	5	1-2-3	6	1000C	-	_	(234) 270				
7×30 RC(E) HE	3/5/10	5	Nil	6	1000C	122		(146) 170				
7×30 RC(E) HEAP	3/5/10	5	2-2-2	6	1000C	:	-	(146) 170				



Smash & Grab TL-7 Aydih Attack Helicopter (Droyne)

TL-7 Aydih Attack Helicopter (Droyne)

The Aydih (Warrior) attack helicopter is a TL-7 Droyne design, used primarily in the antiarmor role. The gunner is seated in the forward cockpit with a flexible-mount 13mm machinegun, and the pilot sits in the rear cockpit. The missiles are also fired by the gunner, but as these are both fire-and-forget designs, this makes only minimal demands on the gunner's attention.

The design is somewhat underpowered, as its ordnance load-out is limited not by hardpoint capacity, but by the helicopter's lifting power.

Tech Level: 7 Price: Cr275,430

Size: 450 cubic meters = 32 tons (180 cubic meters = 13 tons with rotors folded)

Mass: 7.0 tonnes empty, 9.0 tonnes loaded

Power: 2.3-megawatt gas turbine provides 2.25 megawatts to MTR rotors, which provide 9 tonnes lift and 0.9 tonnes thrust. Turbofan producing 0.39 tonnes thrust and .0078 megawatts. (0.0578 megawatts available for on-board electronics.)

Maintenance Points: 3

Controls: Electronic controls, TL-5 flight avionics, TL-5 navigation aids

Communications: 30-km radio Sensors: 0.3-km radar

Other Electronics: Launch control systems for TL-7 homing and target-designated missiles

Life Support: Heat, lights, oxygen tanks and masks for two crew

Cargo: 47.5-kg cargo internal

Crew: 2 (Pilot and Gunner) with advanced cockpit armor (AV 4)

Armament: 2 x wingtip launch rails, 2 x OWHP, 2 x Plumbed IWHP, 13mm HMG-6 in flexible mount Ammo: 600-kg external ordnance, plus 200 rounds 13mm HMG-6 carried internally. Typical loads:

1) 2 × antiaircraft missiles on tip rails, 4 × antitank missiles on OWHPs and IWHPs, 200 rounds 13mm HMG-6

2) 2× antiaircraft missiles on tip rails, 2× antitank missiles on OWHPs, 2×190-liter drop tanks on IWHPs, 200 rounds 13mm HMG-6

3) 2 × 300-liter ferry tanks on IWHPs, 200 rounds 13mm HMG-6 Maximum Speed: 317 kph clean, 298 kph with external ordnance

Cruising Speed: 238 kph clean, 224 kph with external ordnance

Travel Move: N/A, as helicopter cannot remain aloft for four hours. Use cruising speeds above and fuel endurance below to calculate figures.

Combat Move: 44 (High Mode, clean)/41 (High Mode with external ordnance)/6 (NOE)

Fuel Consumption: 736.8 liters/hour (endurance of 1.9 hours on internal fuel) Internal Fuel Capacity: 1400 liters hydrocarbon distillates (1.9 hours endurance)

With 2 × 190-liter drop tanks on inner hardpoints, 1780 liters (2.4 hours endurance)

With 2 × 300-liter ferry tanks on inner hardpoints, 2000 liters (2.7 hours endurance)

Weapons Values

Туре	ROF	Short Range	Damage	Penetration	M/T	Agility	Other
13mm HMG-6	5	160	7	2-3-4	N/A	N/A	Note 1
Missile, Homing-7	1	1340	C:4, B:25	1C	2500	5	Note 2
Missile, Target Memory-7	1	6665	C:2, B:10	33C	5000	5	Note 3

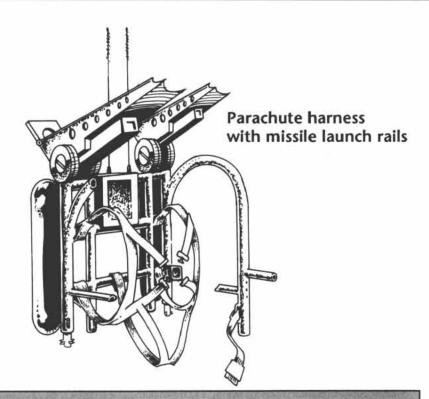
Short Range: Short range in meters for the HMG and homing missile, maximum range in meters for the target memory missile. Damage: Damage value for HMG, concussion and burst for missiles, M/T: Meters moved per 5-second combat turn. Agility: Agility for missiles only.

Note 2: TL-7 Improved IR homing missile from TNE.

Note 1: TL-6 13mm HMG from TNE.

Note 3: TL-7, Guidance—Target Memory/Visual; Missile Weight—50.0 kg; Launch rail—50.0 kg; Missile Price—Cr10,290; Launch rail Price—Cr250; Controller Weight—10 kg; Controller Price—Cr1000.

Smash & Grab Mk I Drop Capsule



Mk I Drop Capsule

The Mk1 drop capsule carries one battle dress-equipped soldier and up to 260 kg of combat equipment through an atmosphere to a set of pre-programmed ground coordinates, piloted by the flight computer. On the trip down, the capsule executes evasive maneuvers using its thruster package, and deploys decoys as necessary. An ablative heat shield protects the passenger from the heat of re-entry.

After passing through the upper atmosphere, the outer shell splits away, leaving the passenger in a small framework that acts as a shoulder harness for a steerable parachute. After a short period of freefall (depending on tactical situation), the passenger deploys the parachute and glides the remaining distance to the landing zone.

Upon landing, the framework that held the parachute forms a missile launcher. The two missiles sit on launch rails, and wait, while the launcher's computer/radio monitors the trooper's radio frequency. When the trooper needs a missile, he speaks a pre-arranged code signal into his radio, and paints the target with a laser designator. The missile's computer launches one or both missiles upon receipt of the code signal.

In a raid, the primary target will be hit by a number of drop capsules landing near it, along with a group of armed drone capsules programmed to crash on nearby targets (for diversions). There is also a cargo version of the capsule, with a capacity of 824 kg.

Tech Level: 10 Price: Cr354,080

Size: 0.5 displacement tons (7m3), length 3.2 meters Mass: 7.02 tonnes loaded, 3.7 tonnes empty

Power: 0.04 MW battery

Maint: 1

Passengers: 1 soldier in battle dress, with equipment (max. 0.68 tonnes)

Offensive Armament: Twin "Lyrebird" Remote Missiles in package launchers.

Defensive Armament: Anti-Radar Decoy Dispenser, Anti-EMS Decoy Dispenser, Anti-IR Decoy Dispenser

Ammo: 5 eachxAnti-Radar, Anti-EMS, and Anti-IR Decoys

Maneuverability: Liquid fuel thrusters for 0.75 G and 4 minutes fuel

Armor: 10

"Lyrchird" Remote Missil

Type	Range (km)	Conc-Burst	Penetration	Mass (kg)	Volume (I)	Price (Cr)	Agility
10cm RM HE	24	C: 20, B: 45	8C	14.4	2.88	594	3
10cm RM HEAP	24	C: 13, B: 35	113C	14.4	2.88	636	3
10cm RM SEFOP	24	C: 10, B: 35	113C	14.4	2.88	678	3
10cm RM Chem	24	C: 3, B: 15	Nil	14.4	2.88	594	3
10cm RM WP/IS	24	C: 3, B: 35	Nil	14.4	2.88	678	3
10cm RM ILLUM	24	C: 0, B: 1225	Nil	14.4	2.88	594	3
10cm RM Lt SubM	24	B: 25	(TNE, page 285)	14.4	2.88	1014	3
10cm RM Lt HomSubM	24	B: 15	(TNE, page 285)	14.4	2.88	1350	3

"Lyrebird" missiles are treated as top attack missiles where appropriate.

These missiles have a fuel endurance of 4 minutes, allowing them to loiter overhead while the troops pick their targets. (Each minute of loiter time subtracts 6 km from the missile's range.)

Note: Price of missiles not included in capsule price above.

TL-13 Chemical Cartridge Squad Support Laser (SSL)

The TL-13 Squad Support Laser (SSL) is a powerful heavy infantry weapon used by Reformation Coalition ground forces. Because it uses technologies above the current manufacturing capabilities of RC worlds, it is manufactured using crucial internal components purchased from the Hivers, such as its focal array and the chemical cartridges themselves.

Chemical cartridge lasers work by drawing the excited electrons needed for laser generation from energetic chemical reactions. Thus there is no need for external power input (small batteries provide the spark that initiates these reactions, and these are recharged by thermoelectric couples that utilize some of the waste heat generated by the chemical reactions). Because different chemical reactions produce different wavelengths of laser light, different cartridges are often required for optimal range performance in different atmospheres. There is no price difference between any of these atmosphere-specific cartridges, but it does require the maintenance of larger stocks of ammunition.

The SSL has five selectable rates of fire: 1, 3, 5, 10, and 50, based on the number of discrete pulses fired from the energy of one chemical laser cartridge (CLC). The SSL can fire five CLCs per combat turn, so the total rate of fire is five single pulses (listed on the combat performance table below as SA5), five triple pulses (5×3), five quintuple pulses (5×5), five sets of 10 pulses (5×10), or five sets of 50 pulses (5×50). All shots fired in the same combat turn must be at the same rate of fire, but this rate of fire may be freely changed from one combat turn to the next.

The SSL is heavy, and, when not vehicle-mounted, requires a crew of three due to the weight of its components. One crewmember carries the laser (59 kg), one carries the ammunition box (73 kg), and one carries the tripod (66 kg). Once the laser is set up, one crew serves as the gunner, another as the spotter, and another as security/ammunition runner.

Smash & Grab TL-13 Chemical Cartridge Squad Support Laser (SSL)

TL-13 Chemical Cartridge Squad Support Laser

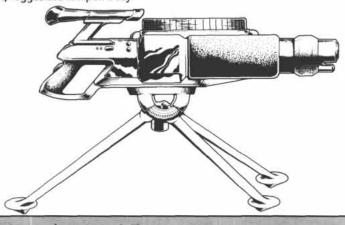
Focal Array Diameter: 6 cm

Discharge Energy: 0.18 Mj (SAS), 0.06 Mj (5×3), 0.036 Mj (5×5), 0.018 Mj (5×10), 0.0036 Mj (5×50)

Weapon Specifications: 59.39 kg empty, 132.47 kg with full magazine, 198.72 kg mounted on tripod, Cr57,835 weapon only Cartridge Specifications: "27×80 CLC," actual dimensions 26.7 × 80.2 mm Chemical Laser (0.9 Mj), 0.45 kg, Cr27 each

Magazine Specifications: 28.08 kg empty, 73.08 kg with 100 rounds, Cr280 empty, Cr2981 fully loaded with 100 rounds CLC Tripod Specifications: 66.25 kg, Cr763

Features: Laser sight, optic sight, ruggedized weapon body



Combat Perform	nance (i	n Atmosphere Damage Die					
Weapon	ROF	(S-M-L-E)	(W-X-Y-Z)	Pen Rtg	Bulk	Magazine	Short Range
6 cm CLC SSL-13	SA5	21-21-21-16	8-4-2-1	Nil	8	100*	300
	5×3	12-12-12-9	5-2-1-1	Nif	8	100*	300
	5×5	10-10-10-7	4-2-1-1	Nil	8	100*	300
	5×10	7-7-7-5	3-1-1-0	Nil	8	100*	300
	5×50	3-3-3-2	1-1-0-0	Nil	8	100*	300

*One CLC cartridge is used per SA shot or per burst, not one cartridge per shot in the burst.

Laser Atmospheric Adjustments

The combat performance chart above shows performance in a standard atmosphere (codes 6, 7). For performance in other atmosphere types, use the short range in the SR column below to resolve hits, then find damage at that range by consulting the column for the correct atmosphere type on the table below: Vacuum (code 0), Trace (code 1), Very Thin (codes 2 and 3), Thin (codes 4 and 5), Dense (codes 8 and 9), and Exotic (codes A-C). These columns provide four entries, for short-medium-long-extreme ranges. The entry will usually be a letter code, showing which damage entry on the table above to use. If the entry reads "0," the laser does no damage at that range.

For dense and exotic atmospheres, there is an additional parenthetical listing. This shows the weapon's short range in meters in this atmosphere to achieve the same S-M-L-E damage performance it would have in a standard atmosphere as listed above. This allows players to use their weapons at shortened ranges in thick atmospheres. If the entry reads "NA," there is no shorter range that may be used to regain damage performance.

Weapon	SR	Vacuum	Trace	VThin	Thin	Stand	Dense	Exotic
6 cm CLC SSL-13	300	S-S-S-S	S-S-S-S	S-S-S-S	S-S-S-S	S-M-L-E	S-S-E-W (NA)	W-X-Y-Z (180)



RCES Light Battle Dress

This unit is the standard light battle dress in use by the RCES raider forces, and is common in other military units as well. The standard model is fitted with a powered exoskeleton (which doubles the effective strength of the wearer), environmental control systems, filters, and respirator fittings (to enable the wearer to function in tainted and thin atmospheres), a laser designator unit (6-km range), an integral 3-km radio, and an integral WSV suite displaying on the inside of the helmet visor. The laser designator unit can be fitted to either the left or right forearm, at the wearer's option, and can be used to "paint" any target the wearer can see within a range of up to 3000 meters.

Some suits are manufactured with an integral "Chameleon" camouflage feature, which adjusts the suit's IR heat signature to match its surroundings. This feature must be incorporated during manufacture.

The suit's power supply is sufficient to enable it to operate for up to 10 hours before recharging is required. All suits are supplied with standard power and life support fittings, allowing users to plug into a ship or vehicle power/life support system and conserve or recharge their resources. The laser designator is only supplied with a battery sufficient to last for a total of 6 minutes, however, so its use must be carefully rationed.

Optional Features: Oxygen tanks can be added to the basic suit in order to enable the wearer to function under vacuum situations. Individuals requiring additional radio communication range may substitute a 30-km radio for the standard 3-km model.

054 0		BV B	BM OSM	TM	MW	End	SMCr	AMCr	BMCr	OSMCr	TMC
.0. 4-00.	.02	0.235	.0022	.2032	.00342*	10*	.14	.00513	.0001075	.007625	0.153
S Light Bat	ght Battl	tle Dress	(as above,	with Cha	meleon fea	ature)					
AM	M B	BV B	BM OSM	TM	MW	End	SMCr	AMCr	BMCr	OSMCr	TMC
.054 .0	54 .02	0235 .0	047 .0022	.2032	.00342*	10*	.14	.00513	.0001075	.008625	0.154
			and the second		20 hours	\ T					
inks to the	s to the a	above (5 high-pres.	sure tanks	s, zo nours)					
anks to the	s to the a	above (5 high-pres.	+.01		, , ,	74.				+.002
			km Radio (ir	+.01		F#1	apacity) 323			+.00
anks to the	s to the a	above (5 high-pres		s, zo mours	<u>-</u>					

SM: Skeletal mass, in tonnes; AV: Armor value; AM: Armor mass, in tonnes; BV: Battery volume, in m³; BM: Battery mass, in tonnes; OSM: Other systems mass, in tonnes; TM: Total mass, in tonnes; MW: Megawatts; End: Endurance of battery, in hours; SMCr: Skeleton price, in megacredits; AMCr: Armor price, in megacredits; BMCr: Battery price, in megacredits; OSMCr: Other systems price,

in megacredits; TMCr: Total price, in megacredits.

Prairie Fire TL-8 Tank

The Prairie Fire is one of many standard pre-Collapse Imperial designs that can still be found on many worlds. It is not a main battle tank, as it is not armored quite well enough to stand up to TL-8 MBTs, but it is a high-speed heavy weapons platform that can perform many of the tasks of a tank, and is used as such on most worlds where it occurs.

Both the commander and gunner can control and fire the Prairie Fire's fully stabilized main armament and its coaxial multi-barrel autogun. In addition, the commander controls a remote stabilized turret with another multi-barrel autogun. The main armament, coaxial weapon, and remote turret are all equipped with ballistic fire control computers, allowing all weapons to disregard 2 Diff Mods.

Tech Level: 8

Price: Cr866,875 (plus ammunition costs, see below) Size: 168 kiloliters displacement = 12 tons (VS) Mass: 239.56 tonnes empty, 247.1 tonnes loaded

Power: 13.62 MW MHD turbine (0.099 MW excess power)

Maint: 67

Controls: Enhanced electronic controls, TL-8 satellite positioning navaids

Commo: 2×30-km radios Sensors: 3-km HRT

Life Support: Overpressure system

Cargo: None

Crew: 3 (driver, gunner, commander)

Passengers: None

Fire Control: -2 Diff Mods (main armament and remote turret)

Armament: Remote turret with stabilized 130mmL60 CPR gun and coaxial 7mm rotary MG, secondary remote turret with stabilized 5mm rotary MG

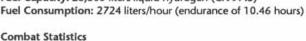
Stabilization: Advanced (fire at all speeds)

Ammunition: 100 rounds 130mm (price varies, see below), 2500 rounds 7mm (Cr1250 for full load), 5000 rounds 5mm (Cr1000 for full load)

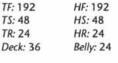
Other Systems: Dispensers for anti-laser, anti-active sensor, and anti-passive sensor decoys, 20 each (Cr400,000 for each full load of 20)

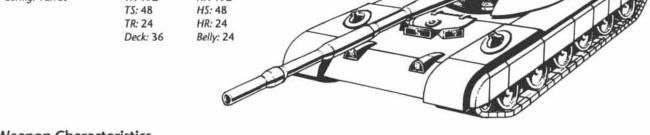
Speed: 142 kph maximum road speed, 113 kph maximum cross-country speed





Config: Turret





Weapon Characteristics

TL-8 130mm/60-Caliber Hypervelocity Gun

		Conc-			Danger	Short	Amn	10
Round	ROF	Burst	Damage Value	Penetration Value	Space	Range	Price	Weight
APFSDSDU	1/5*		29D6	207/197/187/167	4 - Yangara	670	Cr1124	49.7
HEAP	1/5*	C: 20, B: 25	_	123C		510	Cr599	49.7
HE	1/5*	C: 30, B: 35		13C		510	Cr424	49.7
Flechette	1/5*	E	2D6/1D6**	1-Nil**	25×100	510	Cr1824	49.7

^{*}One round every 5 combat turns.

Secondary Weapons

Round	ROF	Damage Value	Penetration Rating	Magazine	Short Range	
TL-8 7mm rotary MG-ball	50	5	2-3-Nil	2500C	270	
TL-8 5mm rotary MG-ball	5/50	3	1-Nil	5000C	150	

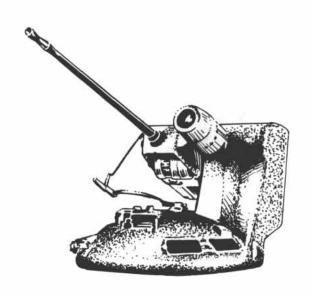
Decoys

Decoys are of three types: anti-laser (which affect attempts to detect a target with ladar or to designate it with a laser designator), anti-active sensor (which affect attempts to detect a target or designate it with radar or active EMS), and anti-passive sensor (which affect attempts to detect a target with HRT or passive sensors, including infrared goggles and sights). Each decoy only works against its specified sensor, and increases the difficulty of a detection or designation task by 1 level if from the same tech level as the opponent, or by 2 levels if from a higher tech level. Each decoy lasts one combat turn, and affects all appropriate sensor attempts against the owning vehicle, regardless of direction. Decoy dispensers may launch one decoy per second.



^{**}In primary/secondary burst area, see TNE, page 280.

Smash & Grab Various Droyne Weapons



TL-7 30mm/100-Caliber Autocannon (Droyne)

This weapon is mounted in a remote turret atop a TL-7 tracked ATV. The mount is stabilized and is equipped with TL-7 fire control equipment. The turret has an all-around AV of 1.

This autocannon is a single-barrel electric-action weapon. It weighs 0.3402 tonnes with TL-7 stabilization, TL-7 laser rangefinder, and an empty magazine. With a full load of 1000 rounds, it weighs 1.0202 tonnes. With stabilization, rangefinder, and empty magazine, the weapon costs Cr48,898.

Weapon's fire characteristics are as follows.

		Conc-				Ammo		
Round	ROF	Burst	Damage Value	Penetration Value	Short Range	Price (Cr)	Weight (kg)	
APFSDS	10		7D6	15/13/11/7	710	7.4	0.68	
HEAP	10	C: 1, B: 5		17C	530	7.4	0.68	
HE	10	C: 1, B: 5	_	Nil	530	5.4	0.68	

TL-7 High-Velocity Grenade Launcher (Droyne)

This weapon comes in two versions: vehicle (pintle) mounted, and shoulder fired. Both use identical ammunition and box magazines.

				-Weight (kg		Price (Cr)			
Weapon	TL	Ammo	Empty	Loaded	Ammo	Magazine	Bulk	Weapon	Ammo
Mounted	7	4mm HVG	8.6	12.6	0.4/4.4	10	5	1602	See notes
Shoulder-fired	7	4mm HVG	8.9	12.9	0.4/4.4	10	7	1625	See notes

Notes: Empty weight includes an empty magazine. Ammo weight is individual round/loaded magazine. Magazine is number of rounds in a full magazine. Weapon price includes one empty magazine. Ammo price per round varies by type: HE is Cr4 each, HEAP is Cr6 each, WP is Cr8 each; one empty magazine costs Cr4.

						-Re	coil-	
Round	ROF	Conc-Burst	Penetration Rating	Bulk	Magazine	SS	Burst	Short Range
Mounted HVGL-HE	SA	C: 2, B: 15	Nil	5	10		_	200
HEAP	SA	C: 2, B: 15	25C	5	10	94271	-	200
WP	SA	C: 2, B: 5	Nil	5	10	-	_	200
Shouder-fired HVGL-HE	SA	C: 2, B: 15	Nil	7	10	5		200
HEAP	SA	C: 2, B: 15	25C	7	10	5	_	200
WP	SA	C: 2. B: 5	Nil	7	10	5		200

TL-7 Hand Grenades (Droyne)

Туре	Range	Conc-Burst	Penetration	Mass (kg)	Price (Cr)
HE	*	C: 2, B: 15	Nil	0.24	2.4
HEAP	* 3/2	C: 2, B: 15	25C	0.24	3.6
WP	*	C: 2, B: 5	Nil	0.24	4.8

*See TNE rules, page 282



Smash & Grab Surveillance and Communications Equipment

Surveillance and Communications Equipment

Communications Uplinks

The Coalition employs a variety of communications uplinks to support its ground operations. These uplinks permit contact with orbital forces from a centralized location, without requiring all vehicles or battle dress suits to have communicators with sufficient range. There are two types shown here. The first is a 300-km (short range) maser uplink, for use when enemy jamming is expected. In order to keep its mass down, its battery duration requirement is based on receiving incoming communications only. Sending out communications consumes power at 10 times this rate. Thus, each 1 minute of sending consumes 10 minutes of time from the battery life.

The second is a lighter and cheaper 300-km (short range) tight-beam radio uplink. This communicator is only a fraction of the mass of a maser communicator of similar performance and duration, thus its popularity. The tight-beam radio also includes a 3-km (short range) repeater in it which allows personnel with their own radios to route their transmissions up to orbit via the uplink, and receive replies in the same way.

Both uplinks come in stand-alone or backpack configurations. The listed duration below is based on the batteries contained in the units, although both come with power cables which allow them to be hooked into external or vehicle power supplies for longer duration. Supplemental battery packs for additional duration are available for both designs.

Item	Mass (kg)	Volume (liters)	Price (Cr)	Duration (hours)	Antenna Diameter (meters)
300-km Maser Uplink	31.7	15.9	11,030	0.2/2*	1.1
External Battery pack	54	27	135	+1/10*	
300-km Radio Uplink w/3-km repeater	19.6	9.8	1125	4	0.36
Spare Battery	19.3	9.6	50	+4	10 FE 249 FE FE
*Time transmitting only/time receiving	g only				

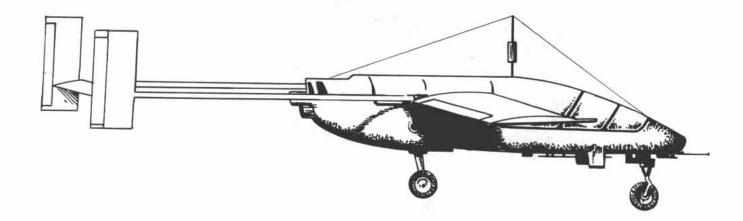
Automated Sensors

These are passive sensors carrying their own power supply and which transmit their data to remote locations with integral tight-beam radios. These sensors can be used one at a time in a stand-alone configuration, or linked into a network of several remote units and one master unit. Each sensor unit has a 3-km (short range) passive EMS sensor and a tight-beam radio with a short range of 3 km, so must be placed within 3 km of either the personnel who will be monitoring it, or a master unit. Master units collate the data from the subsidiary sensors into a single integrated display. Master units have radios with 30-km short ranges, and they may be "daisy chained" together serially to allow sensor barriers to be set up at a great distance from friendly units.

The personnel monitoring these sensors must have either a helmet sensor suite, a map box, or a computer on which to display the data. The master unit is equipped with its own map box, allowing personnel to monitor the sensor perimeter from the master unit itself. Military commanders who are linked into an automated sensor network which is controlled by a master unit add 1 to their Ground Tactics assets.

Depending upon circumstances, these sensors are recovered at the end of a mission or considered expendable. The same sensor unit is used in the stand-alone or networked role.

Item	Sensor	Radio	Duration (hours)	Volume (liters)	Mass (kg)	Price (Cr)
Sensor Unit	3-km PEMS	3 km	3	11.5	22.8	21,400
replacement battery			+3		2	5
Master Unit	_	30 km	10	8	15	4035
replacement battery	T 3 2 4 4 2 2 2 3 3		+10	6.7	13.4	35
replacement battery	-	_	+3.75	1	2	5



The RPV

The remotely piloted vehicle (RPV) available to the characters is basically an extremely large model airplane bearing wide-spectrum visual-imaging equipment. (This includes low light, thermal, and standard video). It is operated via frequency agile radio link, 30-km range, to a hand-held controller which includes a small video screen. The RPV's video feed can also be split off to a larger size display for ease of viewing or recorded for playback. The RPV is equipped with a simple autopilot capable of performing such basic tasks as orbiting a fixed point, flying a particular pattern, and the like. Lastly, its engine can be shut off and subsequently restarted in-flight when stealth is called for.

The RPV requires a flat, open area for take-offs and landings, for example a road, level field, or the like. The RPV may be optionally fitted with a rocket-assisted take-off (RATO) motor which provides the RPV with zero-length launch performance (ZLL; take-off roll is actually 1 meter, usually made from a short ramp). Each RATO motor is good for one use, and weighs 115 kg and costs Cr230. RCV Operations skill is required to fly the RPV.

Note that the RPV's components are manufactured at a wide variety of tech levels, allowing subcomponents to be produced on many RC worlds. Its airframe and engine are manufactured at TL-5, its flight controls at TL-8, its sensors at TL-10, and only its batteries at TL-12.

The RPV is listed in two configurations: its basic configuration of 246.5 kg, and its maximum payload configuration of 315 kg. The RPV in its basic configuration has space set aside in its fuselage for 68.5 kg worth of additional surveillance equipment, flares, decoys, etc., which allow it to reach its maximum payload.

Tech Level: 12 (maximum component)

Price: Cr28,765

Size: 21 cubic meters, VS target (storage volume 10.5 cubic meters)

Mass: 246.5 kg basic fueled mass, 315 kg maximum fueled take-off mass

Power: 0.02 MW improved internal combustion engine with propellor generating 0.01 tonnes thrust, plus TL-12 batteries providing 0.035 MW electrical power for 4 hours (0.00825 MW excess power)

Maintenance Points: 1

Controls: Enhanced electronic controls with RCV modifications, TL-10 flight computer

Commo: 2x30-km (short range) radios

Sensors: Wide-spectrum visual viewer, video camera/signal converter

Life Support: None

Cargo: 68.5 kg additional mission equipment

Crew: None (one remote operator)

Maximum Speed: 128 kph in basic configuration, 100 kph at maximum mass Cruising Speed: 96 kph in basic configuration, 75 kph at maximum mass Operational Radius: 192 km in basic configuration, 150 km at maximum mass

Combat Move: 18 10-meter grid squares in basic configuration, 14 at maximum mass

Aallity: 3

Take-Off Roll: 114 meters in basic configuration, 186 meters at maximum mass

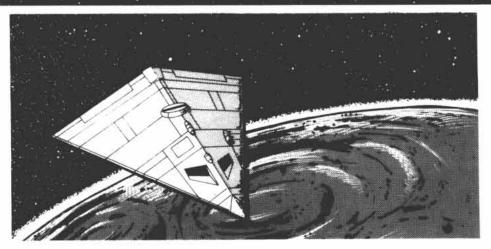
Landing Roll: 75 meters

Fuel Capacity: 20 liters hydrocarbon distillates (Cr5 for full load of fuel)

Fuel Consumption: 5 liters per hour (endurance of 4 hours)



Multimission Scout



General Data

Displacement: 100 tons Length: 35 meters Price: MCr52.03

Configuration: Wedge SL

Hull Armor: 28 Volume: 1400 m3 Target Size: S Tech Level: 15(-)

Mass (Loaded/Empty): 575.8/523.0

Engineering Data

Power Plant: 147 MW TL-15 Fusion Power Plant (147 MW/hit), 1 year duration (9.082 MW power shortfall)

Jump Performance: 2 (210 m³ fuel)

G-Rating: 2G (50 MW/G), Contra-Grav lifters (10 MW) G-Turns: 80 (113.6 using jump fuel), 6.25 m3 fuel each

Maint: 22

Electronics

Computer: 3×TL-15 Mod St Computers (0.55 MW ea.)

Commo: TL-15 300,000-km radio (10 hexes, 10 MW), TL-15 1000 AU maser (∞; 0.6 MW)

Avionics: TL-10+ Avionics

Sensors: TL-15 Passive EMS folding array 150,000-km (5 hexes; 0.15

MW), TL-15 Active EMS 300,000-km (10 hexes; 15 MW)

ECM/ECCM: TL-12 15,000km Area jammer (same hex; 6.75 MW)

Controls: Flight deck with 3×workstation

Offensive: 1×TL-12 120-Mj Laser Turret (Loc: 10; Arcs: 1, 2, 3; 3.3 MW; 1 crew)

	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
120-Mj Laser Turret	4: 1/9-27	8: 1/9-27	16: 1/6-19	32: 1/3-9

Accommodations

Life Support: Extended (0.28 MW), Grav Compensators (6G; 7 MW) Crew: 4 (2×Maneuver, 1×Electronics, 1×Gunner)

Crew Accommodations: 2×Large Staterooms (0.001 MW ea.), double occupancy

Passenger Accommodations: None Cargo: 3.1 m3 plus 20-ton multimission pod Small Craft and Launch Facilities: None

Air Locks: 1

Notes

These are standard TL-15 relic scout/couriers which have been modified by the Aubani Navy to serve as small multimission special operations vessels, and are normally seconded to the RCES. These scouts (MM) have had their cargo, hangar, and some accommodations spaces gutted, and the remainder of their internal systems rearranged to allow for a single 20-ton bay to be fitted along the ventral surface. The scout (MM) has also been fitted with a TL-12 area barrage jammer with a 15,000-km range. This allows effective planetary surface jamming from orbit. The ship's systems draw a total of 156.082 MW, 9.082 MW more than its power plant provides. This means that its active EMS sensor may not be operated while its jammer and laser turret or firing, that it can only use 1G of maneuver while all other systems operate, or some other trade-off.

The ventral 20-ton bay accepts one of several 20-ton modules allowing the ships to be rapidly converted from one mission to another. One such module is the drop capsule/missile launcher module.

The drop capsule/missile launcher module contains launch tubes for 15 drop capsules or standard space combat missiles, and a 300,000-km range missile-capable MFD. This MFD allows the launcher to fire space combat missiles, and also allows the scout (MM)'s gunner to operate the drop capsule launcher and ship's laser turret from this single location. Each of the 15 launchers includes a small staging area which allows the capsule occupants to enter and exit their drop capsule while they are loaded into their launch tube, and also provides external life support for capsule occupants before they are launched. The module requires 3.1 MW of power, raising the ship's shortfall to 12.182 MW, which can also be made up by shutting down the active EMS. This module costs MCr40.21, has an unloaded mass of 136.89 tonnes, and a loaded mass of 241.89 tonnes (assuming a mass of 7 tonnes per missile/drop capsule).

There is also a planetary-bombardment module which contains launch racks for a tremendous variety of self-propelled and deadfall planetary ordnance, usually of the guided submunition, remotely deliverable mine, or surface-penetrating high-explosive varieties. See the Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide (Reformation Coalition Manual 3) for details on this module and the ordnance carried.

The loaded and empty masses listed above are for the ship without the module. Add the module mass to these figures to get the final numbers.

TL-15 fuel-purification machinery (1.05 MW), 20.28 hours to refine 710 m³

Area (1D20)	A-4		Systems
1	Ant	1-15: Elec, 16-20: Hold	ID-TH
2-3	1-16: Ant	1-11: Qtrs, 12-20: Hold	PP-1H
4-5, 12-13		Hold	CG-(4h)
6-7		1-11: Qtrs, 12-20: Hold	ELS-1H
8-9, 14-15		1-15: Module, 16-20: Hold	MD-(2h)
10	1: AL	1-12: LT, 13-20: Hold	FPP-1H
11		Module	AG-1H
16-17		1-5: Eng, 6-20: Hold	LSR-1H
18-19		1-6: Eng, 7-20: Hold	LS-1H
20		Eng	All Others-(1h

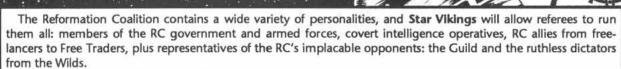




TRAVELLER

STAR-VINGS

Personalities of the Reformation Coalition

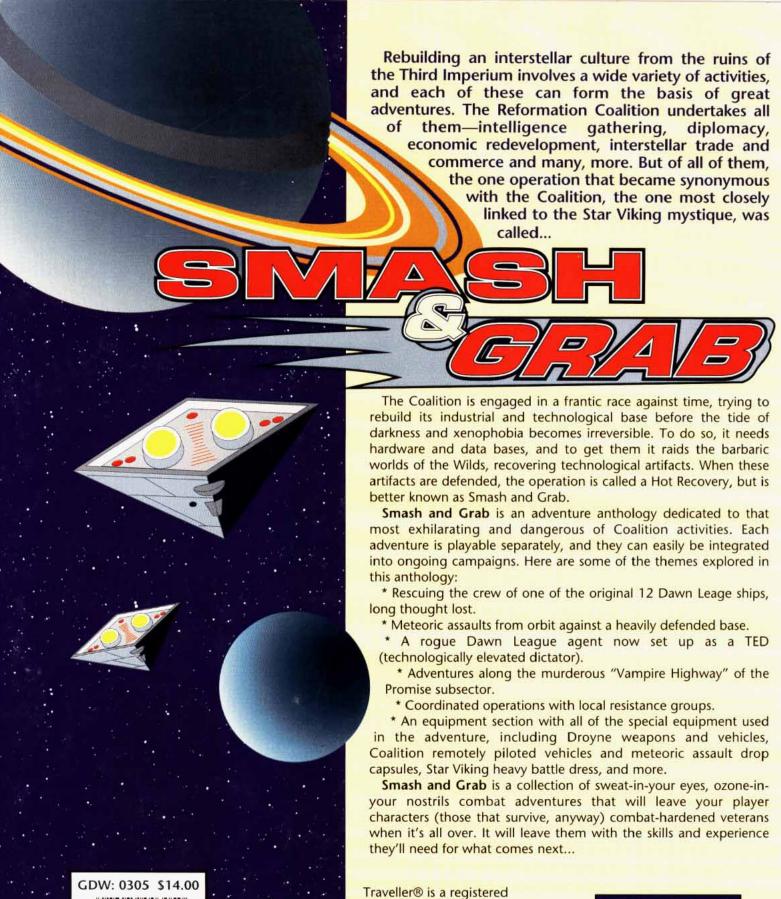


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