



The Guilded Lilly

1
Virus Redux
Epic



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TRAVELLER
The New Era

The Guilded Lilly

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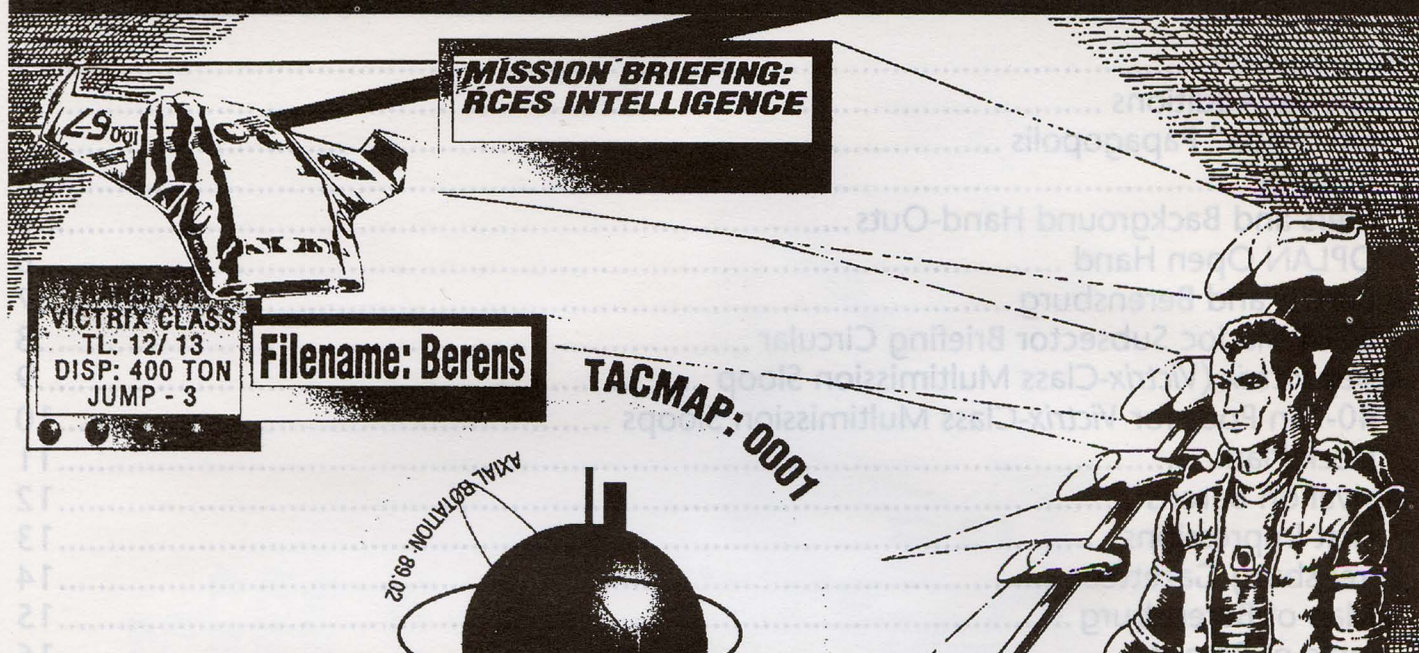
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Introduction



The **Guilded Lilly** is the first of three adventures comprising the **Vampire Redux Epic™** campaign. Each of these adventures is playable separately, although they are best played as three serial episodes of one larger campaign.

This adventure is set in and near the Reformation Coalition and can be easily integrated into an on-going campaign. If your players are starting out adventuring for the first time, very little background beyond that contained in the basic rules is necessary. Referees running campaigns in a pocket empire or the Regency will have to modify some of the details of this adventure for it to fit into their campaigns. These modifications will be fairly minor for a pocket empire campaign, but fairly substantial for a Regency campaign, for obvious reasons.

No GDW products beyond this book (and the basic game rules) are necessary to run the adventure. The adventures contained in **Vampire Fleets** serve as a prequel to this epic, and familiarity with the events of those adventures will be useful, but not absolutely necessary. Referee familiarity with the workings of Virus as detailed in **Vampire Fleets** is even more useful, but again not necessary.

Star Vikings: Personalities of the Reformation Coalition is useful for its more detailed profile of Jo Donskoi, but is not essential.

The adventure proper begins when the player characters are contacted by an official of RCES and asked if they are willing to undertake an important mission. This initial contact, and the subsequent briefing, is best placed on Aubaine, the capital of the Coalition, but can

as easily be set at Dawn Base on Trybec. They will be contacted by "Papa" Papagopolis or another representative of RCES's Long Range Operations Group, which has recently adopted the acronym LoROG as a formal title. (For the first year or more of its existence, it was simply called "The Planning Group." The Coalition is pretty informal about things like that.)

Before beginning the briefing, assemble a briefing folder for the team by photocopying pages 6 through 11 of this book. Permission is specifically granted for you to do so. These pages are laid out in such a way as to look like the actual pages of a briefing folder. Several of these are two-page documents and should be stapled together. Page 6 is the actual mission order issued by the RCES to the team. Page 7 is an intelligence report on the planet Berens. Pages 8 and 9 are standard RCES astrographic information on Madoc subsector. Pages 10 and 11 are technical details of the *Victrix*-class starship, including a floorplan.

SPECIAL ADDITIONS

If the referee owns **Vampire Fleets**, and especially if the PCs have lived through the adventures contained therein, the referee should consider making a sentient ship's computer available for the mission, an experimental installation on the *Victrix*-class ship. Some form of the Snake anti-Virus weapon may be issued as well, although this mission is not specifically directed at a known or suspected Virus threat. If a sentient computer is installed, the referee should draw a playing card to establish its basic personality.



BRIEFING

Upon arrival at Papa's Trantown office, the team meets the LoROG team members, which they have almost certainly dealt with before. See the Coalition adventure in the basic game rules for details on the group. The atmosphere is informal, and several staffers come and go with files or messages while the briefing takes place. Papa conducts the briefing himself.



Sid "Papa" Papagopolis

"I'll skip the introductions since I think most of us know each other by now. As you know, this planning group is tasked with intelligence gathering and long-range, low-profile, low-intensity operations in areas outside the primary AO. Military types would call what we do "battlefield preparation," but "battlefield preemption" might be a better term. If we do

our job right, nobody gets hurt, now or later.

"We've been getting reports from Free Traders concerning a world over in the Madoc subsector called Berens. You've got a handout on it in your briefing folders. A statistician would say that Berens is uninhabited—we peg the population at about 40—but it's potentially a key world in that subsector, by virtue of their starship maintenance facility. We'd class it a Type C facility, which is pretty remarkable to have survived at all out there.

"The Mercantile Guild wants Berens and its maintenance facilities, but they seem unwilling to make an outright grab. The locals on Berens are extremely popular. An open attack would alienate a lot of Guild captains as well as almost every Free Trader in the sector. So they're pressuring the locals, but in a pretty low key way, as near as we can tell.

"Berens is so far beyond the AO, and on the other side of the Vampire Highway, that there's no way we can commit to any kind of meaningful security arrangement with them for at least a year. What we

would like is to establish regular, friendly relations. We've got a lot of friends among the Free Traders, and it would be good to have a listening post over there to keep tabs on the Guild. A permanent consular office there would let them get to know us on a personal level, and if the Guild turns up the heat, they'd at least know that we are here as an alternative. If we had half a dozen marine guards there, it would also make the Guild think twice about causing trouble, although given how few permanent inhabitants there are, one or two marines might be less burden on the local food supply.

"We don't want to rush into this, though. Sending a full-blown ambassador and a squad of jar-heads in battle dress might make everyone a little nervous. Instead, we want you folks to go in a *Victrix*-class starship as sort of an advanced party. A commercial ship would blend in better, but a *Victrix* will get you there a lot quicker.

"Once you're there, see about buying land for an office and residency, or maybe even a deserted building if there's one suitable. Explain to whoever's in charge what we want and why. Don't be cagey with these folks—tell them the truth. If you need to, tell them everything I've told you, understand? Answer any questions they have. We've got nothing to hide.

"You'll need money to lease or buy property, and we're not sure what's going to be in demand there. We'll load your ship's hold up with a good mix of stuff: starship electronics, advanced small arms, holographic art, anti-Virus canaries, that sort of thing. If we cover enough bases, you shouldn't have a problem with money. Just remember who it belongs to.

"You people are our first formal good-will ambassadors to this place. They've probably heard of the Coalition already. Some of what they heard will be from friends of ours, but they'll have heard a lot of lies from the Guild, too. Don't try answering every lie the first 20 minutes you're on the ground, and don't get sucked into arguments.

"What's going to convince these people that we're on the level isn't arguments and explanations; it's how you behave, how you treat them, over time. That's what'll make the difference. Understand? Don't talk the Coalition—be it."

OPLAN Open Hand

General Situation: The planet Berens and its starship maintenance facilities have been identified as a key asset for expansion throughout Diaspora sector. Berens has a tiny population, but its people are popular with Free Traders and Guild crews throughout the sector. The Mercantile Guild is placing pressure on the planet's population to become a Guild-affiliated or Guild-exclusive facility. Local sentiment seems to run strongly in favor of continued independence.

Opposition: Principal opposition to Coalition activity on Berens will be from the Mercantile Guild. Due to the high degree of popularity enjoyed by the local population with starship crews throughout the sector, overt force is probably not an option which the Guild is willing to employ. All forms of resistance and opposition short of this should be anticipated, however.

Support: Free Traders using the facility are almost universally opposed to any arrangement with the Guild which would restrict their access to the facility. Many Free Traders have developed close ties with the Coalition and often are supportive of its efforts, although attitudes vary from crew to crew. Prudence dictates that Free Traders be considered sympathetic neutrals.

Mission: The team will travel to Berens and open informal relations between the Coalition and the local population. The official purpose of the mission is to inquire as to the purchase or lease of a small consulate on the planet. The unofficial and more important purpose is to gather intelligence concerning Guild activities on the planet and create a favorable impression toward the Coalition in the minds of the local population.

Execution: The team will travel to Berens carried by the *Victrix*-class sloop *Riggins Victrix* (tail number 10044). The mission will launch from Dawn Base on Trybec and jump to Lebherz (3236 Diaspora), Dijon (2638 Diaspora), either Boley (2539 Diaspora) or Ekhapen (2636 Diaspora), Saratov (2238 Diaspora), then either Seben or Tygger, and finally to Berens.

Advisories: Gas giant refuelling is available at every point along the flight path. Although maintenance facilities are available on Lebherz, RCES strongly cautions against their use until the source of a recent Virus outbreak, believed to originate there, has been positively identified. Pekhuraa is believed to have one or more armed spacecraft in service, and their attitude toward the Coalition is unknown at this time. To avoid the possibility of an incident, refuel at Saratov instead of Pekhuraa when making the jump from Khulam subsector to the Madoc Main.

None of the other worlds on the projected flight path are believed to contain vessels which pose a threat to astrogation.



BERENS AND BERENSBURG

Background Information and Orientation

Provenance: This orientation sheet is assembled from reports by Free Traders who have been to Berens on one or more occasion. To date, no citizen of the Coalition is known to have visited the planet.

Climate: Berens is a medium-sized world (11,527 km diameter) with a thin tainted atmosphere and 60% hydrographic coverage. Its orbit is somewhat irregular due to the influence of the red dwarf companion of the system's G1 primary, and there is considerable seasonal variation in temperature. Despite temperature variation, there is comparatively little storm activity.

The atmosphere is breathable without respirators or filter masks, but prolonged breathing of airborne metallic dust can pose a long-term health hazard.

Filter masks are necessary for anyone with respiratory disorders, and some travellers exhibit almost immediate allergic reactions to the atmosphere which will also require the use of a mask.

Government: To the extent that there is government at all, it is best termed a self-perpetuating oligarchy, although "volunteer government" might be a better description. Most policy decisions are made by consensus of the population, the usual agency for achieving consensus being a town meeting. The town meetings appear to be as much social as political in function.

Firearms are prohibited outside of vessels except for short-range hunting weapons, such as shotguns, used on "safaris" into the back country.

Maintenance of government facilities, such as the power plant, is done on a volunteer basis. Aside from the one-man port authority, the closest thing to a formal government are the *bankers*. The bankers (there are four or five of them) issue local currency to new arrivals in return for imported goods or currency from nearby worlds. Guild Guilders are also accepted, but Coalition credits probably are not (as there is no local commercial use for them).

Exchange rates for different goods and currencies vary from time to time and banker to banker. Local currency is then used to purchase other trade goods or local services, and can be converted back to other currency upon departure.

Many local merchants will also exchange small amounts of currency, but usually at a discounted rate.

Security: Berens relies for its security on goodwill. In a macro sense, the goodwill generated by the friendly mechanics and merchants of Berens keeps the Guild in particular, and anyone with a starship in general, at bay.

On micro level, visitors causing trouble are dealt with by ad-hoc posses organized by locals but usually containing a majority of off-worlders anxious to preserve this island of sanity.

Population: There are about 40 permanent residents of the planet Berens, most of whom live in the village of Berensburg. Transients vary from a dozen to as many as 100 at any one time, although the lower number is much more common.

Culture: Berensburg is probably unique in human history. It is a small town (a *tiny town*) which is probably the most cosmopolitan gathering place in the entire subsector. All roads cross here at Berens, and all manner of star travellers rub elbows in small rustic shops and restaurants. Conversations range from the likelihood of rain and whether the crops will come in without it to philosophy of governance, theories of aesthetics and interplanetary gossip.

Meals: The best-known restaurant on Berens is Wong's Far Spinward Grill. You've got to eat there at least once just so you can say you did it. Souvenir mugs are signed by Jerry Wong himself. (There are several places in the sector which counterfeit these mugs, so be sure it's signed.) The best (and most expensive) food is at Lutkehaus, but all the restaurants on the plant are decent.

Lodging: There are several bed and breakfast-style establishments in Berensburg. The best of these is Lutkehaus. For a more traditional hotel environment, try the Kenneally Inn.

Entertainment: For all the reputation that starports have for wild night-life, Berensburg is fairly tame. There is no prostitution, no nude dance revues, no casinos. Several restaurants serve wine or other alcohol with meals, but the only saloon *per se* is Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club (often called Mujiba's Knife and Gun Club, but never to Mujiba's face.) A few locals play poker there several nights a week, and visitors interested in gambling can often talk themselves into the game. There are no "hours" at Mujiba's, and sometimes things get wild late at night, but it is as likely to be nearly deserted or filled with a few quiet drinkers or conversation groups.

A local string quartet gives irregular recitals, which are well-attended. Most B&B rooms have computer video hook-ups with access to the widest library of pre-Collapse entertainment tapes in the sector. Once a week, there is a public showing of a tape on the large screen in the lounge of the Kenneally Inn, hosted by one of the permanent local residents.

This event usually features a particularly interesting tape the locals have "discovered" buried in the tape library, and they usually give a short talk before the tape concerning when it was made, by whom, why, etc. While anyone could watch the tape on their home link, these weekly meetings are also a form of social and cultural interaction.

For the adventurous, Mujiba Schwartz offers hunting "safaris" into the wilderness, and the Meteor Club is headquartered at his bar.

If you haven't heard about the Meteor Club, be sure to ask about it when you visit Mujiba's.

RCES Madoc Subsector Briefing Circular

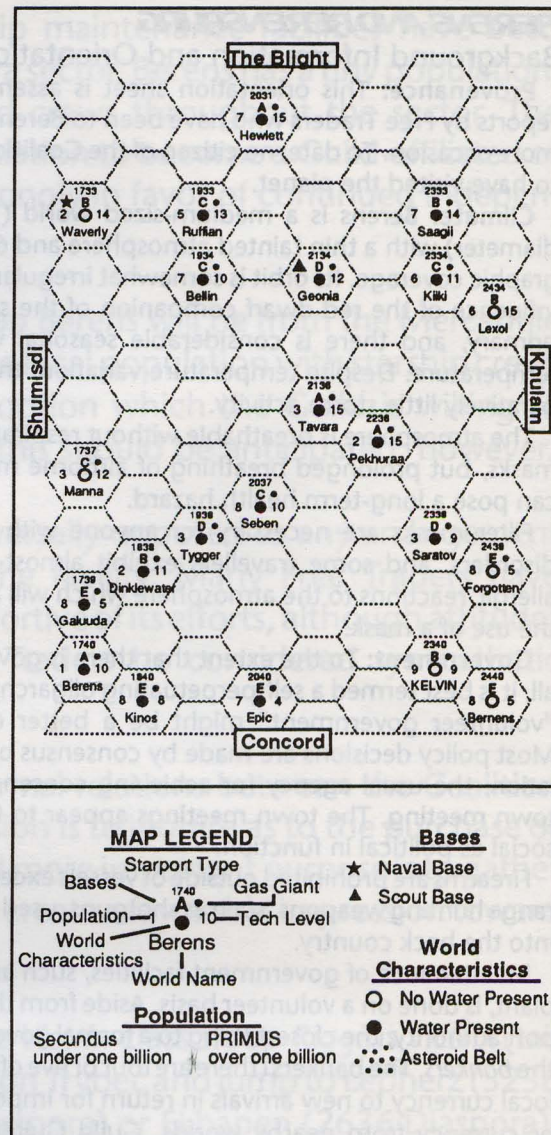
Data presented here is accurate as of 1119, early in the Final War. Listed allegiances are Final War faction; these pre-date the petty politics of circa 1130 which are indicated on the accompanying Diaspora Intelligence Chart 2/Rev 0. Note that significant changes to these worlds had taken place by 1130, before the Collapse, but these cannot be systematically documented. The data here is the last hard information available for these worlds, but it is over 80 years old.

The second (italicized) listing for Berens and Pekhuraa are based on Free Trader Network information.

MADOC SUBSECTOR

(Subsector O)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Waverly	1733	BAA7203-E	N	Ni Lo Fl	800	LI	G4 V
Manna	1737	C8D5359-C		Ni Lo Fl	812	LI	M5 V
Galuuda	1739	E79A883-S		Wa	402	LI	K4 V M3 D
Berens	1740	A846143-A		Ni Lo	911	LI	G1 V M3 D
	1740	C846136-8		Ni Lo	411	WI	G1 V M3 D
Dinklewater	1838	B98A213-B		Ni Wa Lo	514	LI	F5 V M8 D
Kinos	1840	E55887A-8			723	LI	K5 V
Ruffian	1933	C448588-D		Ni Ag	314	LI	M1 V
Bellin	1934	C996786-A		Ag	802	LI	K0 V
Tygger	1938	D768321-9		Ni Lo	103	LI	M9 V
Hewlett	2031	A110748-F		Na	603	LI	G2 V
Seben	2037	C694896-A			A103	LI	F4 V M8 D
Epic	2040	E434745-4			912	LI	G6 V
Geonia	2134	D53A110-C	S	Ni Wa Lo	902	LI	M4 V
Tavara	2136	A67A338-F		Ni Wa Lo	412	LI	K0 II
Pekhuraa	2236	A784220-F		Ni Lo	605	LI	M6 III K5 V
	2236	D784634-9		Ni Ag	205	WI	M6 III K5 V
Saagii	2333	B444736-E		Ag	514	So	M2 V M0 D
Kiiki	2334	C225666-B		Ni O:2333	A524	So	M9 III
Saratov	2338	D559348-9		Ni Lo	803	LI	M0 V
Kelvin	2340	B640988-9		Hi De In Po Cp	604	LI	K6 V M2 D
Lexol	2434	B100664-F		Ni Va Na O:2333	110	So	M3 V M9 D
Forgotten	2438	E630886-5		De Na Po	401	LI	K1 V
Berens	2440	E5508C8-5		De	500	LI	G2 V M9 D



Base Codes: D: Naval Depot; N: Naval Base; S: Scout Base; W: (X-Boat) Way Station.

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, and the number "N" following the colon indicates how many tenths of the world's population consisted of these races; De: Desert; Fl: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; Ic: Ice-capped; 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 Travel Zone digit is empty, it was listed as a Green Travel Zone; A and R indicate Amber and Red zones, respectively.

Allegiance Codes: BC: Backman Cluster; Dr: Droyne world; FD: Federation of Daibei; LI: Lucan's Imperium; Ma: Margaret's Faction.

Kelley Victrix (Victrix-Class Multimission Sloop)

GENERAL DATA

Displacement: 400 tons
Length: 60.5 meters
Price: MCr349.00
Configuration: Slab AF
Mass (Loaded/Empty): 5704.46/5496.33

Hull Armor: 40
Volume: 5600 m³
Target Size: S
Tech Level: 12/13

ENGINEERING DATA

Power Plant: 955 MW TL12 Fusion Power Plant (50 MW/hit), 1 year duration (29.61075 MW power shortfall).

Jump Performance: 4 (1400 m³ fuel for jump-4, 1050 m³ for jump-3, 700 m³ for jump-2, 350 m³ for jump-1) with relic TL13 jump drive.

G-Rating: 4G (200 MW/G), contra-grav lifters (40 MW).

G-Turns: 37 with jump-4 fuel reserve (51 with jump-3 fuel reserve, 65 with jump-2 fuel reserve, 79 with jump-1 fuel reserve, 93 using all jump fuel), 25 m³ fuel each.

Fuel Tankage: 2325 m³ (166 tons), plus 143.25 m³ (10.23 tons) reserved for power plant.

Maint: 222.

ELECTRONICS

Computer: 3xTL12 Mod Fb computers (0.4 MW each).

Commo: 2xTL12 1000 AU radio (only one powered to 300,000-km level, 10 hexes, 10 MW), TL12 1000 AU maser (∞; 0.6 MW).

Avionics: TL10+ Avionics, TL12 terrain-following avionics.

Sensors: TL12 passive EMS fixed array 150,000km (5 hexes, 0.2 MW), TL12 active EMS 300,000km (10 hexes; 27.5 MW).

ECM/ECCM: TL12 120,000km EMS jammer (4 hexes, 33 MW), TL12 15,000km area jammer (same hex, 6.75 MW), EM masking package (5.6 MW).

Controls: Bridge with 9xbridge workstations, plus 10 other workstations.

ARMAMENT

Four hardpoints fitted with mass and power reserved for four turrets totalling up to 280 tonnes and drawing 18.3 MW (Loc: 2, 3, Arcs: 1, 2, 3; Loc: 10, 10, Arcs: All). Sample fittings include 4x150-Mj laser turrets, 1xTL12 nuclear damper and 1x120-Mj laser turret, etc. Typical fitting is listed below. Weapons listed as "Planetary Combat Only" are permanent fittings.

Offensive: 3xTL12 120-Mj laser turret (Loc: 2, 3, Arcs: 1, 2, 3; Loc: 10, Arcs: All; 3.3 MW each; 1 crew each).

	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
120-Mj Laser Turret	4: 1/9-27	8: 1/9-27	16: 1/6-19	32: 1/3-9

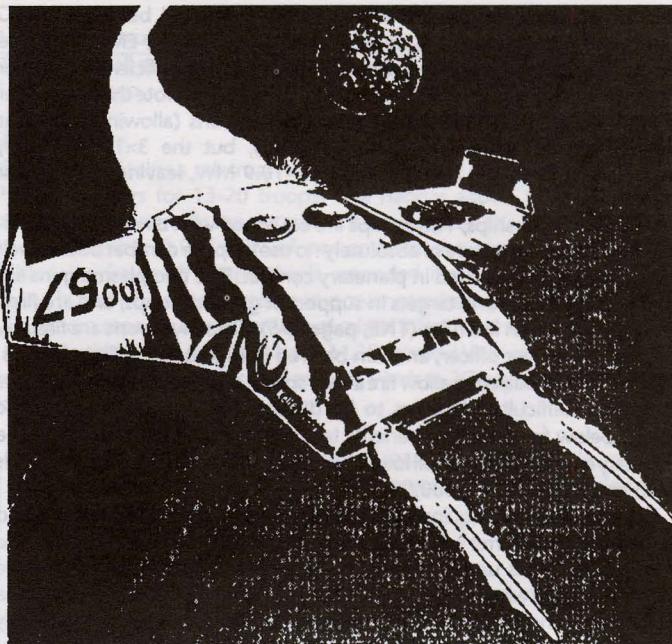
Defensive: 1xTL12 sandcaster turret (Loc: 10, Arcs: All; TL12, 1D10x5 per hit; 30 Cann; 1 MW; 1 Crew).

Master Fire Directors: 2xTL12 missile/beam MFD (4 Diff Mods; Msl 10 hexes; 10 hexes; 3.1 MW each; 1 Crew each).

Planetary Combat Only: 2xforward-firing rapid-fire plasma guns with 100 rounds per gun (data below), 1xremote turret with squad support laser with 2000 rounds (see page 96 for complete firing data). Both weapons below are fitted with advanced stabilization, meaning they can be fired without loss of accuracy at any speed.

Description	ROF	SR	Dam	Pen Val	Conc-Burst	FC
76-Mj RF Plasma Gun	SA5	870	262	262-262-131-26	69-25	4
Squad Support Laser	SA5	300	Varies	Nil	—	4

ROF: Rate of fire in shots per five-second combat turn. SR: Short range in meters. Dam: Damage value. Pen Val: Penetration value at short-medium-long-extreme ranges. Conc-Burst: Concussion and Burst. FC: Fire control, showing number of firing difficulty modifiers which may be disregarded.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Life Support: Extended (1.12 MW), grav compensators (3G; 28 MW).

Crew: 26 (2xManeuver, 2xElectronics, 6xGunnery, 10xEngineering, 2xMaintenance, 3xCommand, 1xMedic).

Crew Accommodations: 1xsmall stateroom (0.0005 MW), single occupancy for captain, 12.5xsmall staterooms (0.0005 MW ea.), double occupancy for remainder of crew.

Passenger Accommodations: None, but pods may accommodate troops.

Cargo: 8 m³ with small cargo hatch plus 40-ton multimission pod.

Small Craft and Launch Facilities: None.

Air Locks: 4.

NOTES

The Victrix ships are survivors of and copies of a class of multipurpose warship constructed by the Solomani Confederation during the Final War. They are true TL12 thoroughbreds: fast, long-legged, well-armed and highly capable, but "high-strung" and quite demanding to operate. All 11 units of the class currently serving RCES are slightly different, but Kelley Victrix, detailed here, is a good representation.

Like all Victrix ships, Kelley Victrix is a tight design. Except for her recovered TL13 jump drive, all her systems are TL12. (All Victrix ships have at least jump-3 performance with TL12 drives, but some are fitted with recovered lightweight TL14 drives. These not only allow higher absolute performance, but the weight savings allows these vessels to have beefed-up hull plating.)

All crewmembers except the captain are housed at double occupancy, but when extra crew or troops are carried (as is typically the case), "hot bunking" (three or more crew per small stateroom) is required. Fuel carriage is also at a premium; Victrix ships always require careful attention to fuel usage. The G-turn figures above based on fuel reserved for "jump-N" apply equally as well to a ship which has just arrived in system after having completed such a jump. An additional six G-turns may be gained by burning power plant fuel, but this is potentially risky. Although all Victrix ships have "good legs" based on their jump-3+ performance, the cost in their limited fuel tankage means that such deep penetration missions must have their jumps carefully plotted to place a fuel source very near the far end of the jumpspace "hole," preferably in such a position as to completely use up the ship's residual velocity (see TNE, page 224).

Ship's systems draw a total of 984.61075 MW, a shortfall of 29.61075



MW. When the contra-grav is secured, there is no shortfall, but while the CG is in use, the area jammer is usually shut down, and the EMS deceptive jammer has its short range reduced to 3000 km (quite sufficient to counter planetary surface and orbital threats when flying NOE). Note that the power shortfall varies. 18.3 MW are set aside for weapons (allowing a nuclear damper or relic 150-Mj lasers to be fitted), but the 3x120-Mj laser, 1x sandcaster fit shown above draws only 10.9 MW, leaving 7.4 MW for other purposes.

Unlike most starships, *Victrix* ships are equipped with direct-fire ground-attack weapons. These are of absolutely no use in space combat due to their limited range, but are used in planetary combat. The two plasma guns are used for strafing ground targets in support of ground troops, and are fired using the approach fire rules (TNE, page 295). These weapons are fired by the pilot/maneuver officer, and can be fired in High or NOE flight modes. They are fully stabilized to allow fire at any speed, and their fire control allows up to four Difficulty Modifiers to be disregarded. See the atmospheric ratings below for defensive benefits to the *Victrix* due to its speed in the planetary combat arena. A full load of ammunition for each gun (200 rounds total) costs MCr0.38 (Cr380,000).

Victrix ships are also equipped with a remote chin turret mounting a squad support laser. This turret is fully stabilized with -4 Diff Mod fire control like the plasma guns, but is usually used in the NOE mode to lay down suppressive antipersonnel fire when recovering troops. The turret can be fired by one of the bridge command crew or an MFD operator, but no additional bonuses apply when fired under MFD control. The turret can bear in any direction below or at the same level as the ship, but may not fire at targets above the ship. Use data on page 96 for firing the SSL. A full load of ammunition costs MCr0.054 (Cr54,000).

Although some of the relic *Victrix* ships have not been refitted for multimission pod carriage, all the newly built vessels (Tail No. 10067 and later) are fitted for the carriage of a 40-ton (560 m³) mission configurable pod in their bellies. These pods are detailed below. The prices, maintenance requirement and empty/loaded masses on the facing page are for the ship only, and do not include the pod. Maximum allowed mass for all pods is 473 tonnes, or ship's performance will fall to 2G.

TL12 fuel purification machinery (3.6 MW), 23.25 hours to refine 2325 m³ (166 tons), or 100 m³ (4 G-turns) refined per hour. 11% scoops allow craft to skim full fuel load in one hour.

Because its mission and some of its weapons call upon a *Victrix* ship to operate in planetary atmospheres, planetary combat ratings (as distinct from the Brilliant Lances/space combat ratings) are listed below.

ATMOSPHERIC RATINGS

Speeds: 5600 kph maximum, 4200 kph cruising, 480 kph maximum NOE.

Area (1D20)	Surface Hits	DAMAGE TABLES Internal Explosion	Systems
1	1-16: Ant	1-2: Pl Gun A, 3-4: Pl Gun B, 5: Remote SSL, 6-20: Elec	
2-3	1-19: Ant	1-4: Elec, 5-7: LT, 8-11: Hold, 12-20: Qtrs	CG:1H MD:1H
4	1-9: Ant, 10: AL	1-4: Eng, 5-8: Elec, 9-20: Hold	
5	1-10: Ant	1-4: Eng, 5-8: Elec, 9-20: Hold	AG:1H
6-7		1-15: Qtrs, 16-20: Hold	
8	1-2: SCH	1-5: Pod, 6-20: Hold	ELS:5H
9		1-5: Pod, 6-20: Hold	
10		1-3: Sand, 4-6: LT, 7-20: Hold	Sickbay:1H
11		Pod	
12-13		Hold	AEMS:(2h)
14-15		1-5: Pod, 6-20: Hold	
16-17	1-2: EMMR	1-14: Eng, 15-20: Hold	LT:1H
18-19	1-2: EMMR	1-15: Eng, 16-20: Hold	
20		Eng	Pl Gun:1H Remote SSL:(1h) EMM:1H All Others:(1h)

For Pod hits, see specific pod damage table on facing page

Combat Move (10-meter grid squares per Five-second combat turn): 778 (High Mode absolute speed), 22 (NOE safe speed).

Travel Move (km per four hours): 16,800 (High Mode), 960 (NOE).

Agility (Target Movement Difficulty Modifiers): +9 Diff Mod (max. speed, use vs. High Mode combat move), +8 Diff Mod (cruising, use vs. High Mode travel move), +6 Diff Mod (use vs. Safe NOE combat move), +8 Diff Mod (use vs. 2xSafe NOE combat move), +10 Diff Mod (use vs. 3xSafe NOE combat move).

40-TON PODS FOR VICTRIX-CLASS MULTIMISSION SLOOPS

Unlike many of the modules built for the modular cutters and clippers, the *Victrix* pods shown below have no provision for independent operation. Although they are built with internal frameworks, pods are not constructed with their own hull shells, and instead rely on the hull shell of the carrying ship. These shell-less pods must be fitted at a starport, and cannot be loaded in the field, as modules with hull shells can be.

Pod-equipped vessels use the same procedure for resolving excess damage as described for clipper modules on page 132.

Drop Capsule/Missile Launcher Pod

This pod contains facilities to launch up to 24 drop capsules or standard space combat missiles. Unlike the similar pod in the multimission scout, the *Victrix* pod contains no missile-capable MFD, as the *Victrix* already has two of its own. Another difference is that while the MM Scout pod uses a separate launch tube for each capsule, the *Victrix* pod has two automatic launchers. The advantage of the autolauncher is that it requires less space, as there is only one staging area per autolauncher rather than per tube, and it also requires less surface area. Disadvantages include its nominally lower rate of fire (one round every two seconds) and that there is no external life support for the drop troops once they are in their capsules. This means that the troops are on their internal oxygen while they wait for launch, which can create some sticky timing issues. Since it can take almost half an hour to load 12 troops into a 12-round autolauncher, the first troop loaded will be almost half finished with his on-board oxygen by the time all are ready to go. If the drop is planned for an ODHO (see page 14) profile, this may be a problem.

The pod also contains 5.5 small staterooms for the 22 troops, and cargo space for 36.67 m³ of their equipment (maximum of 36.67 tonnes). The mix of drop capsules carried is limited by a ceiling of 222.58 tonnes. Typical load-outs include: 16xMk I, 4xMk IIc, 2xMk IIb, 2xMk IIa; 14xMk I, 4xMk IIc, 3xMk IIb, 3xMk IIa; or 14xMk I, 2xMk IIc, 4xMk IIb, 4xMk IIa.

Volume: 560 m³

Mass: 250.42 tonnes unloaded, maximum loaded weight of 473 tonnes (maximum load of drop capsules is 24 totalling 222.58 tonnes, see pages 14-15 and use empty mass for Mk I and IIc, loaded mass for Mk IIa and IIb)

Price: MCr0.494

Crew: 0 (ship's MFD operator controls the pod).

Passengers: 22 (carried quadruple occupancy in 5.5xsmall staterooms)

Features: 2x12-round drop capsule/missile autolaunchers able to fire RC Mk I and II drop capsules or standard space combat missiles, quarters for 22 drop troops, cargo space for 36.67 tonnes/m³. Pod draws life support from the ship's main system, and requires 0.0055 MW power.

Maint: 13 (does not include maintenance required for each capsule, see pages 14-15).

DAMAGE TABLES

1D20	Internal Explosion	Systems
1-7	Autolauncher A	Autolauncher (each)-1H
8-14	Autolauncher B	SSR-(2h), 1/2 SSR-(1h)
15-19	Small stateroom	Roll randomly for individual capsule hit if autolauncher is loaded. Resolve hits against capsules within autolauncher as Mk I-(1h), Mk IIc-(1h) unloaded, -(2h) loaded, Mk IIb (2h), Mk IIa-(4h)
20	Cargo	



Troop Carrier Pod

This pod contains quarters for 48 troops (although up to 64 may be carried at an additional decline in comfort). The troop pod requires 0.008 MW of power from the carrying vessel, and additionally draws off of the ship's extended life support and artificial gravity, but at no further increase in power requirement. Cargo space is for battle dress, weapons and ammunition, and light vehicles such as broomsticks (page 11) or grav bikes (TNE, page 365). Note that troops are not carried indefinitely in these conditions, as their efficiency will eventually be degraded by the lack of training and exercise spaces.

Volume: 560 m³

Mass: 51.95 tonnes empty, 162.62 tonnes loaded

Price: MCr0.68

Crew: None

Passengers: Accommodations for 48-64 troops in 16 small staterooms (0.0005 MW ea.) requires hot bunking (3-4 per room)

Features: 110.67 tonnes/m³ of cargo with one large cargo hatch

Maint: 8

DAMAGE TABLES

1D20	Internal Explosion	Systems
1-16	Small stateroom	SSR-(2h)
17-20	Cargo	

Vehicle Pod

This pod contains a minimal hangar for a vehicle of up to 15 tons (210 m³) and quarters for 15-20 troops. The hangar allows the craft to be maintained, and permits repair tasks to be conducted at +1 difficulty level. The pod requires 0.002 MW of power from the carrying vessel, and additionally draws off of the ship's extended life support and artificial gravity, but at no further increase in power requirement.

Stateroom capacity allows carriage of mixed infantry/vehicular unit.

Carried vehicle must mass less than 334.38 tonnes if Victrix is to maintain 4G performance. Mass above this level reduces Victrix to 2G while vehicle is being carried.

Volume: 560 m³

Mass: 113.95 tonnes empty, loaded mass varies with vehicle, recommended maximum loaded mass is 473 tonnes (334.38 tonne vehicle mass in addition to 26.67 tonnes cargo)

Price: MCr0.33

Crew: None

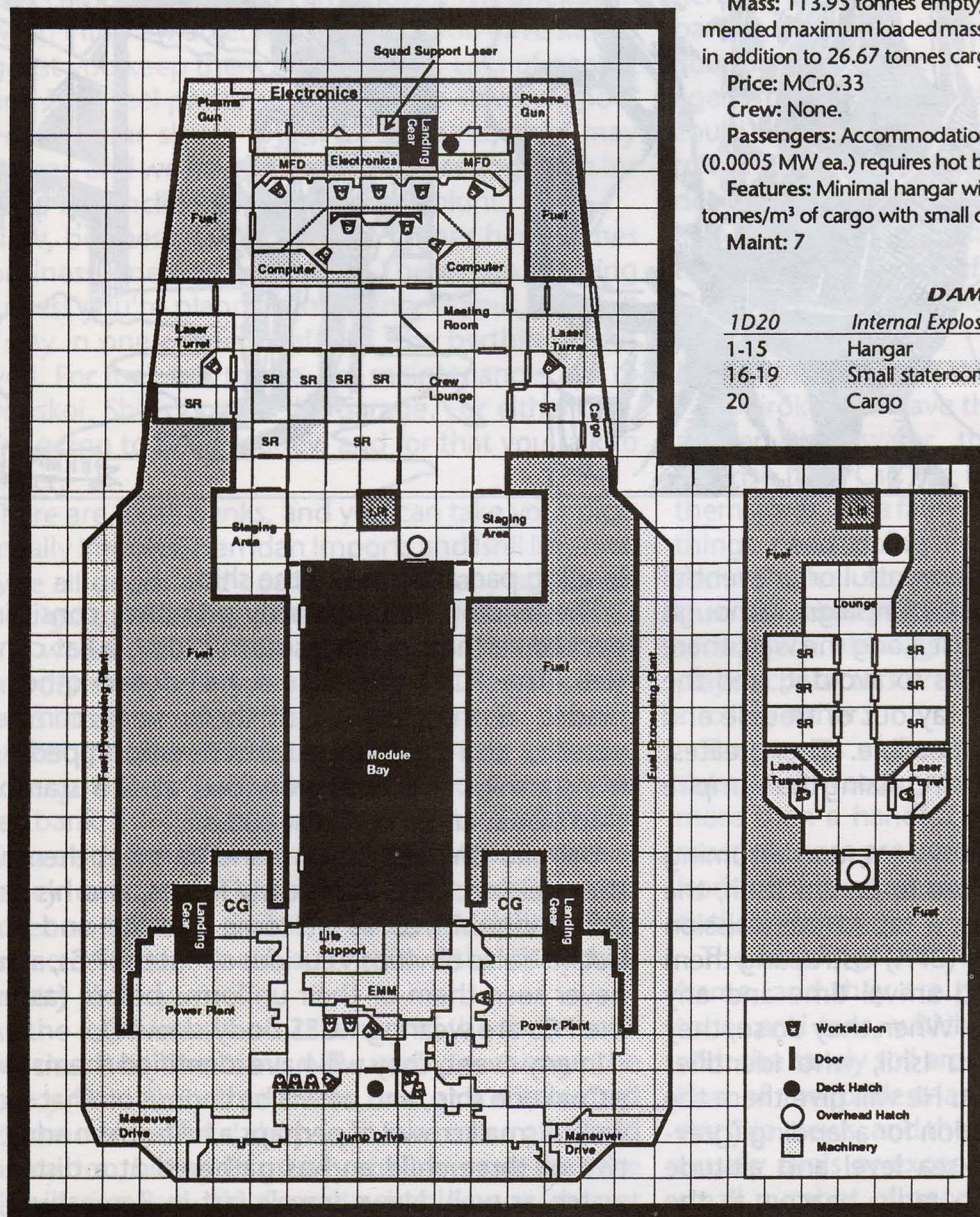
Passengers: Accommodations for 12-16 troops in 4 small staterooms (0.0005 MW ea.) requires hot bunking (3-4 per room)

Features: Minimal hangar with launch doors for 15-ton vehicle, 26.67 tonnes/m³ of cargo with small cargo hatch

Maint: 7

DAMAGE TABLES

1D20	Internal Explosion	Systems
1-15	Hangar	SSR-(2h)
16-19	Small stateroom	Hangar-4H
20	Cargo	



Arrival on Berens



The trip to Berens may be as eventful or uneventful as is appropriate for the current campaign. Although opportunities for adventure exist along the way, there are also plenty of opportunities to avoid it, and the team has been cautioned to stay out of trouble and make as quick a transit as possible. The greatest possibility of trouble will be when crossing the Vampire Highway in Khulam subsector.

Upon arriving in the Berens system, and assuming they exit jump space fairly close to Berens itself, the PCs' ship will begin receiving a taped transmission from the Berens Port Authority (BPA) instructing them to voice radio their expected arrival time and any special berthing requirements. When they do so, they will be contacted by Dairoku Ishii, who identifies himself as the head of the BPA. He will give them the detailed astrographic information for a landing (gravity, atmospheric pressure at sea level and altitude gradients, etc.) and trigger a radio beacon at the

landing pad assigned to the ship.

The landing pads are fairly primitive, consisting of packed earth-blast berms surrounding a flat concrete slab. The PCs will notice a half-dozen other ships landed at the port, all of them small commercial vessels, and perhaps a dozen empty pads. Two nonstarships are also grounded at the starport—a ship's boat and a modular cutter.

Dairoku Ishii will be on hand to meet them when they de-ship. He is in his early forties, and his expression is inquisitive. His welcome is formal and sincere, but he is also obviously curious about the PCs, as he has never seen them or their uniforms before (assuming the PCs are wearing RCES body-sleeves).

In any event, they will have identified themselves as a Coalition ship, and he will be curious on that score as well. A small crowd of perhaps a half-dozen adults and two or three children has gathered at a distance to watch as well. News travels fast in Berensburg, and



everyone is anxious to get their first glimpse of the Coalition.

After introductions have been made, Dairoku will make his standard orientation speech.

"First some rules. All weapons should be left on-board your vessel. You will have no need of them while you are here. Our laws concerning violence against people or property are fairly standard. Accidental injury or destruction usually requires restitution; deliberate acts result in fines, confiscation of some property and usually expulsion from the world. We have very few incidents requiring any of that, however. We buy and sell cargos here, almost any cargos. The one cargo you won't find a market for is slaves. If you have slaves, I suggest you keep them on your ship. Lots of people around here feel pretty strongly about slavery, and if you allow your slaves to wander around, they may disappear, and we have no means of locating them for you. No real inclination either, to be blunt.

"Now, business. Everyone who comes here comes for business, one way or another. There is no berthing fee unless you're planning on living in your vessel. If you stay in one of our local inns, the berthing fee is waived. For fuel, talk to me. For maintenance, talk to Jo Donskoi. She's boss of the garage. For either one, you're going to need money, and for that you talk to a banker.

"There are three banks, and you can take your pick: Kenneally Imports, Harridan Imports and Ishii Imports. They're all good, and I can't give you any advice on who to go to since my wife runs one of them. Here's how it works. You go to one of the banks and show them your stuff, whatever you've got. The bank buys it for its local currency. When you leave, you can buy whatever goods you want from the bank, provided they've got them available, for local currency, and either bank the rest or convert it to hard currency, again provided that bank has enough of that particular currency on hand. They usually have pretty good supplies on hand of Guilders, Prestwick dollars, Pekhuraan credits and Kinozhian credits. Other than that, it's pretty chancy.

"All the local merchants take any of the three bank currencies, and one bank will usually exchange the currency from the other banks, but at a discounted rate. Some of the local shops will take some off-world currency, too, but again usually at a lower rate than the bank will give you. It's all pretty simple once you get the hang of it, and about anyone around here can give

you a hand figuring things out.

"I'll give you a map of the town with the commercial establishments noted. The town only has a couple of streets, so addresses didn't make much sense when it's just as easy to tell someone 'third store on your right.' You shouldn't have any trouble finding anything, and if you do, just ask directions. Have a profitable stay."

The PCs may explain to Ishii their mission to establish relations and buy or lease a building. If so, he will rub his chin thoughtfully and answer, "When it comes to buying or leasing property, you probably want to talk to old Ravi Kenneally. You can usually find him over at Kenneally Inn, or maybe at his import shop. He's a banker, too. This time of day he might be over at Soundarajan's Bakery, come to think of it. He's the agent for most of the vacant buildings in town, or he could probably let you have a lot cheap if you wanted to build. Ev' Corkill could really use the work, if you decide to build. As far as establishing relations, I guess Ravi could help you with that, too. We could have a town meeting and all of us introduce ourselves. That's about as formal as diplomacy gets around here."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

If Dairoku Ishii gave the impression that Berens was a sleepy backwater, the town and its people may surprise the PCs. The Berensi, as the inhabitants call themselves, are a fairly relaxed but busy people. Lots of things need doing in order to keep even a small technological community running, and with fewer than 40 adult permanent residents, everybody does several jobs. Although people don't exactly dash about, player characters are not likely to see many leisurely strollers either.

The streets of Berensburg are very wide concrete slabs, with weeds growing up through the cracks. No more than a handful of vehicles are on Berens, and most of those are cargo haulers used to move goods from ships to warehouses, or to move the crops in from outlying farms.

The buildings are mostly poured concrete or steel frame, and they are painted a variety of light earth tones and tans, which causes them to blend in well with the sandy soil around the starport. A fair proportion of the pedestrian traffic looks to be off-world starship crews, and the transient population on Berens usually rivals or exceeds the native one. Despite the small number of people and the wide open spaces, Berensburg can almost be called bustling.

Berensburg Gazetteer

A number in parentheses after a location indicates the domicile of the indicated people. Consult the People of Berens section to match the number with a name. For example, Jo Donskoi (no. 3) sleeps in a small apartment at her garage; Everett Corkill (no. 2) sleeps in the storage shed where he keeps his construction equipment, and Hermes Fislar (no. 4) sleeps at the Fislar Bungalow.

Commercial Establishments:

Starport

- A. Starport Landing Area
- B. Jo's Garage (3)
- C. Corkill Construction (Storage Shed) (2)
- D. Imam Machine Shop

Food (F), Alcoholic Beverages (A), and Lodging (L)

- E. Hong's Far Spinward Grill (F, A) (11)
- F. Kenneally Inn (F, A, L)
- G. Lutkehaus (F, L, A) (25, 26)
- H. Pituri's Berensburg Inn (F, L, A) (34)
- I. Soundarajan's Bakery and Restaurant (F)
- J. Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club (F, A)

Shops

- K. Ishii Imports
- L. Ishii Fabrics
- M. Kenneally Imports
- N. Maroules Crafts and Interior Design
- O. Berensburg Library (1)
- P. Ada Harridan's Novelty Shop (7)
- Q. Harridan Imports
- R. Arturo Nohovig's Office

Municipal Facilities

- S. Power Plant
- T. Well and pumping station
- U. Sewage pond
- V. Dump

Private Residences

- 1. Fislar Bungalow (4)
- 2. Hong House (10)
- 3. Hong-Harridan Cottage (12, 13)
- 4. Imam House (14, 15)
- 5. Ishii House (16, 17, 18)
- 6. Kapusta House (19, 36)
- 7. R. Kenneally House (22, 24)
- 8. D. Kenneally House (20, 21, 41)
- 9. Magemeneas Cottage (27)
- 10. Schwartz House (29, 37, 38)
- 11. Nickrent Bungalow (30)
- 12. Nohovig Cottage (31, 32, 33)
- 13. Soundarajan House (39)

Out-Lying Homesteads

- 14. Kenneally Farm (23)
- 15. Forshee Ranch (5, 6)
- 16. Harridan Farm (8, 9, 28, 35)

Vacant Buildings

- 17-19. Houses
- 20-23. Storefronts
- 24-29. Sheds and warehouses

People of Berens

It's not often possible to list all the inhabitants of a planet and what they do for a living. So when the opportunity presents itself, it would be a crime to let it pass by. The following is a list of all the permanent inhabitants of Berens, their gender and age, and what they do for a living. In a community this small, many of its inhabitants wear multiple hats, as there are more things which need doing than there are hands to do them.



1. Baldocchi, Anecita:

Female, 73 years old. The oldest resident of Berens is still active as the planet's librarian and archivist. She is very close to her sister Zor'e and can often be encountered in Zor'e's restaurant.

2. Corkill, Everett: Male, 57 years old. Corkill is not a native of Berens, having come here as a crewman for a free trader more than 30 years ago. He was a cargo handler on the starship, and any advanced technical skills he once had have faded. He now lists himself as a contractor, and while he handles almost all construction and some remodeling tasks on Berens, these are rare, and he functions mostly as a laborer and handyman.



3. Donskoi, Josephine: Female, 30 years old. Owner of Jo's Garage, formerly Pablo's Garage. Her parents are deceased, and her only brother left Berens on-board a free trader, but she is close to both her uncles (Ravi and Shugush Kenneally) and is good friends with her cousins Alin and Ada Harridan. See *Star Vikings* and other parts of this book for more details.



4. Fislar, Hermes: Male, 37 years old. Fislar works as a mechanic for Jo Donskoi at her "garage." Like all her other mechanics, he is from

off-world. Fislar was originally an engineer for a free trader which joined the Guild against his wishes. At the ship's next stop at Berens, he left the ship and went to work for Pablo Donskoi, Jo's father, and after his death stayed on with the daughter. Fislar is the senior mechanic in the shop, and no one (with the possible exception of Jo herself) is better with starships than he is. Hermes is also a fair violinist, and replaced the elder Kenneally, when he died, in the Berensburg String Quartet.

5. Forshee, Rishanda:

Female, 50 years old. Born Rishanda Schwartz, she married Bergen Forshee, an off-world immigrant, when she was 18. After trying several occupations, the two began domesticating various native animals and started the only ranch on the planet. Most meat eaten on Berens is from Rishanda's ranch, and some of the meat is now exported as exotic food to the nearby TEDs at premium prices.



6. Forshee, Takashi:

Male, 12 years old. Youngest of Rishanda Forshee's children, Takashi is still a student, but works part-time for his mother and is anxious to take over the ranch when he gets older.



7. Harridan, Ada: Female, 27 years old. Ada is the youngest child of Ravi Kenneally and was married to Oscar Harridan until his murder two years ago at the hands of his brother Karl. Since then, she has taken over the small general

merchandise shop her husband operated. The shop sells mostly local items of furniture and clothing, with a few imported goods. Like many shops on Berens, it is usually closed. Ada can often be found at one of the local restaurants, and she will cheerfully



open the shop for PCs except during the time from 1100 to 1300 hours, when she cooks at Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club. In addition to being a shopkeeper, Ada is also the only trained doctor on the planet, having learned the trade from her recently deceased grandfather. With her medical knowledge, she is also the planet's veterinarian and can often be encountered at the Forshee ranch. She is very close to her cousin, Jo Donskoi.



8. Harridan, Sikyta: Female, 39 years old. Sikyta is the only daughter of Vern Harridan and Michaelene Rakvaan, and she married Don Maroules, an off-world immigrant who worked as a farm hand for her father, when she was 18. The two became the principal workers for her father, and she is an enthusiastic farmer.

When her father expressed the desire to turn the farm over to Sikyta and her husband two years ago, there was a terrible argument with her brother Karl which became violent. By the end of the fight, both her husband, Don, and her brother, Oscar, were dead at Karl's hands. Karl fled the planet the next day on a departing Guild trader. A year later her son, Don Jr., then only 20 years old, left the world to track Karl down.



9. Harridan, Vern: Male, 59 years old. Vern is one of the most prosperous and influential residents of Berens, although he has become withdrawn and bitter since the death of his son and son-in-law two years ago. He

owns and operates the largest farm on Berens and is also a banker/importer with an office by the starport.

10. Hong, Jerry: Male, 44 years old. Owner of Hong's Far Spinward Grill,



and also the chef. He has one daughter (Forma Hong-Harridan) by his marriage to Sprague Nohovig, although Sprague abandoned both Jerry and the infant Forma. Sprague later returned and now works as a waitress for Jerry, and she is regularly humiliated by him.



11. Hong, Pramern: Female, 62 years old. Mother of Jerry Hong, Pramern is the hostess and cashier at Hong's Far Spinward Grill, and she can usually be found there.

12. Hong-Harridan, Forma: Female, 22 years old. Daughter of Jerry Hong and Sprague Nohovig, Forma detests her mother (who abandoned her when she was still an infant) and



has a stormy relationship with her father. Forma is the wife of Karl Harridan, who killed his brother and brother-in-law in a brawl two years ago and fled the planet. Forma doesn't speak about the incident unless pressed. Then, she will bitterly insist that Vern Harridan is to blame for having unjustly cut Karl out of the family business and that the two deaths were accidental during a fight, not deliberate murder. She still loves Karl and blames the Harridan family for the entire incident, particularly Sikyta Harridan. Forma is a gardener, specializing in grapes, and she also makes the only wine on the planet worth drinking. She is also a sculptor of some talent, and her work is usually available for sale at Hera Ishii's shop. Hera is her best friend, although she is also friendly with her half-sister Sieg Nohovig. The three of them spend much of their free time together, and they are part of the loose group of friends centered around Siscoe Nickrent. Forma is the first violin with the Berensburg String Quartet.

13. Hong-Harridan, Ronald: Male, 3 years old. Infant son of Forma Hong-Harridan.

14. Imam, Don Carlos: Male, 29 years old. Probably the friendliest guy on the planet. "Don C" works as a part-time laborer doing odd jobs, but is also an accom-



15. Imam, Syed: Female, 21 years old. Born Syed Lutkehaus, she is the twin sister of Mahmut Lutkehaus. She is a metalworker by trade and a good machinist, trained by her father (now deceased). She fabricates most of the heavy parts needed by Jo Donskoi for repairs of starship component. She has a complete machine shop inherited from her father which includes a small high-temperature furnace which she uses to melt down scrap metal and cast larger parts. In addition to being a machinist and smelter, she is also an expert welder, and in her spare time she sculpts using scrap metal welded together. Her work is for sale at Hera Ishii's shop. It doesn't sell particularly well, as it isn't very good, but off-worlders occasionally purchase a piece. Through her contacts with Hera Ishii, she has recently become closer to the circle of friends centered on Siscoe Nickrent, and she spends more and more of her free time with them. She flirts with Spanky Soundarajan and is considering having an affair with him. All this imposes a strain on her marriage to Don C. Imam, who has no use for Nickrent or most of his friends.



plished furniture maker, working in wood and local fabrics. He is married to Syed (below), but their marriage is a troubled one.

16. Ishii, Dairoku: Male, 41 years old. Dairoku is likely to be the first person the PCs encounter on Berens, as he is the official Port Authority. He carries a small radio at all times which is linked to the principal communications beacon at the starport, and a call to the port will immediately reach him. He will respond by indicating which landing bay to use and turning on the radio and optical beacon at that bay. He will also



usually try to be there to welcome the crew in person, explain the local economy and customs to first-time visitors, and discretely inquire into their business. In his spare time, Ishii is a tailor, one of two on the planet. His clothes are made from imported fabric or the local fabric made by Thanh Kenneally, and pre-made clothes are sold in his wife's shop. Most of his work is done to order.

17. Ishii, Dimitris: Male, 10 years old. The son of Dairoku and Hera Ishii. He is a young student fascinated by starships and space travel (what youngster isn't?). He is best friends with "Uncle" Takashi Forshee, who is only two years older than he is, and the two of them can usually be found playing together or hanging around Jo's Garage.



18. Ishii, Hera: Female, 30 years old. Daughter of Rishanda Forshee, Hera had no taste for ranching and worked as a clerk in Oscar Harridan's shop (now Ada Harridan's) for several years. After marrying Dairoku Ishii, she learned more about the nature of Free Trader and Guild commerce, and eventually went into business for herself, becoming an import banker and shopkeeper. She has a knack for finance and marketing, which has made her, by the limited scale of Berens, successful and prosperous. Her shop is the most attractively decorated in town and, unlike the other shops, it is open throughout the daylight hours, as Hera does her banking and import business through the shop as well. She is good friends with Forma Hong-Harridan and spends a good deal of time with Siscoe Nickrent's circle of friends. As she has become more successful, and as her son Dimitris has become a more important part of her life, she is gradually drifting away from Nickrent's crowd.



19. Kapusta, Dierdre: Female, 35 years old. Abandoned on Berens by an unscrupulous Free Trader, Dierdre Kapusta met and fell in love with August



Renfro. August died shortly after the birth of their only child, Spaid, and Kapusta became quiet and withdrawn. She did odd jobs for several years, mostly working as a clerk in the shops or waitressing, but has recently gone to work for Jo Donskoi as a starship mechanic. She was an appren-

tice engineer before being stranded, and although her skills were rusty, they are coming back quickly.

20. Kenneally, Alin: Female, 23 years old. Alin's son Delmar Jr. died accidentally while visiting her father-in-law, the boy's grandfather, Ravi Kenneally. Although this caused an irreconcilable breach between Ravi and his son Delmar, Alin's husband, Alin has never held Ravi responsible for the death and remains close to him. Despite her husband's objections, she continues to work for Ravi in his hotel, doing most of the cleaning and maid work as well as filling in at the front desk when Ravi is occupied elsewhere. In her spare time, she is also the mathematics tutor for the school-age children, and she has a special flair for calculus. Five years ago, she and Delmar adopted Surithong Srivastava, an orphan brought to Berens by a free trader. She and her adopted son are quite close, and Surithong has also grown close to his adopted grandfather, Ravi.



21. Kenneally, Delmar: Male, 34 years old. Delmar is the night bartender at Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club.



He also spends time hunting local game, which usually ends up on Jerry Fong's or Mujiba's menu. On those rare occasions when off-worlders sign up for a tour of the local wilderness, Delmar serves as the guide. Delmar had once planned to take over his father, Ravi's, business, but the

accidental death of his infant son while visiting Ravi estranged the two of them, and they have not spoken since. Delmar became depressed and embittered by the event as well, and has become one of the angrier members of Siscoe Nickrent's circle. He has also lost interest in his wife, Alin, and their adopted son, Suri-thong, and the extent of his current ambition is to seduce Naomi Schwartz, divorce his wife, marry Naomi, and take over Mujiba's bar. The most obvious barrier to this ambition is the fact that Naomi Schwartz wants nothing to do with him.

22. Kenneally, Ravi:

Male, 54 years old. One of the most respected and influential people on the planet, Ravi is a banker and importer by principal profession, although he also owns and runs the Kenneally Inn, one of the few lodging places on the planet, and publishes a semi-regular newspaper in his spare time. The newspaper usually comes out once a week, and contains news and rumors from arriving starship crews. Particularly exciting news may prompt a special edition, and some weekly editions have consisted solely of a single sheet of paper with the words "Nothing interesting this week" printed on it. Ravi also has the only functioning copier on the planet, so PCs needing copies will go to him. As all paper is imported, copies are expensive, costing Cr1 per page. Ravi has two sons and a daughter. He was very close to all three of them when his wife abandoned the family almost 30 years ago, shortly after the birth of their daughter, and he raised them by himself. He is estranged from his son Delmar following the accidental death of Delmar's son (Ravi's grandson) while visiting Ravi. Ravi's son Thanh is good-hearted but has no head for the import or banking business, so Ravi expects to turn the business over to his daughter, Ada Harridan, who has taken over her deceased husband's shop and manages it successfully.



23. Kenneally, Shugush: Male, 43 years old. Shugush is a farmer, although his farm is nowhere near as large or successful as Vern Harridan's. He cleared the land himself as a young man, and Vern Harridan has actually helped him with advice, seed and, on occasion, money. Shugush is not very intelligent, but is a



hard worker and dedicated to his land. He lives alone and rarely comes into town anymore.



24. Kenneally, Thanh: Male, 30 years old. Thanh Kenneally weaves fabric from the local fibre plants cultivated by Vern Harri-dan and is also one of two tailors on the planet. Most of his tailoring work is done to order and by appointment, although his weaving keeps him very busy, as his cloth is the only available alternative to the expensive imports. Thanh makes his own dyes from local plants, and his fingernails and the creases and lines in his hands are permanently stained a dark reddish brown.

25. Lutkehaus, Mahmut: Male, 21 years old. Mahmut worked from his early teens as a hired hand for Bergen Forshee on his ranch. Bergen butchered all his own animals, and Mahmut became as good at it as Bergen.



When Bergen died three years ago, Mahmut went into business for himself as the planet's butcher. Most of his work still comes from the Forshee ranch, but the farmers have some livestock which occasionally needs butchering as well. Mahmut works part-time for Rishanda Forshee when she needs the help, and is also a part-time cook for Ravi Kenneally.

As a result, Ravi Kenneally's hotel restaurant usually has the choicest cuts of meat (except for Zor'e Lutkehaus' inn), but Mahmut's cooking skills don't extend very far beyond broiling steaks.

26. Lutkehaus, Zor'e: Female, 66 years old. Now a widow, Zor'e owns the oldest, nicest and most expensive inn on Berens, which is called simply "Lutkehaus."

As her son, Mahmut, is the local butcher, she always has good cuts of meat available, and she is an outstanding cook. She is beginning to feel her age, however, and has recently hired Naomi Schwartz as a part-time maid to help with cleaning and making the guest beds.



27. Magemeneas, Shrier: Male, 47 years old. Shrier is an off-world immigrant who works for Jo Donskoi at her garage. He is a recent addition to the staff. In his spare time, he is an enthusiastic gardener, and he grows the largest vegetables on the planet. He also paints primitivist watercolor landscapes, which he is becoming quite good at.

28. Maroules, Sonya: Female, 27 years old. The twin sister of Don Maroules Jr. (who has left the planet in pursuit of his uncle Karl, the murderer of his and Sonya's father), Sonya owns a small art and craft shop and also specializes in interior decorating and renovations. Petite and soft-spoken, with tendency to talk on at length about art history, Sonya is also the best plumber on the planet.



29. Mavity, Frances: Female, 36 years old. An off-world immigrant, Frances married Mujiba Schwartz when she was only 17, and remains happily married to him. Most of the local citizens credit Frances with settling Mujiba down considerably and, despite the difference in their ages, Frances is generally viewed



as the more mature and stable of the two. Although she sometimes helps out at Mujiba's bar, her main interest and occupation is as an electrician. Frances keeps most of the generators, pumps, radios and other electrical equipment on the planet operating. She also helps out at Jo's garage if there is a particularly difficult



electronics repair job. In her spare time, she plays cello in the Berensburg String Quartet.

30. Nickrent, Siscoe: Male, 37 years old. Originally from off-world, Nickrent was fired by his free trader captain here on Berens and has remained here ever since. He works as a mechanic for Jo Donskoi, but they do not get along well. He is tough and charismatic, and is the informal leader of the wilder group of young adults on Berens. Off-duty he can often be found at Mujiba's, and he is friendly with a number of the tougher Guild captains who call regularly at Berens.



"Nanna Hong," but never within earshot of Jerry Hong.

32. Nohovig, Sieg: Female, 19 years old, unmarried. Sieg hates her father (Guild Captain Arturo Nohovig) for abandoning her and her mother and brother, and despises most of the people of Berens, whom she sees as narrow-minded hypocrites. She works for Thanh Kenneally as an assistant weaver, but spends most of her free time with Jo Donskoi learning about starship drives and power plants. She hopes to be able to ship out someday with a starship crew. She also plays violin in her spare time, and occasionally sits in with the Berensburg String Quartet to replace an absent violinist. When all four other members are present and Sieg plays with them, they call themselves the Berensburg String Ensemble.

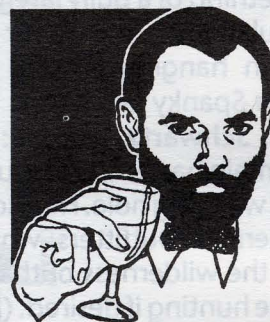


33. Nohovig, Sprague: Female, 43 years old, born Sprague Lutkehaus. Married Jerry Hong 1178. Left Jerry Hong (and abandoned her infant daughter Forma) in 1180 to run away with the Guild captain Arturo

Nohovig. Returned to Berens in 1195, after being abandoned by her lover, along with her two children by Nohovig. Has worked since then as a waitress for Jerry Hong, who seldom passes up an opportunity to embarrass or humiliate her in front of customers. Sprague is estranged from her daughter Forma and from her mother Zor'e, and hardly knows her brother and sister, having left Berens when they were only one year old. Sprague's actions when she was younger alienated most of the community from her, but there is a growing sense of distaste with Jerry Hong's ceaseless petty torment.



34. Pituri, Raju: Male, 45 years old. Pituri is an off-world immigrant, the former finance minister for a nearby TED, who fled following an economic recession (fearing that he would have been made the scapegoat). After working odd jobs for a while, Raju opened an inn on Berens, a bed & breakfast style establishment similar to Lutkehaus. In his spare time, he is also a leather tanner and leather worker, most of his animal skins coming from the Forshee ranch.



35. Rakvaan, Michaelene: Female, 59 years old. An off-world immigrant, Michaelene is the wife of Vern Harridan and mother of Sikyta, as well as the deceased Oscar and fugitive Karl. She never speaks of either of her sons, but is devoted to her young grandson Ronald Hong-Harridan. Michaelene is the "teacher" on Berens, which means she is responsible for organizing the education of all the youngsters up to the age of 18. While she teaches basic skills, such as reading and writing, she arranges instructional courses for the children with other people on the planet.





History and astrography are taught by Anecita Baldocchi, higher mathematics by Alin Kenneally, biology by Vern Kenneally, engineering by Jo Donskoi, etc.



36. Renfro, Spaid: Male, 15 years old. His father, August Renfro, died when Spaid was still quite young, and his mother, who is an off-world immigrant, has made few close friends on Berens and was not able to spend much time with Spaid when he was younger. As a result, he has grown up as a loner with

poor social skills, and is immature for his years. He is also turning out to be a very big kid and has become something of a bully lately, which makes him even less popular with the other children. Recently he has begun hanging around with Spanky Soundarajan, when Spanky lets him.

37. Schwartz, Mujiba: Male, 52 years old. Owner and main bartender of Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club, the local watering hole. He also has a side business, Mujiba's Wilderness Outfitters, which offers guided excursions into the wilderness outback of Berens, including wild game hunting if desired. (Any trophy animals killed are brought back to Mujiba's, and while the customer keeps the trophy head, the meat goes on Mujiba's grill.) While he was pretty wild as a youngster, Mujiba has settled down and mellowed with age. He is more tolerant of Siscoe Nickrent and his friends than most older residents of the world, as he sees something of himself in them. He also is self-appointed recording secretary of the Meteor Club, which is headquartered at his bar. His first wife, who was an off-world immigrant, is deceased, but he has remarried Frances Mavity, also an off-world immigrant, and has a daughter



by her, Naomi. Naomi waitresses at his bar, is learning bar-tending, and will probably take over the business some day.

38. Schwartz, Naomi: Female, 18 years old. Known jokingly as "the most beautiful girl in the world," Naomi is strikingly pretty and is a major draw

at Mujiba's, where she is a waitress and fill-in bartender. She also works part-time as a maid for Zor'e Lutkehaus. Despite the frequent contact with them, she does not think much of Siscoe Nickrent or his friends, and particularly dislikes Delmar Kenneally, the night bartender at Mujiba's. Her best friend is Sonya Maroules, and she has been dating Mahmut Lutkehaus for some time.

39. Soundarajan, Spanky: Male, 23 years old. Spanky doesn't quite know what to do with himself. He has no real trade and few interests. He does odd jobs as a laborer and handyman, and on busy days he works as a cook at his father's restaurant. He spends much of his free time with Siscoe Nickrent and is becoming involved with Syed Imam, but he is also a naturally talented musician, and plays base fiddle with the Berensburg String Quartet.



40. Soundarajan, Nguyen: Male, 49 years old. Nguyen owns the Soundarajan Bakery and Restaurant, and he is the only professional baker on the planet.

All of Berens' bread is baked here, and all its grain is milled to flour by Nguyen as well, which occupies the majority of Nguyen's time.

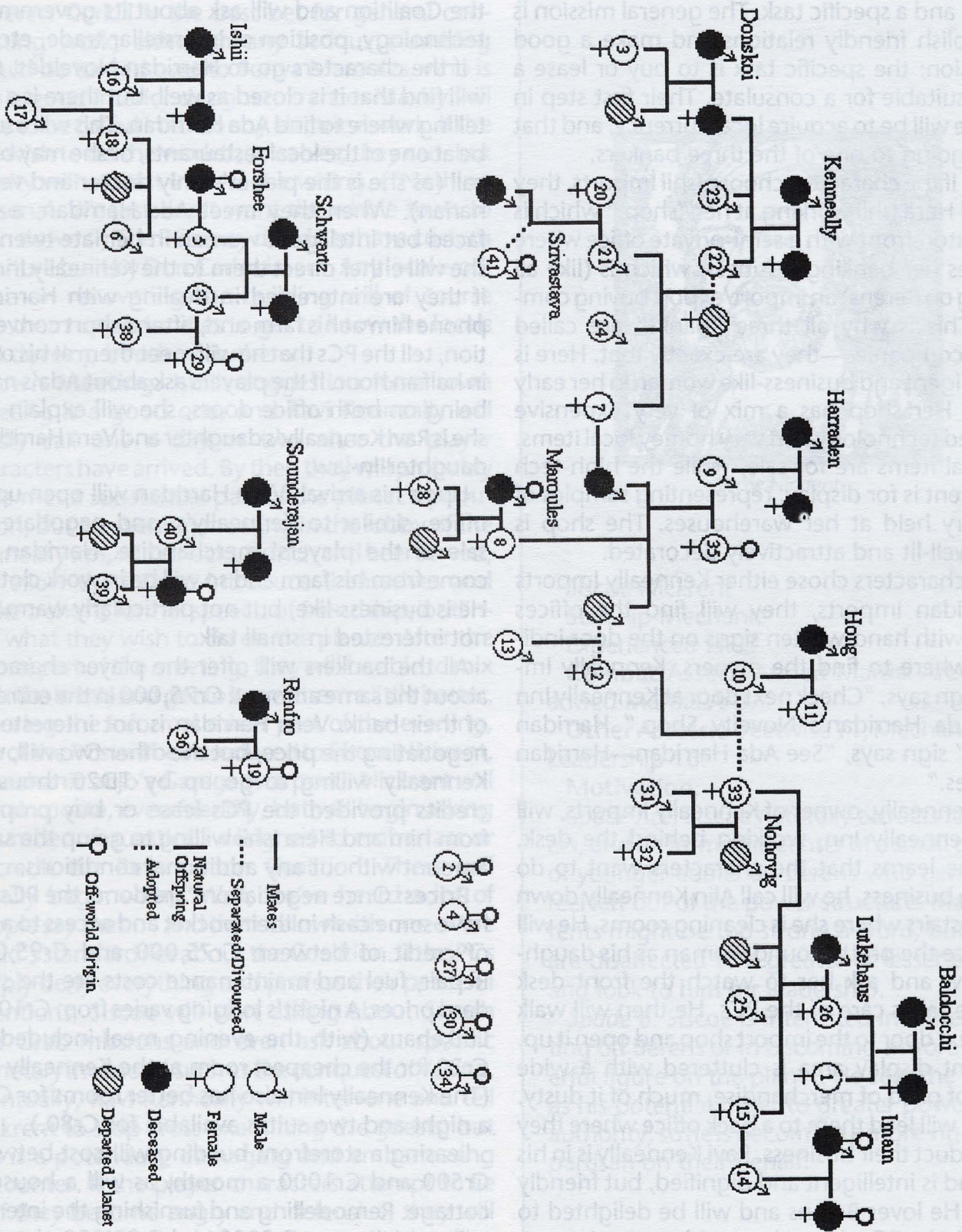
His bakery also has three small dining tables, and he serves a limited menu.

His son, Spanky, fills in as a part-time cook at dinner time if a large number of ships are grounded at the starport.

41. Srivastava, Surithong: Male, 15 years old. Surithong is an off-planet immigrant orphan adopted by Alin and Delmar Kenneally.

He is still a student, but in his spare time he works as a busboy at Hong's Far Spinward Grill.





Taking Care of Business

The PCs were sent to Berens with a general mission and a specific task. The general mission is to establish friendly relations and make a good impression; the specific task is to buy or lease a facility suitable for a consulate. Their first step in any case will be to acquire local currency, and that means going to one of the three bankers.

Bank: If the characters choose Ishii Imports, they will find Hera Ishii working at her "shop," which is a small storefront with a semi-private office where she does her banking business, which is (like all banking on Berens) an import/export buying company. This is why all three "banks" are called Import companies—they are exactly that. Here is an intelligent and business-like woman in her early thirties. Her shop has a mix of very expensive imported technology and very homey local items. The local items are for sale, while the high-tech equipment is for display, representing samples of inventory held at her warehouses. The shop is clean, well-lit and attractively decorated.

If the characters chose either Kenneally Imports or Harridan Imports, they will find the offices closed, with hand-written signs on the door indicating where to find the owners. Kenneally Imports' sign says, "Check next door at Kenneally Inn or at Ada Harridan's Novelty Shop." Harridan Imports' sign says, "See Ada Harridan—Harridan Novelties."

Ravi Kenneally, owner of Kenneally Imports, will be at Kenneally Inn, working behind the desk. When he learns that the characters want to do banking business, he will call Alin Kenneally down from upstairs where she is cleaning rooms. He will introduce the pretty young woman as his daughter-in-law and ask her to watch the front desk while he takes care of the PCs. He then will walk them next door to the import shop and open it up. The front display area is cluttered with a wide variety of piled of merchandise, much of it dusty, but Ravi will lead them to a back office where they can conduct their business. Ravi Kenneally is in his fifties and is intelligent and dignified, but friendly as well. He loves Berens and will be delighted to chat with the PCs about the world, answering any

questions they might have. He is also interested in the Coalition and will ask about its government, technology, position of interstellar trade, etc.

If the characters go to Harridan Novelties, they will find that it is closed as well, but there is a sign telling where to find Ada Harridan. This will usually be at one of the local restaurants, or she may be on call (as she is the planet's only doctor and veterinarian). When they meet Ada Harridan, a sad-faced but intelligent woman in her late twenties, she will either direct them to the Kenneally Inn or, if they are interested in dealing with Harridan, phone him at his farm and, after a short conversation, tell the PCs that he will meet them at his office in half an hour. If the players ask about Ada's name being on both office doors, she will explain that she is Ravi Kenneally's daughter and Vern Harridan's daughter-in-law.

Upon his arrival, Vern Harridan will open up his office, similar to Kenneally's, and negotiate the sale of the players' merchandise. Harridan has come from his farm and so will be in work clothes. He is business-like, but not particularly warm and not interested in small talk.

All the bankers will offer the player characters about the same amount: Cr75,000 in the currency of their bank. Vern Harridan is not interested in negotiating the price, but the other two will, with Kenneally willing to go up by 1D20 thousand credits provided the PCs lease or buy property from him and Hera Ishii willing to go up the same amount without any additional conditions.

Prices: Once negotiations are done, the PCs will have some cash in their pocket and access to a line of credit of between Cr75,000 and Cr95,000. Repair, fuel and maintenance costs are the standard prices. A night's lodging varies from Cr100 at Lutkehaus (with the evening meal included) to Cr20 for the cheapest room at the Kenneally Inn. (The Kenneally Inn also has better rooms for Cr40 a night and two suites available for Cr80.)

Leasing a storefront building will cost between Cr500 and Cr1000 a month, as will a house or cottage. Remodelling and furnishing the interiors will cost between Cr5000 and Cr20,000, depend-



ing on how elaborate a redecorating job is done.

Everett Corkill is the best bet for general contracting work, although any serious plumbing should be turned over to Sonya Maroules, who is also a good interior designer. Frances Mavity will have to be called in to do any electrical work. If the PCs wish to do the work themselves, they can, but Mavity will at least inspect the wiring. ("Nothing personal. We just don't want the whole town to burn down.") The PCs may decide to have custom furniture built by Don Carlos Imam. Any local work done on renovating the building will of course give them opportunities to get to know the locals and develop bonds with them.

Town Meeting: Ishii's suggestion for a town meeting is a good one, and Ravi Kenneally will gladly call one a day or two after the player characters have arrived. By then they will probably have met a substantial part of the planet's population, but an evening meeting in the lobby of the Kenneally Inn, with snacks, punch and beer served, will allow the PCs to introduce themselves and make a short, formal speech of friendship, outlining what they wish to do on the planet. After the formal part of the meeting, they will be able to mix with the locals and get to know them a little better.

During the informal mixer part of the evening, one of the PCs will be introduced to Siscoe Nickrent, a mechanic at Jo's Garage (starport). Nickrent will remain polite, even friendly, but will begin asking a number of questions designed to embarrass or discredit the Reformation Coalition. These will usually begin with, "Well, we've heard a lot of people say that..." and then follow with one of the Guild's standard lies about the Coalition. If the PCs simply deny everything and profess their peaceful intentions, Siscoe will start asking about Smash and Grab missions and even ask about specific planetary invasions, such as the conquest of Vezina. Eventually, Ravi Kenneally will intervene and tell Nickrent to stop cross-examining the guests, but this is a potentially damaging and embarrassing encounter. If the player characters attempt to lie or if they become angry and defensive, they will definitely make a bad impression on the locals.



Siscoe Nickrent

Siscoe Nickrent
Starship Mechanic
Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Armed Martial Arts, Unarmed Martial Arts.

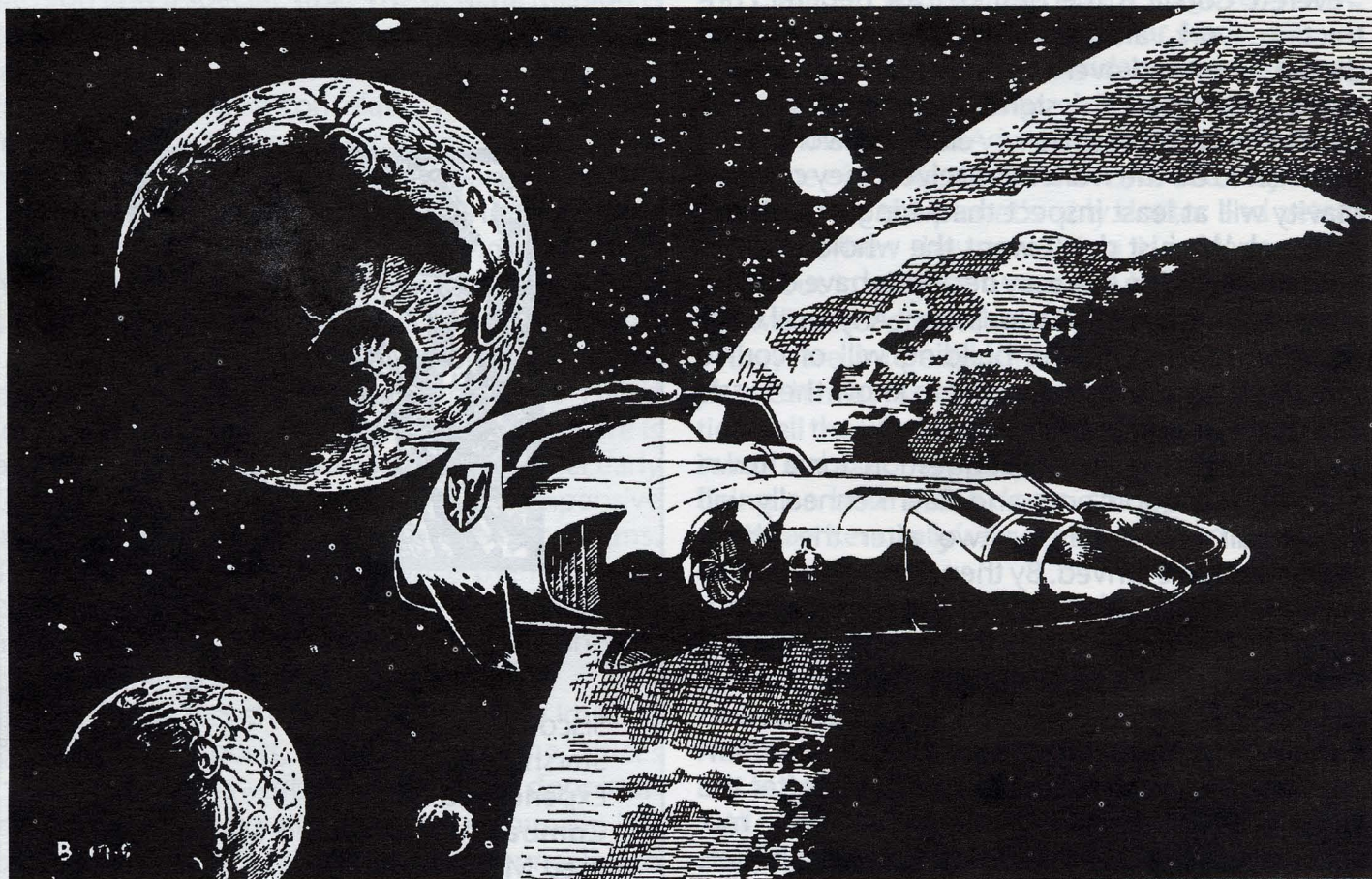
Other Assets: Streetwise 11, Mechanic 12, Leadership 16.

Motivation:

Spade Ace: Siscoe naturally attracts followers, and he forms the center of a small group of younger adults on Berens who generally feel left out of the power structure. Malcontents might be too strong a word, but they are disaffected to a greater or lesser extent and look to him for leadership.

Spade 6: Siscoe is interested in either getting off Berens or in becoming a more powerful figure on the planet. He sees the Guild as his potential ticket to greater power and authority, so he is becoming a more vigorous partisan on their behalf.

New Ships For Old



Six other ships are grounded on Berens when the PCs arrive. Four are free traders, and two are Guild ships. One of the Guild ships lifts the next day, as does one of the free traders, but another ship or two will arrive over the course of the next several days. Most of these are small ships—free traders and far traders—although at least one “fat trader” will be grounded at first, and a liner converted to haul bulk cargo will also arrive after several days.

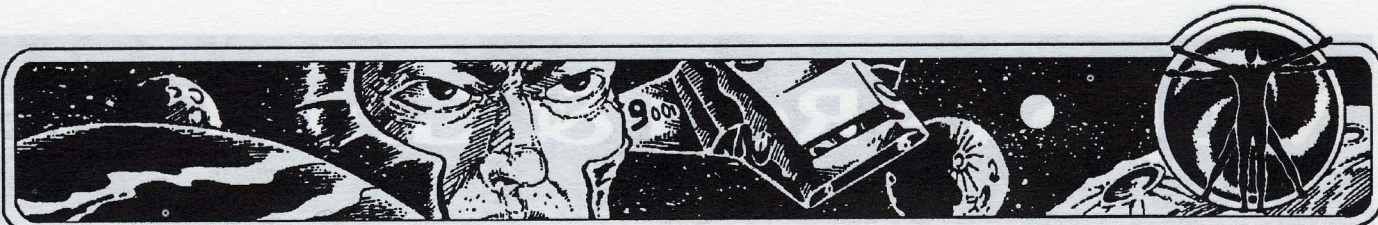
Most of the arriving and departing starship crews know the locals, and they are greeted as old friends. They often know each other as well, so the player characters may feel like outsiders on a world where everyone, including the visitors, seems to know everyone else. The very fact that they are new and unfamiliar faces, however, will make them objects of interest, and both locals and starship crews can be expected to engage them in conversation and ask about the Coalition and what life is like nearly two subsectors to trailing.

The one Guild ship which does not leave is a far trader in excellent condition called *Lilly Marlene*. Her captain is Arturo Nohovig, an off-worlder with extensive ties to Berens, or at least a “history” of ties.

Nohovig first visited Berens over 20 years ago, first as a starship crewman and then as a young ship captain. In 1180 he seduced Jerry Hong’s young wife, Sprague, and convinced her to run away with him, abandoning her husband and infant daughter. Nohovig sired two children by Sprague, daughter Sieg and son Agashaam, then left all of them back here on Berens five years ago.

A month ago, he returned with a new ship, *Lilly Marlene*, and rented a storefront office for his new business, which is the sale of starships to Free Traders. His explanation for abandoning his family here five years ago was that “space is no place for kids,” but the truth is that he was simply tired of the responsibility. He has made no contribution to their financial support and neither avoids contact with them nor seeks them out. He is outwardly friendly, but no more so than with anyone else, treating them as casual acquaintances rather than family.

Guild Pitch: Somewhere to spinward, the Guild recently brought a starship assembly plant on line and is manufacturing new *Jayhawk*-class far traders. Nohovig will not say where, and even visiting Guild crews seem never to have heard of this assembly plant. When pressed for a location, he will explain



that the plant has to remain secret, since the Reformation Coalition would probably attack the plant and destroy it if they knew where it was. The Coalition, according to Nohovig, wishes to cripple the Guild because it is the only force in Diaspora sector capable of standing up to their "aggression."

Nohovig's sales pitch is impressive, although he has yet to make a final sale. A new *Jayhawk*-class far trader is generally held to be worth about MCr57, although no one in Diaspora sector has seen a new ship of that class in 75 years. Nohovig is offering the ships for MCr50, with a very generous down-payment plan.

Basically, the Guild will take in exchange any operational commercial starship as a down payment, and will credit it at 10% over its assessed value based on age and wear. Thirty-year financing on the outstanding balance will be provided by the Guild at a 2% annual interest rate.

The specific ship for sale is the *Guilded Lilly*, and he will let anyone, including the player characters, walk through it and inspect it. (He will not allow anyone to examine its navigational computer, since that has the coordinates of the factory in its memory.) It is clearly a newly manufactured vessel and is very well made. Since he will take a ship in trade for the down payment, after the transaction is completed, his crew will take the trade-in back to the factory and then return with another new ship to sell.

These are extraordinarily good terms of sale, and several Free Trader captains are clearly interested. Nohovig's answer to sceptics is that the Guild is honestly interested in reestablishing interstellar trade, and while the Coalition talks a lot, only the Guild is actually doing something positive about it. The Guild is subsidizing the construction of the ships, so the price and financing are easier than most would expect, but the expectation is that the increased volume of trade will eventually increase everyone's revenues enough to make up the cost of the program.

Of course, the only way the Guild has of making up expenses through increased trade is by way of member dues, so the sale is available only to Guild members. In order to qualify for the ship, the Free Traders would have to join the Guild. Nohovig explains that the Guild leadership knows that there is a lot of mistrust of the Guild, "unfounded mistrust" in his words, largely generated by Reformation Coalition propaganda. So to try to address that, they have established a new category of membership, called Associate Membership. Associates cannot vote in Guild matters, but pay a lower stipend to the Guild and are not subject to Guild trade agreements, and still have access to all Guide maintenance facilities.

So far no Free Traders have actually gone ahead with the deal, but several are looking at it very seriously. All Free Traders own their own starships. They are not used to making regular bank payments and find the prospect intimidating. Nohovig's answer is that a new ship requires far less maintenance than the relics they currently operate, and at least a bank payment is

predictable—an unexpected power plant failure can be financially devastating.

Having to join the Guild is another barrier—Free Traders are an independent lot, and those comfortable with large organizations have mostly already joined the Guild. The conditions of Associate Member are well-designed to at least partially allay this concern.

In general, if Nohovig's deal is everything he says it is, it is only a matter of time before he starts making regular sales. And if his deal is everything he says it is, perhaps that isn't such a bad thing.

Although Nohovig leases a small storefront office, he does most of his business over a beer at Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club.



Arturo Nohovig

ARTURO NOHOVIG

Guild Captain

Veteran NPC

Nohovig is in his late-forties when the adventure takes place, although he looks younger.

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon, Armed Martial Arts.

Other Assets: Act/Bluff 12, 9 Marketing 12, Pilot 12, Leadership 12, Bargain 12, Persuasion 12, Forgery 9, Intrusion, Bribery 9, Environment Suit 9, Zero-G Environment 9.

Motivation:

Diamond King: Arturo Nohovig is one of those people who cares only for himself and will do whatever it takes to achieve whatever it is that he wants, regardless of the effect it has on others.

Diamond 10: Arturo is an extremely greedy person, and most of his actions are motivated by pursuit of money. But he is not stupid. He is willing to offer a reasonable deal in the short term if it will maximize his long-term profits.

Mujiba's Rod & Gun Club



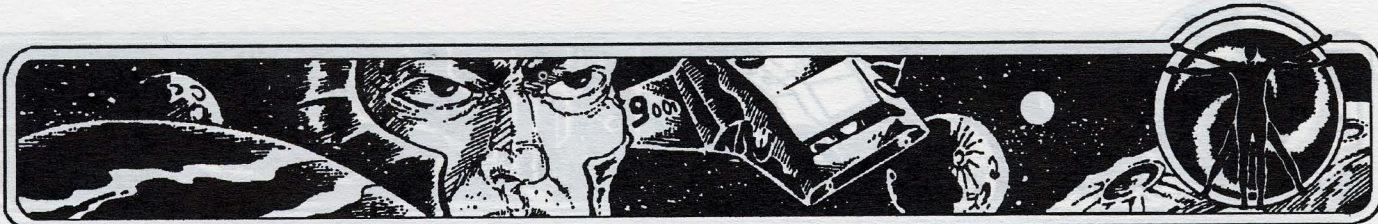
Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club is the most famous watering hole in Diaspora sector among Guild captains and Free Traders alike. Virtually the first thing most starship crews do after grounding ship on Berens is go to Mujiba's, have a frosted mug of Mujiba's Special Label, find out who else is in port, and catch up on news. In fact, this is virtually a ritual, and spacehands on their first voyage as full-fledged crewmembers are usually treated to a pitcher of beer poured over their heads at the doorway as a sort of initiation.

Mujiba's fame is partially an accident of geography, due to his location on Berens, but he has also made the most of that accident and promotes the bar's fame through a number of mechanisms. One of these is the Diaspora Starport Club Registry, which Mujiba maintains. Mujiba has had posters promoting his bar printed up, and outgoing captains take them to other taverns at starports, where they are put up in return for listing the tavern in Mujiba's registry. Thus, Mujiba's bar is prominently advertised in almost every other starport bar

within 20 parsecs.

Mujiba also sponsors the Meteor Club, and membership in the club is widely held among Guild and Free Trader crews, with current rankings closely watched and a position near the top of Mujiba's top 10 chalkboard widely coveted. (See the Meteor Club sidebar.)

Finally, Mujiba brews his own beer, called Mujiba's Special Label, from grain grown on Vern Harridan's farm. Although some imported beer is usually available in limited quantities, Mujiba's Special Label is always available on tap and sometimes in cans as well. Mujiba has deliberately refrained from exporting the beer in quantity, although he has received several lucrative offers to do so, as it adds considerably to the bar's mystique that it is "the only place in the universe" where you can buy his beer. The fact that it's pretty good beer helps considerably. Mujiba also sometimes gives away a case or two of beer to a departing starship captain he particularly likes (or wants a favor from), and the small quantities of his beer which leave the world in this manner are widely



prized and add further to its mystique.

Hours: Mujiba's opens at 1100 hours for lunch, closes from 1400 to 1700 hours, then opens again for the evening. The grill closes down at 2100 hours, but the bar itself usually remains open as long as there are customers (but always closes at dawn, which comes any time between 0300 and 0700 hours, depending on the season).

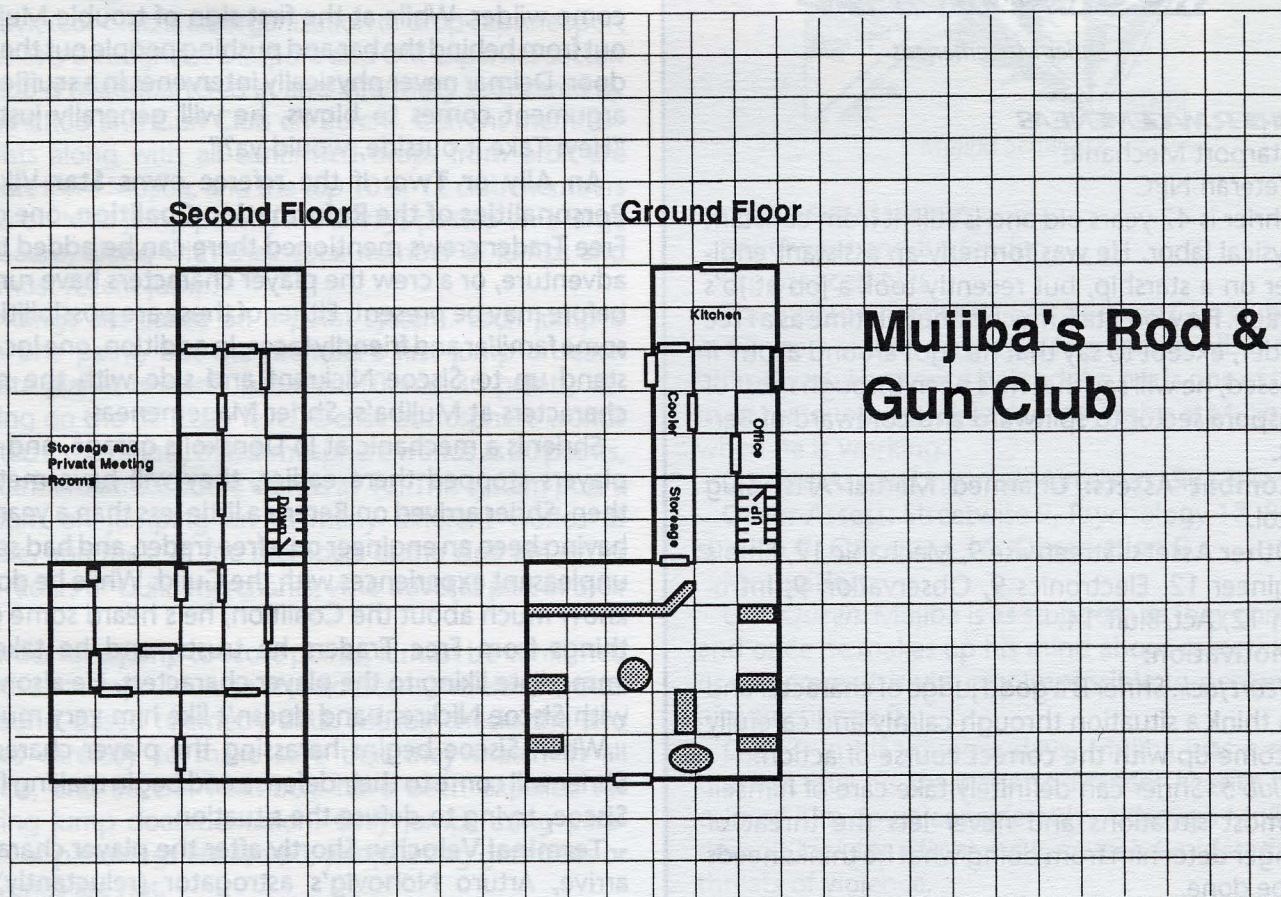
Mujiba usually works the noon shift and evenings until about midnight. The other bartender is Delmar Kenneally, who is also the evening cook and comes on duty at 1700. If customers are still present when Mujiba leaves for the evening, Delmar remains and closes the bar later. Mujiba's daughter, Naomi, waits tables, fills in as bartender on busy evenings, and also works the lunch crowd if many ships are in port. Ada Harridan cooks during the lunch shift.

First Visit to Mujiba's: Mujiba's is not a huge place and is likely to be fairly full whenever the player characters first visit it. The crowd is usually a mix of locals and starship crews, and is likely to contain a number of Aslan or even Vargr, aliens the player characters may never have en-

countered before anywhere near the Coalition. Recorded up-tempo music is usually playing, with a background of laughter and conversation. As the player characters are mostly unknown on the planet, conversation is likely to die down for a moment as the patrons size them up. In the case Guild crews, this may be accompanied by a pretty hostile glare, while Free Traders will be more neutral at first until the player characters get to know them.

Regulars: Most of the permanent residents will stop by Mujiba's for a meal once every week or so, since there just aren't that many different places to eat, so everyone is a regular in a sense. Certainly all the permanent inhabitants are on a first-name basis with each other. Some residents stop regularly for lunch, others for dinner, but a few constitute a regular late-night crowd. Mostly this consists of Siscoe Nickrent and his friends—Forma Hong-Harridan, Sieg Nohovig, Syed Imam, Spanky Soundarajan and, less frequently of late, Hera Ishii. Delmar Kenneally is also one of Siscoe's circle of friends.

As indicated before, Siscoe and his friends are all somewhat disaffected, and all have an "attitude," a





mixture of defiance and resentment. In the cases of Forma, Sieg and Delmar, it is fairly easy to see what life experiences may have accounted for their feelings of bitterness and alienation. In the other cases, it is somewhat less obvious and is probably just a case of arrested adolescence.

Siscoe has recently become more vocal in his support for the Guild, and most of his friends have followed his

lead. (Sieg Nohovig, while no friend of the Coalition, also has no use for the Guild in general, and her father, Arturo, in particular. But Sieg is not a leader and does not speak up to contradict Siscoe. Instead, when the subject turns to the Guild, she simply becomes even more moody and withdrawn than usual.) While Siscoe remained outwardly polite at the town meeting, he will be less so at Mujiba's. He will try to draw the player characters into arguments about the Coalition and cite as "facts that everyone knows" wild Guild lies about Coalition atrocities committed during raids. He will make loud and rude remarks about the Coalition deliberately in their earshot and try to provoke a reaction which will make them look like the violent thugs he claims they are.

All this is by careful design. Unknown to his friends, Siscoe is now in the employ of Guild Captain Arturo Nohovig and is acting under orders to discredit the Coalition.

Rough Stuff: Mujiba is in the bar almost continuously from when it opens to midnight. There are no fights in Mujiba's while Mujiba is there. After he leaves at midnight and Delmar takes over, and the remaining patrons' blood-alcohol content increases, things sometimes become wilder. While at the first sign of trouble Mujiba is out from behind the bar and pushing people out the front door, Delmar never physically intervenes in a scuffle. If an argument comes to blows, he will generally just yell, "Hey! Take it outside, would ya?"

An Ally or Two: If the referee owns **Star Vikings: Personalities of the Reformation Coalition**, one of the Free Trader crews mentioned there can be added to the adventure, or a crew the player characters have run into before may be present. Either of these are possibilities for some familiar and friendly faces. In addition, one local will stand up to Siscoe Nickrent and side with the player characters at Mujiba's: Shrier Magemeneas.

Shrier is a mechanic at Jo Donskoi's garage, and if the players stopped there earlier, they will have met him then. Shrier arrived on Berens a little less than a year ago, having been an engineer on a free trader, and had several unpleasant experiences with the Guild. While he doesn't know much about the Coalition, he's heard some good things from Free Traders he trusts, and he takes an immediate liking to the player characters. He also works with Siscoe Nickrent and doesn't like him very much.

When Siscoe begins harassing the player characters, Shrier will come to their defense and begin making fun of Siscoe, trying to defuse the situation.

Terminal Velocity: Shortly after the player characters arrive, Arturo Nohovig's astrogator (reluctantly) announces that he has decided to join the Meteor Club by



Shrier Magemeneas

SHRIER MAGEMENEAS

Starport Mechanic
Veteran NPC

Shrier is 47 years old and is still fit from constant physical labor. He was formerly an assistant engineer on a starship, but recently took a job at Jo's garage. He won't talk much about his time as a Free Trader, except to say that he "got around a lot." If pressed, he will say that he's been through most of Diaspora sector to spinward and coreward of Berens.

Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts, Slug Pistol.

Other Assets: Streetwise 9, Mechanic 12, Ship's Engineer 12, Electronics 9, Observation 9, Intrusion 12, Act/Bluff 14.

Motivation:

Heart Jack: Shrier is a good judge of character and can think a situation through calmly and carefully to come up with the correct course of action.

Club 5: Shrier can definitely take care of himself in most situations and never lets the threat of danger deter him from doing what he thinks needs to be done.



making his first jump here at Berens. Nohovig tells the player characters that if they are really interested in becoming part of the local community, at least one of them should join as well, and this is as good a time as any. For details on the Meteor Club see the sidebar.

The obviously nervous Guild astrogator and whatever player characters decide to join the jump are taken up into orbit by the ship's boat parked at the starport (and jointly owned by the Berensi). They make their descent by means of personal reentry kits using the rules on pages 32-33.

The Guild astrogator's reentry will be unsuccessful, however, coming in at too steep an angle, and his reentry kit will overheat and then shed its parachute, crashing into the planet's surface at terminal velocity a kilometer outside of Berensburg.

First Clue: Although Arturo will be shaken by the death of his astrogator, he will not make any effort to locate or hire a replacement. Since he does not have a qualified astrogator in his remaining crew, this means either that he is not planning on leaving or that he has an astrogator which no one else knows about.

METEOR CLUB

The Meteor Club is an organization of drop capsule sport enthusiasts throughout Diaspora and Old Expanses sector. The club is headquartered at and informally sponsored by Mujiba's Rod and Gun Club on Berens. Current membership lists along with all confirmed drops from orbit are available from Mujiba, and the top 10 or 12 club members (based on total jump points) are always posted on a large chalkboard, along with their total number of jumps and their most recent jump.

Standings are based on a point system. Each jump is worth one point, but the member's first jump on each separate planet is worth between 10 and 30 points, depending on the difficulty level. Dense atmosphere worlds are rated as 30 points, thin atmosphere worlds as 20 points, and standard atmosphere worlds as 10. This system puts a premium on jumping on as many different worlds as possible, and most of the members of the club are either Free Traders or Guild merchants, who travel as part of their job.

In order for a jump to score points, it must be confirmed by both an in-capsule video of the descent and either orbital or ground-based telemetry data. Mujiba checks the two sources carefully to make sure that they match in all respects, and several members have been expelled for falsifying jump documentation. Only jumps using parachutes or parawings are scored; jumps using grav belts or grav wings are not.

Membership in the Meteor Club is one way for player

characters to gain acceptance by the Free Traders who frequent the facilities on Berens, and that will make them that much more trusted by the actual inhabitants of Berens. However, the only way for player characters to join immediately will be to make a jump on Berens itself, as they will not have access to any confirming documentation of any previous jumps which they may have made. Berens itself is a 20-point jump, due to its thin atmosphere, and is a fairly hazardous way to get started, as events shortly after their arrival on Berens will prove.



Mujiba Schwartz

MUJIBA SCHWARTZ

Bar Owner and Bartender
Experienced NPC

The burly owner of Mujiba's Rod and Gun club is, at 52 years of age, physically formidable. His quiet but powerful presence behind the bar is one of the main reasons there are seldom any fights at Mujiba's when he is working.

Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts, Slug Rifle.

Other Assets: Streetwise 9, Psychology 12, Persuasion 9, Carousing 16, Observation 9.

Motivation:

Club Queen: Mujiba is as stubborn as they come, and once he makes up his mind about something or someone, it is virtually impossible to persuade him to change it.

Club 3: In his younger days, Mujiba was a real brawler, but his marriage to Frances Mavity has calmed him down considerably. Although Mujiba doesn't look for a fight, he is never intimidated by threats of violence.



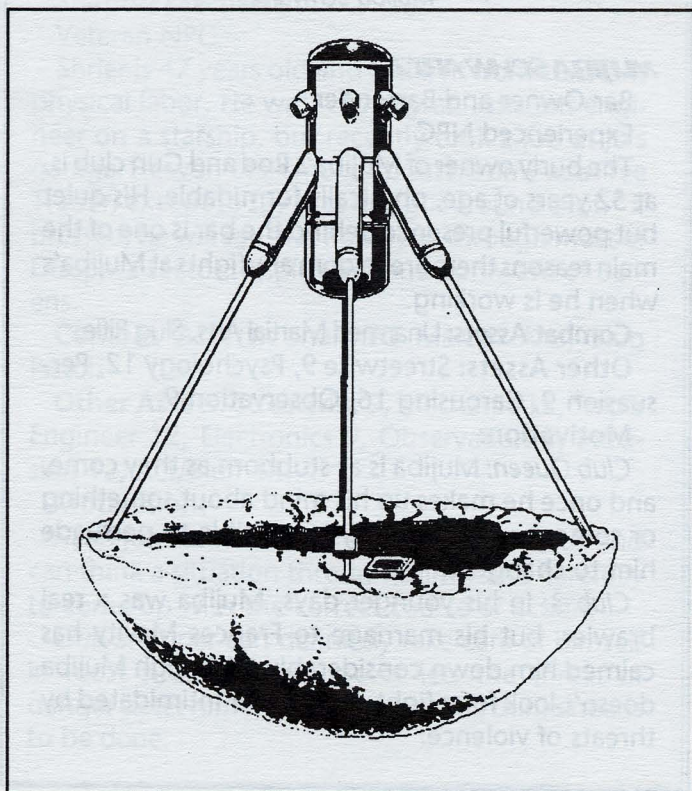
PERSONAL REENTRY KIT

Originally invented as a means of emergency atmospheric reentry from a crippled space vessel, the personal reentry kit (PRK) was quickly adopted by the military and provided the glamorous *raison d'être* for jump troops (although first-line jump/drop troops have long since transitioned to purpose-built drop capsules—see **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide** pages 14-15).

Each kit consists of an inflatable hemispheric mold, a pressurized cannister of ablative foam, and a chemical thruster for attitude control and limited vector adjustment. The kit does not include a soft landing system (usually a parachute), which must be purchased separately.

The PRK has no provision for defensive decoys and depends upon its operator for maneuvering instruction (instead of the on-board computer used by military drop capsules), which means that the operator must have some Environment Suit skill if an unskilled task roll is to be avoided.

TL	Volume	Mass	Price
8	20 liters	14.5 kg	Cr15,000
10	16 liters	11 kg	Cr12,000
13	12 liters	8 kg	Cr10,000



Volume, mass and price are for the PRK alone, and do not include parachute, parawing, grav parachute or grav belt.

PERSONAL REENTRY KIT (PRK) REENTRY SEQUENCE

The TNE rules make reentering with a PRK a single Difficult: Environment Suit task, with the recommendation that the referee implement Diff Mods for dense atmospheres or high initial vectors (PRKs may not be used in atmospheres of very thin or less.). Players and referees who wish to play out the situation in more detail may wish to use the following optional sequence. (Note: These optional rules are slightly modified versions of the rules appearing in the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide**.)

1. Deploy Kit and Ablative Foam Shield: The user unpacks the kit, deploys the mold, prepares the ablative heat shield and otherwise prepares for the descent (Easy: Environment Suit). Any success indicates that the kit has been deployed correctly. Failure means that the kit has not been deployed properly, and the user must try again. Catastrophic Failure indicates that the kit has a minor defect which escapes the user's notice, and the reentry burn task is carried out at a +1 Diff Mod.

2. Calculate Trajectory and Execute Reentry Burn: If the user wishes to land at a specific 1km square landing zone, this is the point at which that must be specified to the referee and the trajectory calculated on that basis. If the character does not choose a specific landing zone, the reentry task is carried out at a -1 Diff Mod, and the referee picks a landing zone at random.

The user calculates the desired trajectory and executes a reentry maneuver (Difficult: Environment Suit). Reentry in dense atmospheres or from a nonorbital trajectory is carried out at one higher Diff Mod (these are cumulative). Other decisions as to the reentry vector are left up to the referee's discretion.

Success: On any success, go to step 3a (with reserve fuel).

Failure: User must recalculate the burn angle and try again. If successful, go to step 3a (without reserve fuel); if a second failure occurs, go to step 3c.

Catastrophic Failure: Go immediately to step 3b (with reserve fuel).

3. Reentry and Course Corrections: What happens here depends upon the success of the task in step 2.

3a: The user is on course and reenters the atmo-



sphere. The ablative shield protects the user on the trip down, and minor course correction may be made if the PRK has entered this step with reserve fuel.

The user may continue on to step 4.

3b: The user has reentered at too steep an angle, and must immediately try to correct this by a second burn (Formidable: Environment Suit), applying the Diff Mods for atmosphere and high initial vector (if they apply), and using up the PRK's fuel reserve. If successful, move to step 4. If the task fails, the user burns up in the atmosphere.

3c: The user will strike the atmosphere at the wrong angle and "skip" off into space, drifting helplessly in orbit around the world, and without fuel to change vector (the second burn exhausted the PRK's fuel supply).

4. Jettison Shield and Enter Free-Fall: There are no tasks associated with this step. If the user was able to make minor course corrections during step 3a, the user is now within 1D10 km of the chosen landing zone. If the user picked a landing zone, but was unable to make minor course corrections during step 3a, the user has deviated and is now 1D20 km from the chosen landing spot.

5. Deploy Parachute/Activate Grav Belt: The user now deploys the PRK's parachute, grav parachute or parawing, or activates the grav belt. If using a grav parachute or parawing, the user may counteract 1D6

km of the course deflection introduced in step 4 (by succeeding at an Average: Parachute task—Catastrophic Failure adds another 1D6 km to the course deflection).

6. Maneuver to Landing Zone: If using a grav parachute or parawing, the user may counteract another 1D6 km of the course deflection introduced in step 4 (by succeeding at an Average: Parachute task—Catastrophic Failure adds another 1D6 km to the course deflection). Users with grav belts may fly to their landing zone if it is within the grav belt's range.

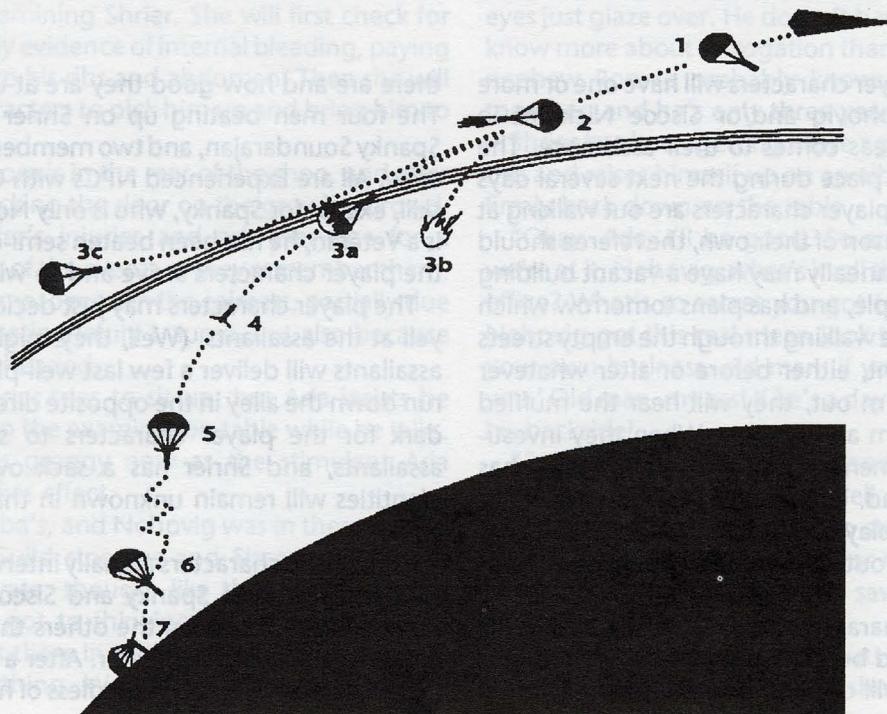
7. Land: Characters using grav belts automatically land safely. Characters using any form of parachute to land safely must make a task roll. To land safely in most terrain is Average: Parachute; to land safely in woods, cities, swamp, or water is Difficult: Parachute. Diff Mod is -1 if the world size is 4 or less, +1 if the atmosphere is thin.

Success: The user lands safely.

Failure: The user suffers a minor injury and/or damage to carried equipment.

Catastrophic Failure: The user suffers serious injury or death.

Parachutes may be used to attempt a landing at a specific location within the one-square-kilometer landing zone (Formidable: Parachute for simple parachutes, Difficult: Parachute for grav parachutes and parawings. See the basic rules, page 120, for a discussion of parachute related tasks).



Back-Alley Diplomacy



At some point, the player characters will have one or more run-ins with Arturo Nohovig and/or Siscoe Nickrent in which Shrier Magemeneas comes to their assistance. The next crucial event takes place during the next several days when some or all of the player characters are out walking at night. If they have no reason of their own, the referee should invent a reason. Ravi Kenneally may have a vacant building to show them, for example, and has plans tomorrow which will keep him busy. While walking through the empty streets of the town late at night, either before or after whatever errand has brought them out, they will hear the muffled sound of a struggle from an alleyway. When they investigate, they will find four men beating on a fifth man who has a cloth sack over his head. The man being beaten is Shrier Magemeneas, and the player characters will recognize his voice cursing and crying out for help even though they can't see his face.

Whether the player characters go to Shrier's assistance is up to them, but it would be pretty ungrateful of them not to. How well they do will depend on how many of them

there are and how good they are at unarmed martial arts. The four men beating up on Shrier are Siscoe Nickrent, Spanky Soundarajan, and two members of Arturo Nohovig's crew. All are Experienced NPCs with Unarmed Martial Arts skill, except for Spanky, who is only Novice. Although Shrier is a Veteran, he has been beaten semi-conscious by the time the player characters arrive and so will not be any help.

The player characters may just decide to call for help and yell at the assailants. (Well, they might!). In that case, the assailants will deliver a few last well-placed blows and then run down the alley in the opposite direction. The alley is too dark for the player characters to see the faces of the assailants, and Shrier has a sack over his head, so the identities will remain unknown in that case, at least for a while.

If the player characters actually intervene, they will be able to identify at least Spanky and Siscoe, and will probably leave enough marks on the others that positive identification won't be a problem later. After a few turns of combat, the assailants will leave, regardless of how the fight is going,



as by then they will hear the sound of more voices as other people hear the fight and come running to see what's going on.

Taking Stock: A crowd soon gathers around the characters and the injured Magemeneas, and one passerby is sent to bring the doctor (Ada Harridan). The player characters will want to see to Shrier, who is very groggy and may be suffering from concussion. At the same time, they will be bombarded with questions by the locals. What happened? Who did this? Where did they go? Why? Unless they saw the thugs fleeing, the locals may even think the player characters beat up Shrier, and Shrier is in no condition to contradict them. (In fact, he has no way of knowing who actually assaulted him.) It may take some quick talking on the part of the player characters to keep the situation from tuning even uglier than it already is.

One thing which should be clear to perceptive PCs from the mood of the crowd is that this sort of personal violence is all but unknown on Berens. They are clearly shocked, particularly the locals. More than shocked, they feel violated. Berens has been free from this sort of street violence for as long as anyone can remember, and its sudden ugly appearance here is frightening.

Some of the locals will blame the player characters even though they did not actually assault Shrier. After all, the Guild has been visiting here for years, and there has never been an incident like this. The Coalition comes, and suddenly Berens is a battlefield. Comments along the lines of, "Listen Bub, you don't have any idea what a *real* battlefield is like," is unlikely to make the situation better.

Within a few minutes, Ada Harridan will arrive with a first aid kit and begin examining Shrier. She will first check for broken bones and any evidence of internal bleeding, paying particular attention to his ribs and abdomen. Then she will order the player characters to pick him up and bring him to her shop.

An examination room is in the rear of the shop, and after firmly closing and locking the door on the growing crowd, she will see to Shrier's injuries and ask everyone for a complete recounting of the events as they remember them. Of everyone, she seems to remain the calmest, partially due to her experience treating injury trauma, but also because she is naturally level-headed.

Shrier's Story: Shrier tries to sit up, but Ada insists he remain lying down on the examination table while he talks. He is becoming less groggy now as the stimulant Ada injected him with takes effect.

"I was over at Mujiba's, and Nohovig was in there talking to a couple of his Guild stoogies and Siscoe. They were talking low and private, though, like they were cooking something up. So I got to thinking about how Nohovig always does business there in Mujiba's, has the paperwork with him and everything. Well, considering old Arturo's

history around here, I doubt he'd be welcome at a table over at Jerry Hong's, but Mujiba won't say no to anybody's business, and Arturo always keeps the drink orders coming.

"So, what was I talking about? Oh, yeah. So there's nothing wrong with doing business at Mujiba's. Makes good sense, since every captain stops in there anyway as soon as he grounds ship. But what does Arturo need that office for? They carried in a half-dozen heavy crates when he rented it. Office equipment, we all figured, and forgot about it. But he doesn't use it. Hell, he hardly ever even goes there. The windows are all covered, like it's abandoned, you know? So what does he need an office for? And what's in those crates.

"Well, I got to thinking about that, and all of a sudden I got to thinking about something else. So I piped up and said, 'Hey, Arturo, you been talking to any of the incoming crews about hiring?'"

"He looks up at me, confused like, and says, 'No. Why? Hiring what?'"

"Hiring what,' he says. Now that's pretty peculiar. 'Hiring an astrogator, you fat-head,' I said. 'How you planning on getting home? Walking?'"

"Now this was real interesting. When I said that, Nohovig got this surprised look on his face, and then he got guilty-looking, or embarrassed, or something weird. But not worried about getting home. 'Oh, I've done some astrogation in my time,' he says. 'Enough to get us home, anyway.' Well, that's a load of bull if ever there was one. I've heard Nohovig try to carry on a conversation with captains who do their own astrogation. They get to talking about gravitic sling-shotting and coordinate drift and stuff like that, and his eyes just glaze over. He doesn't have a clue. Hell, I probably know more about astrogation than he does, and Ada's little nephew Ronnie probably knows more than both of us together, and he's only three years old."

Shrier has been getting more agitated toward the end of this and raises himself up on an elbow, but Ada pushes him firmly back down on the table.

"Okay, Ada, I'll be good. So anyway, I ask him, 'While we're at it, Nohovig, what's in all those crates sitting in your office? What's so secret you got to hide it and lock it up?' Nohovig got this real mean look then and just said, 'Mind your own business, old man, if you know what's good for you.' Old man, my ass! If he's a day younger than me, I'll kiss his backside!

"So I went back to my beer, and they went back to their scheming, or whatever the hell they were doing. Then pretty soon Siscoe and the two stoogies get up and leave. They must have been waiting for me when I left, because I never knew what hit me, never saw them coming. Maybe I am getting old."

"Drunk's more likely," Ada puts in sarcastically, but then pats him affectionately on the shoulder.

Confronting the Guild

The player characters now know that Arturo Nohovig is probably up to something shady. But what? There isn't enough information to know for sure. One thing is clear: He must be desperate to risk an assault on a Berensi native, knowing the tremendous public outcry it would cause if word got out (which it has). Since the identities of the assailants are now known (or at least strongly suspected), Arturo's veil of secrecy is no longer useful, and he can be expected to move ahead with whatever his plans are quickly and openly.

Nohovig's Plan: His real purpose on Berens is exactly what he claim it is—to sell newly manufactured far traders to Free Traders at bargain base-ment prices. Everything else is secondary to that goal. He needs Berens as a sales platform, as sooner or later almost every Free Trader in the sector stops here. He has been willing to keep a low profile so far, but if necessary he is willing to secure Berens as a sales platform by force of arms. The crates in the office contain battledress and advanced weaponry, and he and his crew are there now suiting up. A half-dozen combatants in battledress with gauss rifles can easily control the planet.

But what about the Guild and its official hands-off policy? What about the ill will this will cause among Free Traders and Guild crews alike when

word leaks out? Nohovig is no longer working for the Guild; he is an agent for the ship assembly plant, which is run by a sentient Virus-infected computer system. The plant is located on the planet Ebekhar (1628/Diaspora) in the Iusea sub-sector, about 12 parsecs coreward of Berens (although that is a closely guarded secret). Its plan is to sell Virus-infected far traders at irresistibly low prices, and thus spread a new wave of Virus throughout the sector. The Virus infection will not reveal itself, but will quietly infect every system it can contact. Eventually it will take over the ship, kill or imprison its human crew and become more overt in its efforts to spread Virus.

Nohovig and his crew are in the deal purely for the money, having been persuaded by the Virus that it is not interested in killing everyone, simply in taking over, a sentiment which they understand completely.

As to the ill will that a takeover will generate, Nohovig simply intends to take hostages once he controls the planet. By threatening them with violence, he wants to obtain the cooperation of the Berensi in pretending that all is well. Of course, he won't be able to keep up the charade forever, but he should be able to maintain it long enough to sell a number of ships. After that, he doesn't care what happens; his work will be done, and he will make his escape.

All Hell Breaks Loose: Ada will explain to the crowd gathered outside her shop what she believes happened (which is substantially true) and what is suspected of Arturo. Before the player characters or the crowd can decide on a course of action, however, they hear the sound of gunfire, screams and people fleeing down the street in panic. Behind them are Arturo and three or four crewmembers in battledress firing gauss rifles on full auto over the crowd's head. The crowd dissolves in panic and runs for cover.

The PCs will have to think fast, but their best course of action is to head back to their ship to arm themselves. Along with everyone else on the planet, they have no means of dealing with men in battledress, but they have probably brought

NOHOVIG'S FORCE

Nohovig has himself and three other men in battledress (the surviving members of his crew) armed with gauss rifles, along with Siscoe Nickrent, without armor and armed with an automatic pistol. Spanky Soundarajan and Forma Hong-Harridan were also given automatic pistols, but both of them run away as soon as Nohovig is out of sight and will throw in with the defenders if they have the opportunity. (*Angst* is one thing; violent revolution something else entirely.)

Nohovig is an Experienced NPC, as is Nickrent and one of Nohovig's men. All the others are Novices. They are wearing standard tech level 10 battledress as detailed in the basic game.



along rather more substantial armament and left it on-board their vessel. Fortunately, things began happening too fast for Hohovig to seal off the grounded vessels, and he is instead counting on overwhelming all resistance with the shock of his initial assault.

The referee should use the map of Berensburg on page 15 to adjudicate the battle. Nohovig and his men are not trying to hurt any of the locals, only scare them. Ultimately, Nohovig will need their cooperation to make his plan work. He is less concerned with visiting Free Traders, and if they resist or get in his way, he'll be as likely to shoot them as try to reason with them. The player characters are a different matter. Nohovig and his men will actively seek them out and try to capture or kill them, and the same is true of Shrier.

Regardless of what the player characters decide to do, Ada Harridan announces that she is going to try to get Shrier to Jo Donskoi's garage. Donskoi is her cousin and best friend, and the garage is heavily built and labyrinthine, the perfect place to hole up. If the player characters are going back to their ship to arm themselves, Ada tells them that she and Shrier will wait for them at the garage.

Options: At this point the adventure may have branched in one of several different directions, depending on which course of action the PCs took earlier.

If the PCs came to Shrier's aid, they will have identified Siscoe and the others and thus triggered Nohovig's coup. If they managed to capture one or more of the assailants, there will be that many fewer armed men to carry out the attack, but Nohovig will go ahead with it anyway. One of his priorities in that case, however, will be to find his men and release them to augment his forces.

If the player characters run for help instead of coming to Shrier's aid, he will be more severely beaten, and they will have a less certain idea of who made the assault. Nohovig will not launch his coup immediately, but instead will await developments. Shrier's severe injuries will cause a genuine popular outrage and a clamor to bring the villains to justice. The combination of the widely heard

RESISTANCE

The player characters will not be the only ones on the planet who have weapons on their ship, and they won't be the only ones to think to go there (assuming the PCs actually *do* think to go there). While any Guild crews on the planet may be shocked at the attempted takeover, they still believe that Nohovig is working with backing from the Guild leadership, and they will take no part in the fighting on either side. Some of the Free Traders in port will try to get back to their ships and arm themselves. Some will have helmets and body armor, and one might even have battledress, at the referee's discretion.

The locals have a few weapons, but only shotguns and pistols—nothing powerful enough to penetrate battledress.

angry exchange between Shrier and Nohovig at Mujiba', the lack of an alibi for the assailants, and skinned knuckles on Spanky's fists will combine to throw overwhelming suspicion on the assailants. Player investigation may turn up the missing evidence, or PCs may overhear a conversation between two of the assailants which amounts to a confession. In any case, identification of the culprits will precipitate the coup.

If the player characters arm themselves from their ship, there will be a battle in the streets of Berensburg or perhaps in the sprawling garage complex. Several Free Traders and a few locals with light weapons will join them as they fight Nohovig and (hopefully) beat him. If the characters do not think to arm themselves, the referee should have a few more Free Traders do so, and the player characters can then pick up weapons dropped by defender casualties or improvise weapons at the garage.

If the defenders lose the battle, the adventure can go on for some time, as the player characters are imprisoned and have to find a way to first escape and then turn the tables on Nohovig. That is beyond the scope of this book (but of course nothing is beyond the scope of what your players can get their characters into).

Jo's Garage

Assuming the player characters actually win the fight, they will probably end up at Jo's garage, where Shrier and Ada are waiting. Shrier is somewhat recovered from his beating, and only with some difficulty have Ada and Jo Donskoi kept him from getting up and joining the fight against Nohovig.

But simply winning the fight against Nohovig does not answer the question of why he did what he did. If Nohovig is a prisoner, the PCs and locals can interrogate him, and he will eventually tell his entire story. This will reveal that *Lilly Marlene* is alive and potentially dangerous, and has to be dealt with.

If Nohovig was killed or is incapable of talking due to injuries, another member of his crew can tell substantially the same story, but if all members of Nohovig's crew are dead or unconscious, the player characters (perhaps with help from Shrier and Jo Donskoi) will have to puzzle this out themselves.

The first piece in the puzzle is that no Guild crew on the planet other than Nohovig's had ever heard of this ship purchase program. Communications are spotty and uneven out in the Wilds, but you would think that somebody would have heard of this. Also, this doesn't fit the Guild's operating

pattern at all. If Nohovig wasn't working for the Guild, who was he working for, and where did *Lilly Marlene* come from?

Second, there remains Shrier's question of how Nohovig was going to get back to the assembly plant without an astrogator.

Jo Donskoi may provide the answer to the puzzle. *Lilly Marlene* has been moved into an enclosed bay in the garage to make the tours of the ship more convenient. She was not asked to do any maintenance on the ship, and was told to stay away from it. Once the fighting started, however, she decided she needed to make at least a cursory examination of the ship, and did so by means of the diagnostic hull jacks provided for starport maintenance personnel to assess the performance ship's key systems. Here is what she reports:

"I rolled the diagnostic trolley over to her, hooked up all of my data jacks and had a look. All systems were nominal, and I mean *exactly* nominal, to about five decimal places, of the textbook specifications. Weirder than that even. If there weren't any decimal values for a recommended reading, the reading wouldn't have any, you know? It was a whole number, just like in the book. It was just like somebody looked up the performance values and programed my trolley to feed them back to me.

"Okay, so big deal. This is a really *hot* ship, right? I unplugged the trolley and rolled it over to the service bench. There are things you get in the habit of doing, without even thinking about them, you know. Whenever I unplug the trolley, I hook it up to the recharger and run a Virus telltale. Guess what? It lit up like a fireworks celebration. That's a Vampire out there."

Dealing With Lilly: If *Lilly* is indeed a Vampire, then there would seem to be an immediate danger that she will either lift and escape, or will open fire with her laser turret, but Jo Donskoi immediately assures them that there is no danger of either of those happening. Jo's father, Pablo, installed a powerful damper projector in the garage and focussed it on the maintenance bay as a means of preventing people from hijacking ships or just trying to skip out on a bill. When turned on, it will immediately shut down any ship's fusion power plant. Jo says that as soon as she saw the telltale readout, she "pulled the plug" on *Lilly*.

The player characters will probably want to inspect *Lilly* and may be able to extract information from the ship's Virus-infected computer. The personnel airlocks are closed, but the port cargo hatch is open and the party can enter there.

The problem is that *Lilly* has a backup power system. While the battery system is not powerful enough to either lift the ship or activate the floor gravity (which would mean the immediate and messy end of the player characters), it has enough power to keep her alert and to operate the security cameras and lasers. Once the characters are on-board she will open fire, and the PCs will have to fight their way to the bridge, destroying lasers and cameras as they go.



Josephine "Jo" Donskoi

JOSEPHINE JO DONSKOI

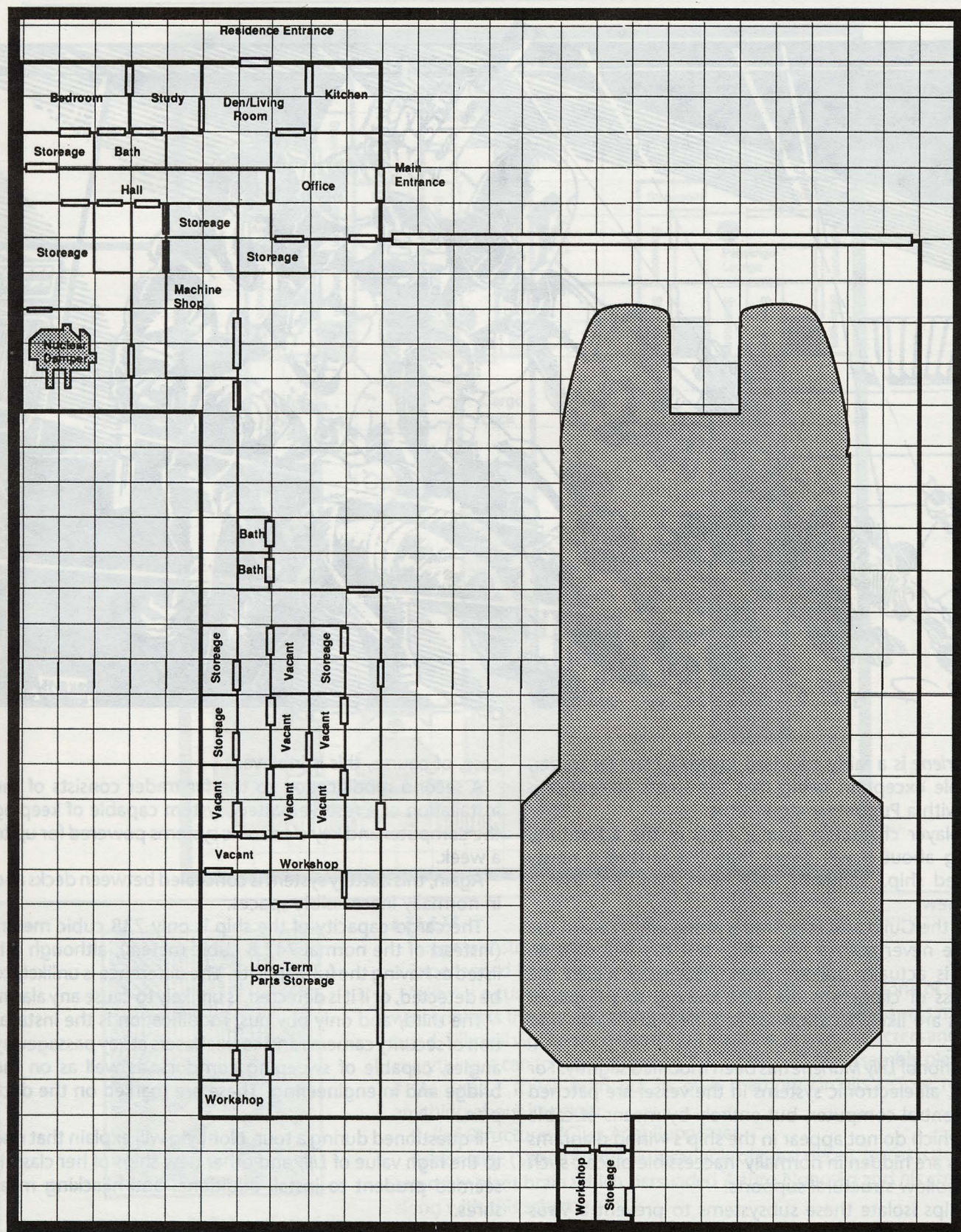
Starport Garage Owner

Novice NPC

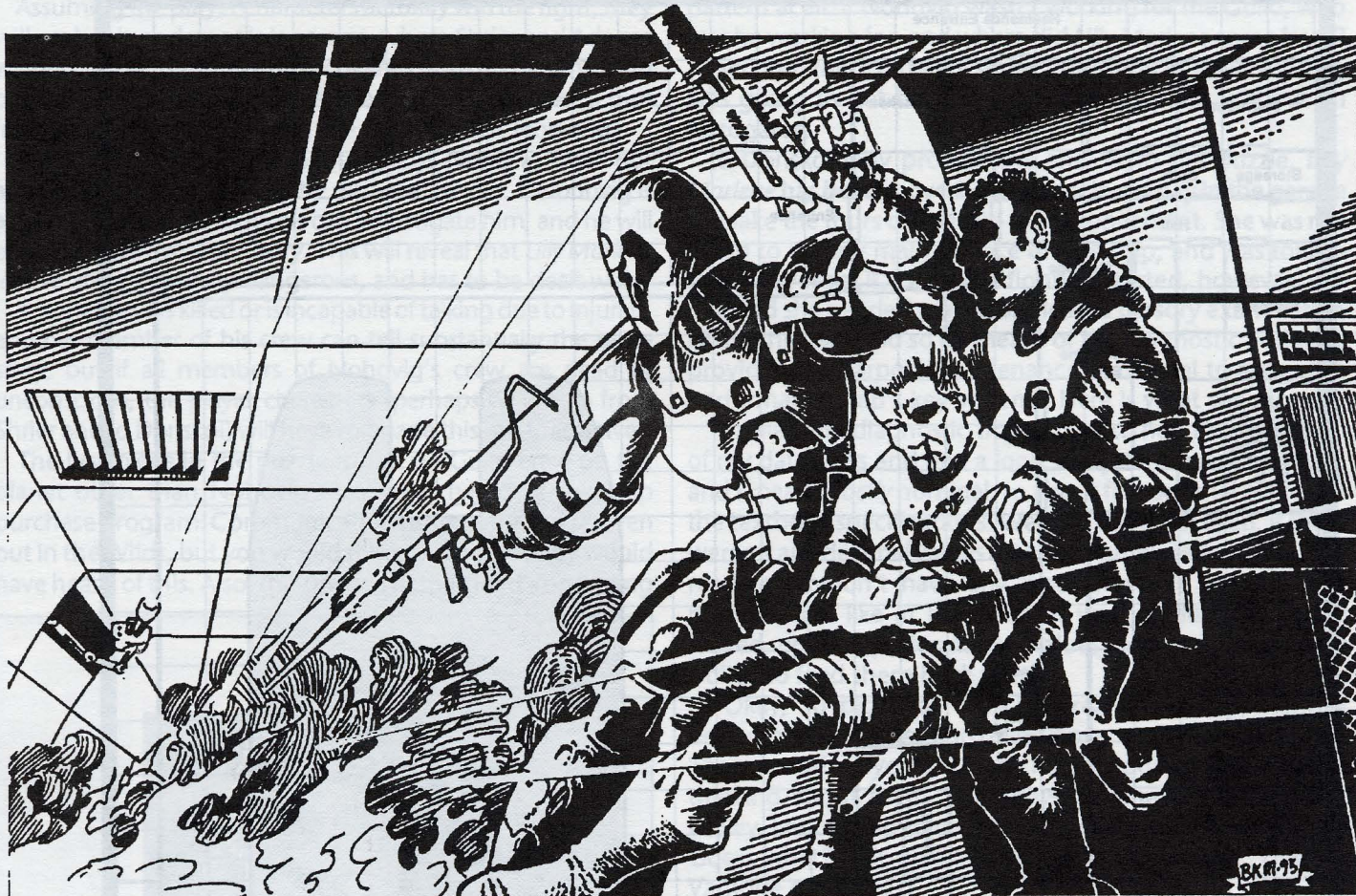
Jo Donskoi is a cheerful redhead, short and slightly stocky, perpetually dressed in a greasy mechanic's jump-suit. She loves starships with a passion, and dreams of the day when she can reopen the orbital starport and make Berens a real crossroads for trade in Diaspora. See *Star Vikings: Personalities of the Reformation Coalition* for details.

Combat Assets: Armed Martial Arts (Pole Arm), Unarmed Martial Arts.

Other Assets: Computer 8, Electronics 9, Intrusion 7, Leadership 7, Machinist 8, Mechanic 13, Ship's Engineering 8, Starship Architecture 7.



The Lilly Marlene



Lilly Marlene is a fairly standard *Jayhawk*-class far trader, the notable exception being that the ship's computer is infected with a Puppeteer-strain virus.

If the player characters tour it early in the adventure, everything about it will prove that it is indeed a newly constructed ship. Someone may even comment that it "smells" new.

Most of the Guild and Free Trader crews which are in the wilds have never seen a new ship, but the Reformation Coalition is actually building new vessels, of which the *Aurora*-class of clippers is the best known, so the player characters are likely to know what a new ship looks and smells like.

The interior of *Lilly Marlene* has been modified slightly. For one thing, all electronic systems in the vessel are patched into the central computer, but entirely by means of cable bundles which do not appear in the ship's wiring diagrams and which are hidden in normally inaccessible places, such as inside hollow structural supports.

Most ships isolate these subsystems to prevent a Virus infection in one to spread to the rest of the ship. In *Lilly's*

case, of course, this is irrelevant.

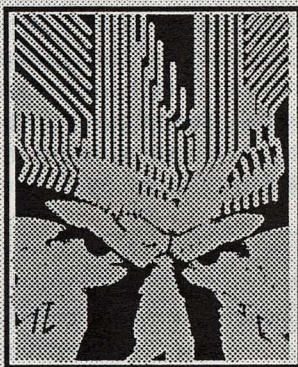
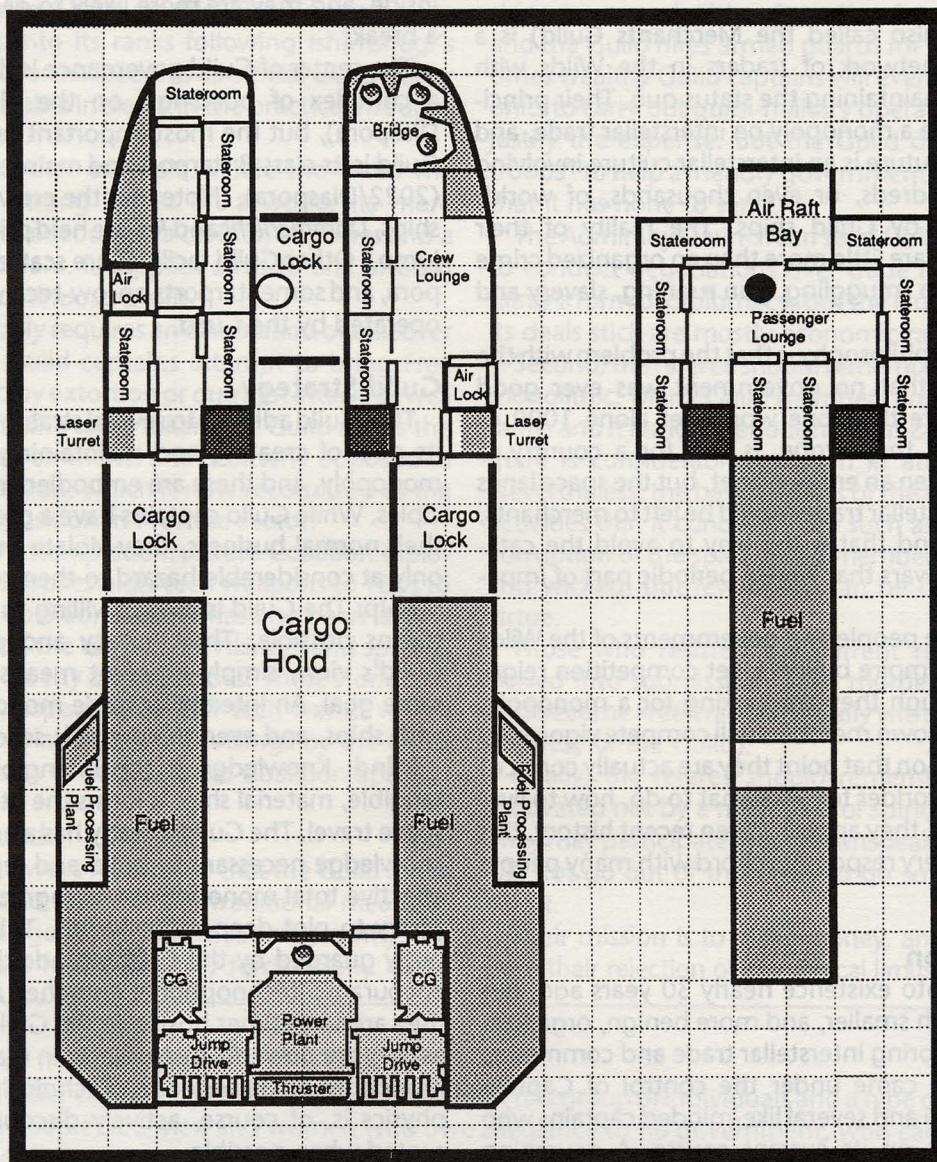
A second modification to the far trader consists of the installation of a reserve battery system capable of keeping the computer and key electronic systems powered for up to a week.

Again, this battery system is concealed between decks and in normally inaccessible spaces.

The cargo capacity of the ship is only 738 cubic meters (instead of the normal 743.8 cubic meters), although it is listed as having the full capacity. The difference is unlikely to be detected, or if it is detected, is unlikely to cause any alarm.

The third, and only obvious, modification is the installation of security cameras and coaxial lasers at key passageway angles, capable of sweeping corridors, as well as on the bridge and in engineering. These are marked on the deck plan.

If questioned during a tour, Nohovig will explain that due to the high value of *Lilly* and other new ships of her class, it seemed prudent to install additional anti-hijacking measures.



"Lilly"

LILLY

Puppeteer-strain virus

Experienced NPC (for purposes of fire combat)

"Lilly" is a cunning and careful Puppeteer-strain virus, a clone of the virus which infects the starship assembly plant computer where it was manufactured. Lilly will vigorously defend itself from the player characters and will do everything it can to avoid revealing the location of the assembly plant. Even if "tortured," it will burn out its own memory circuits before revealing anything about its origin.

Belief Structure: (Club Ace) Puppeteer

Personality: (Spade King) Lilly is capable of great deceit, just as is the master assembly plant brain which persuaded Arturo Nohovig and his crew to go along with this scheme.

Electronic Comat Value: 6



THE GUILD

The Star Guild (also called the Merchants Guild) is a loosely organized network of traders in the Wilds with strong interests in maintaining the status quo. Their principal goal is to achieve a monopoly on interstellar trade, and their dream for the future is an interstellar culture involving trade between hundreds, or even thousands, of worlds conducted entirely by Guild ships. The reality of their situation is that they are little more than an organized crime "family," engaged in smuggling, gun running, slavery and extortion.

The Guild's stated philosophy is that the problem with the old Imperium was that no government was ever good enough to rule more than one world, let alone 1000 or more. Government, they argue, is fine for a country, a continent, maybe even an entire planet, but the space lanes should be free. Interstellar trade should be left to merchants, not governments, and that is the way to avoid the catastrophic interstellar wars that were a periodic part of Imperial history.

Their appeal to the people and governments of the Wilds is to resist the new empire builders. Let competition reign, they say. (Even though they are looking for a monopoly, they argue that their own members will compete vigorously with each other, and on that point they are actually correct.) Don't let some off-worlder tell you what to do, how to live, or who to trade with, they appeal. Given recent history, this argument strikes a very responsive chord with many people in the Wilds.

Guild Organization

The Guild came into existence nearly 30 years ago, but was originally a much smaller, and more benign, organization, devoted to restoring interstellar trade and commerce. Twelve years ago it came under the control of Captain Vugashnii Ishimshugi and several like-minded captains who set the organization on its current course. A governing Admiralty Council consists of five of the most powerful Guild ship owners, and a Council of Captains consists of a little over 100 ship owners who elect the five Councilors every three years.

Vugashnii and his clique hold a clear majority of the captains and all of the seats on the Admiralty Council.

The Guild allows its members a very free hand in their business dealings, provided they "tithe" a share of their profits to the Guild for maintenance of its facilities. Note that Free Traders are not part of the Guild, and are often hostile to it. Also, many Guild members are former Free Traders who were forced, either by economic considerations or by threat of violence, to join the Guild. These provide a possible source of intelligence from the

inside, and they are more likely to give Coalition members a break.

The center of Guild governance is the Guild Hall (actually a complex of buildings) on the planet Justabit (0823/Diaspora), but the most important technical facility of the Guild is its class-B starport and maintenance facility at Jump (2022/Diaspora). (Note that the crew of two Dawn League ships, *Dämmerlicht* and *Ra*, are held prisoner at the facility on Jump.) Other Guild facilities are scattered throughout Diaspora, and some starports on low-tech worlds are owned and operated by the Guild.

Guild Strategy

The Guild adheres to several strategies in order to forward its goal of creating and maintaining an interstellar trade monopoly, and these are embodied in four operating principles. While Guild captains have a great deal of freedom in their normal business, they violate these strategic policies only at considerable hazard to themselves.

Ship: The Guild is always willing to acquire ships by any means possible. Theft, piracy and purchase are, in the Guild's view, simply different means of approaching the same goal. An interstellar trade monopoly starts and ends with ships, and everything else is secondary to this.

Mind: Knowledge is the intangible equivalent of the tangible, material ship. It forms the other part of the key to space travel. The Guild already has a near-monopoly on the knowledge necessary to build and repair starships and an effective total monopoly on astrographic information necessary to plot deep-space jumps. This information is jealously guarded by the Guild. In addition, the Guild tacitly encourages technophobic churches and cultures, even if they are sometimes hostile to the Guild's immediate plans, as they are powerful instruments in maintaining the Guild's monopoly on knowledge. Technical education in astrophysics is, of course, actively discouraged and even disrupted when possible.

Market: Trade requires markets, and markets require goods. A prime consideration of every Guild captain is to maintain existing markets and develop new ones, as well as sources of supply for existing ones. The Guild does this in a number of conventional and fairly harmless ways, but also engages in some extremely destructive activities as well.

Slavery, for example, was all but unknown on most high-tech worlds until it was introduced by Slavers, supplying

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Justabit	0823	D445689-A	S	Ni Ag C:4	804	LI	M2 VM4 D M6 D
Justabit	0823	E44566A-7	S	Ni Ag	704	Na	M2 VM4 D M6 D
Jump	2022	B665432-E		Ni Lo	211	LI	G0 V
Jump	2022	B66536B-3		Ni Lo	411	Wi	G0 V



captives from raided low-tech worlds. The Guild's acceptance of the Slavers into its ranks following Ishimshugi's election 12 years ago formalized this as official Guild policy and has led to a noticeable increase in the practice throughout the Wilds.

Balkanization is another example. While the Guild will occasionally back a strong leader on a world, its more common practice is to encourage a division of power and a continual state of warfare. It supplies arms to one or both sides and makes a continuous profit.

The One: A monopoly requires an elimination or takeover of the competition. Guild captains attempt to bring Free Traders into the Guild by extortion or outright attack, as well as economic offers. By the same token, the Guild resists the idea of multiworld governments and is bitterly opposed to the Reformation Coalition, which it now recognized as the clearest threat to its position in Promise sector.

The Guild not only attempts to frustrate Coalition diplomatic initiatives and supplies high-tech weapons to TEDs to help defend against Coalition raids, it has also been largely responsible for coining the term "Star Viking," and spreading rumors of Viking cruelty and atrocities. These stories are very widely believed, especially on low-tech worlds where Slaver raids are often blamed on Star Vikings by the Guild (even on worlds dozens of parsecs from Coalition Space).

Refereeing the Guild

The referee should always remember that the Guild is not a government and lacks many of the traditional means of interaction available to governments. Most importantly, the Guild does not have a formal military force. Many Guild

ships are armed, either for self-defense or to allow piracy, and the Guild hires armed guards for Guild facilities. Sometimes wealthy Guild captains will even hire small mercenary units to carry out quasi-military operations, if the return will justify the expense. But the Guild does not "send in the troops" to help a friendly government, for the simple reason that it has none to send.

The Admiralty Council can send Guild envoys empowered to conduct negotiations over trade rights, and this is certainly a form of diplomacy, but the Guild's means of making its deals stick are mostly economic rather than military.

Second, the referee should remember that the Guild is not monolithic. Many Guild members are not members voluntarily, and it is a loose enough organization in any event that there is considerable variation in attitude throughout it. Nevertheless, the basic policies of the Guild, and the sorts of activities that it condones, are such as to cause a continual corruption of the spirit. Guild members may not all be cruel and wicked, but few if any can be considered models of virtue.

Those who resisted the current regime have all been cowed into submission, been murdered, or left the Guild and become Free Traders (usually with a price on their heads courtesy of the Guild).

Finally, the referee should remember that the Guild is motivated not by a meanness of spirit, but rather by profit. They may participate in acts of unspeakable cruelty, but they will not go out of their way to do so if it will cost them a credit.

Their mission is to make money, and their cruelty comes from their rejection of any ethical limits on their greed.

Free Traders and free traders

The term Free Trader can be very confusing, as it refers both to a group of individuals and a type of merchant vessel. Free Traders (the people) are men and women who owe allegiance to no government, who call no planet home. In many cases they were born on ship-board and have never lived "dirtside." These Free Traders form a loose-knit tribal community and are the only vestige of interstellar commerce in collapsed Imperial space, albeit a sparse and thin vestige. Back in Imperial times, there were free traders as well, but the term was merely a description of a job (like "gas station attendant") rather than of a unique way of life under circumstances where there is no longer any interstellar authority. The Free Traders of the New Era are a nation without a state, but form a continuous link to a lost epoch.

The vessels called free traders are a small and relatively cheap type of merchant ship. Although these free traders can be of various specific classes (*Beowulf* TL15 free trader, *Moraine* TL10 free trader, etc.), all share certain characteristics: they displace 200 tons, have jump-1 and 1G performance, and have a simple and inexpensive electronics suite.

During Imperial times, the starship free trader was often capitalized in order to specify those precise performance parameters, while the free trader profession was lower case as befitted a general job description. However, in the New Era these terms are differentiated in the text by the use of lower case for the vessels as opposed to upper case for the people.

Finally, Free Traders who have regular contact with the Reformation Coalition do not fly free traders; you can't get to Coalition Space from the Wilds with a jump-1 ship.

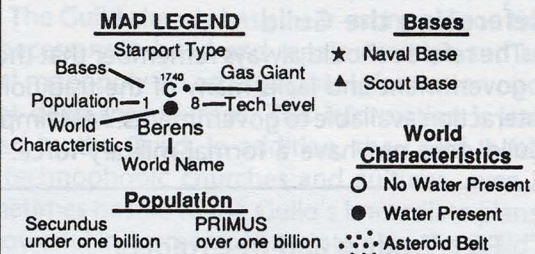
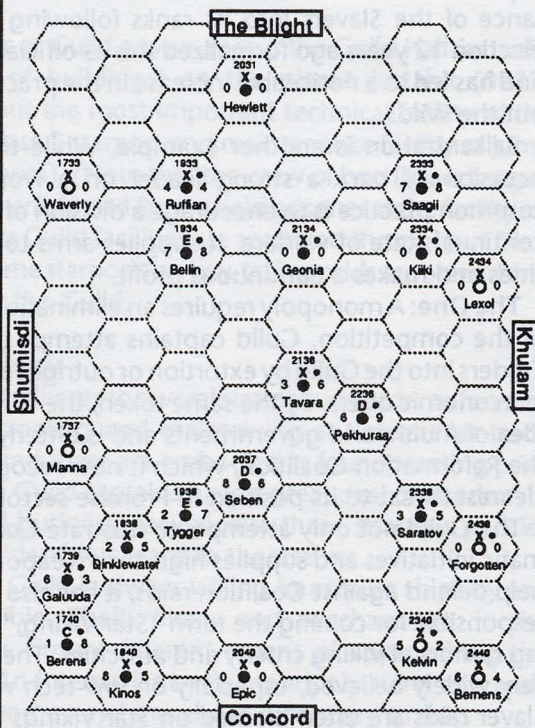


REFEREES ONLY

This page contains the post-Collapse, New Era UWPs for the worlds of Madoc Subsector. Players are only allowed access to the "RCES Madoc Subsector Briefing." Access to the current information contained in this post-Collapse document can only be obtained by visiting and exploring the worlds in question.

MADOC SUBSECTOR (Subsector O)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Waverly	1733	XAA7000-0	Ba Fl		000	—	G4 V
Manna	1737	X8D5000-0	Ba Fl		012	—	M5 V
Galuuda	1739	X79A669-3	Ni Wa		B902	Wi	K4 V M3 D
Berens	1740	C846136-8	Ni Lo		411	Wi	G1 V M3 D
Dinklewater	1838	X98A225-5	Ni Wa Lo		114	Wi	F5 V M8 D
Kinos	1840	X5588AB-5			823	Wi	K5 V
Ruffian	1933	X448487-4	Ni Lo		B314	Wi	M1 V
Bellin	1934	E996765-8	Ag		B902	Wi	K0 V
Tygger	1938	E768221-7	Ni Lo		503	Wi	M9 V
Hewlett	2031	X110000-0	Ba		003	—	G2 V
Seben	2037	D694869-6			103	Wi	F4 V M8 D
Epic	2040	X434000-0	Ba		012	—	G6 V
Geonia	2134	X53A000-0	Ba Wa		002	—	M4 V
Tavara	2136	X67A344-6	Ni Wa Lo		112	Wi	K0 II
Pekhuraa	2236	D784634-9	Ni Ag		205	Wi	M6 III K5 V
Saagii	2333	X444758-8	Ag		B614	Wi	M2 V M0 D
Kiiki	2334	X225000-0	Ba		024	—	M9 III
Saratov	2338	X559333-5	Ni Lo		B303	Wi	M0 V
Kelvin	2340	X64056A-2	Ni De Po		B304	Wi	K6 V M2 D
Lexol	2434	X100000-0	Ba Va		010	—	M3 V M9 D
Forgotten	2438	X630000-0	Ba De		001	—	K1 V
Bernens	2440	X550667-4	Ni De		B500	Wi	G2 V M9 D



Base Codes: N: Naval Base; S: Scout Base.

Trade Codes: Ag: Agricultural; As: Asteroid; Ba: Barren; Cm: Cemetery world (a world whose original population has died off completely, and the current population is all recent settlers); C:N or D:N indicates that the world was populated in part by Chirpers or Droyne, and the number "N" following the colon indicates how many tenths of the world's population consisted of these races; De: Desert; Fl: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; Ic: Ice-capped; In: Industrial; 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 Travel Zone digit is empty, there is no particular meaning, as there is no surviving interstellar organization to assign travel codes to worlds. 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: Na: Nonaligned, no off-planet allegiance—these worlds use the government types listed on page 188 of the TNE rulebook; Su: Covenant of Sufren; Wi: Wilds (no off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact)—these worlds use the Wilds government type from page 191, TNE rulebook (in the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," the world's listed tech level is that of the world as a whole; the tech level of the TED and his or her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.



REFEREE NOTES FOR MADOC SUBSECTOR

These notes provide additional information on inhabited and interesting uninhabited worlds in Madoc subsector.

Madoc's main point of interest in the class C starport at Berens. There are few worlds in the subsector which have the population, technology and ground facilities for lucrative trade, and there were few pre-Collapse planets with both a high tech level and high population, making the salvage prospects in the subsector fairly limited as well. The only worlds where there is much prospect of salvage are Hewlett and Saagii.

Waverly: Before the Collapse, Waverly's starport provided the only convenient jump-3 bridge across the Blight Rift Coreward of Manna, and for that reason was the site of an important naval base. The base was effectively destroyed during the Final War, and the appearance of Virus ended any plans to rebuild the facility. As Waverly has neither fluid oceans on the world nor gas giants in the star system, there is no practical means of starship refuelling there.

Galuuda: A primitive, superstitious and balkanized world one parsec coreward of Berens and in the middle of the Madoc Main. It is seldom visited by starships.

Berens: Despite its tiny population, Berens boasts the best maintenance facility in the subsector and one of the best half-dozen in all of Diaspora. Only the class-B facility on Jump is known to be superior. (There is also a superior facility at Iiselu in Blight subsector, but this is not yet widely known.)

Dinklewater: The 100 people remaining on Dinklewater are the descendants of researchers and starport personnel, and they make their living mostly by scavenging tools and equipment from the destroyed and abandoned starport. Starships trade manufactured goods—such as clothing, utensils, and weapons—for specialized tools and replacement parts.

Kinos: Kinos is a populous world controlled by a corrupt and paranoid civil service bureaucracy, which has made trade difficult. Both Guild and Free Trader captains regularly smuggle contraband goods to Kinos, however, and this is one of the more lucrative (if sometimes dangerous) runs on the Madoc Main. The Kinozian government's characteristics are:

Paranoia/ Corruption Talent Cruelty Aggression Xenophobia				
High	Low	Low	Low	High

Ruffian: Virtually isolated in the coreward half of Madoc subsector, Ruffian has been visited by fewer than a dozen free traders in the last decade (mostly stop-overs from ships visiting Bellin), and none of them have seen any reason to repeat the visit. The small population is split into hostile city-states, each ruled by dictators or totalitarian oligarchies. Tech level remains low, and the economies are stagnant.

Bellin: This planet is balkanized and ruled by technologically elevated dictators (TEDs), the largest and most powerful of whom, Marouque the Terrible, controls the starport and has managed to keep a small fleet of spacecraft in service. This fleet consists of one SDB and four armed merchant vessels (none of which are jump-capable). The characteristics of Marouque's government are:

Paranoia/ Corruption Talent Cruelty Aggression Xenophobia				
Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate

Tygger: The small population of Tygger has managed to keep the starport functioning so far, but very few ships call here anymore, and it is getting more and more difficult to support even the limited services available. Not enough people remain on the planet for any active trade, and ships needing maintenance mostly go to Berens, where the facilities are superior.

Hewlett: Hewlett is uninhabited but had a pre-Collapse population of 60 million and a tech level of 15, making it a potentially lucrative source of salvage. Few if any ships have visited the world for that purpose, however, due to the absence of water on the main world. While gas giant refuelling is available, the long transit times into the main world and back out to the gas giant are more than most independent crews are willing to invest in what is ultimately a crap shoot. No one really knows how much, if any, of Hewlett's equipment survived, or if it was ever attacked, and each referee can decide this individually for their campaign.

Seben: With a high population (by local standards) and a functioning spaceport, Seben is one of the more important worlds in Madoc subsector, particularly due to its placement at the trailing end of the Madoc Main. It is ruled by a technologically elevated dictator styled Emperor Charles II. It does not have any operational spacecraft, although Charles is interested in obtaining one or more operational ships along with training for crews. The government's characteristics are:

Paranoia/ Corruption Talent Cruelty Aggression Xenophobia				
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High

Tavara: This is another very low population world which has recently made contact with its neighbors on Pekhuraa. Both governments are considering peacefully combining the two worlds under a single unified government.

Pekhuraa: This world maintains a moderately good starport maintenance facility (although not as good as that found on Berens) and a space navy of one jump-capable armed merchant ship, a former subsidized merchant. Its government characteristics are:

Paranoia/ Corruption Talent Cruelty Aggression Xenophobia				
Moderate	High	Low	Low	Moderate

Saagii: This world's population is balkanized due to the rugged geography of the planet. It lies at the coreward end of a small main which starts at Ekhaben in Khulam subsector, but there is comparatively little trade on this main due to low populations and the proximity of the Vampire Highway. Recently salvage expeditions have recovered several valuable tech level 14 relics.

Saratov: The planet's small and primitive population has little to trade, and most starships refuel at the gas giant, passing by the inhabited world.

Kelvin: This is a nearly classic example of a TED-controlled world. Balkanized into rival, if seldom hostile, city states, the general population lives at a level scarcely different than the Terran middle ages, while the handful of "noble" rulers maintain their position with surviving tech level 9 hardware.

Bernens: Aside from an order of magnitude more people and less discrepancy between the prevailing technology and that used by the rulers, Bernens is close to a carbon copy of Kelvin.

Conclusion

If all has gone well, the player characters have uncovered a plot by a Virus-infected ship assembly plant to spread a new wave of Virus throughout Diaspora sector, and partially derailed it. The assembly plant remains in operation, however, and who knows how many other sales agents like Arturo Nohovig are trying to sell ships to unsuspecting Guild and Free Trader captains.

Interrogation of the computer, if it has been captured reasonably intact, will add little to their knowledge. Beyond possibly confirming that it came from Ebekhar (1628/Diaspora), it will reveal nothing, and will eventually firewall its memory and logic circuits, effectively committing suicide.

At this point, the player characters have two potential courses of action—return to the Coalition to report or head for Ebekhar and try to take out the assembly plant as soon as possible. It should be clear that returning to Dawn Base will delay any expedition against the assembly plant by three or four months at least, and by then the Virus intelligence may have realized that something has gone wrong with its agent on Berens. Three or four months will also result in many more new Vampires built and in operation throughout Diaspora.

On the other hand, it would be reckless to charge in alone without at least letting the Coalition know what is going on. If the player characters fail, who will follow them up and finish the job? A solution to that particular dilemma offers itself almost immediately. One of the Free Trader captains who participated in the fight against Nohovig volunteers to take the report back to Aubaine, as he is heading to trailing anyway, and the other captains will begin spreading the word by means of the Free Trader network.

Circumstances certainly indicate an immediate investi-

gation and, if possible, attack on the assembly plant, and if the player characters seem undecided, Shrier will encourage them. At the same time, Shrier announces his intention to go along with them and “sign on with the Coalition.” His arguments as to why he should accompany them are simple—he worked on a Free Trader that visited most of the words for 20 parsecs to coreward of Berens. He knows the area, knows where to expect trouble and where to go for help if they need it. The player characters don’t have anything to go on but some old Imperial star charts 75 years out of date and a bunch of rumors.

Shrier is persuasive, and the referee should make his arguments as compelling as possible, and Ada Harridan, Jo Donskoi, and the other locals and Free Traders will eagerly vouch for Shrier. The following adventure in this campaign assumes that Shrier accompanies the player characters, so it would be very good for them to take him. Perhaps an NPC engineering crew member of the *Kelly Victrix* became a casualty in the fight, opening a berth for him.

One more thing is worth considering. The basic idea of manufacturing new commercial starships and selling them at a subsidized low price with easy credit as a means of restarting interstellar trade is a very good one. Once the Coalition hears about it, it will probably undertake a similar program of its own, both for its public relations value with Free Traders and as a legitimate means of increasing commerce and communication. If the player characters have thought to include a recommendation to this effect in their report, they will receive considerable credit for the success of the program once it gets going.

Look for *Belly of the Beast™*, part 2 of the *Virus Redux Epic™*, in your local gaming stores.

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Lilly Marlene was an amazing ship. I mean, I've seen some really well-maintained ships, but this was something different. No tool dings around the access panels. No cigarette burns on the plastic galley tables. No paint discoloration anywhere. "Jeeze," Greta said to me, "this thing even *smells* new." Greta was right. This wasn't a restoration job. *Lilly* was a brand new ship.

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