

VAMPIRE FLEETS

The
Virus
Sourcebook



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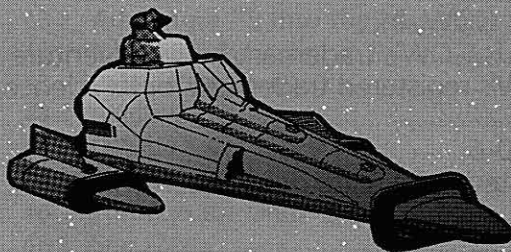
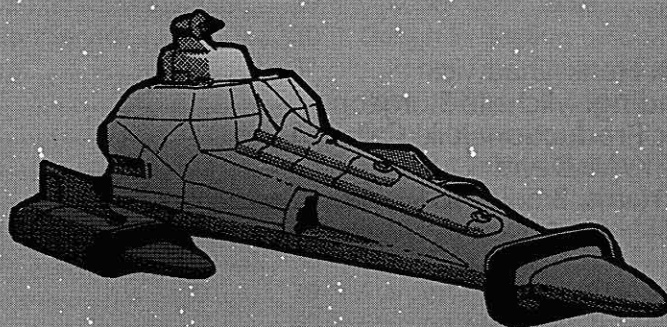
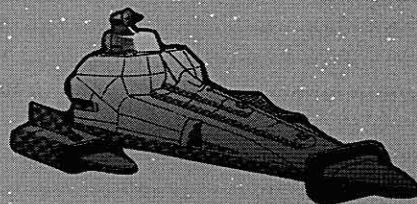
TRAVELLER
The New Era

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VAMPIRE FLEETS

The
Virus
Sourcebook



GDW

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News Reports

CINETWORK

RCES MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: **NOTICE TO STARFARERS**, DISTRIBUTION: **MANDTY**, AUTHORITY COMMANDER, RCES DAWN BASE (TRYBEC/0336/AUBAINE, B443610-A), 26/X/1201
KEYWORDS: **VIRUS, HAZARD TO TRAVEL, VAMPIRE**

RC space forces have issued a Notice to Starfarers for the Arvid (0131/Aubaine) and Mitchell (3034/Khulam/Diaspora) star systems. These systems appear to present an active Viral or vampire threat, and are to be avoided until more information becomes available.

Arvid is thought to be connected to the disappearance of several vessels, including Dawn League ships *Reine Soleil* and *Lady Elise*, although it is not known by what mechanism these disappearances were caused or even if they were the result of a single cause.

Mitchell is believed to be the base of an active and growing vampire fleet and is probably connected to the loss of Dawn League ship *Helios*, missing since 19/XI/1199.

RC space forces will attempt to evaluate and neutralize these threats. Private exploration is not advised.

Exercise extreme caution when entering or passing near these systems, and if possible, avoid passing through them at all. Even gas giant refueling is considered to be hazardous in these systems.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBANE RC NAVY HEADQUARTERS, AURORA (0535/AUBAINE, B576646-B), 2/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **COSMIC FIRE, DAALIISA, DROYNE, CYNTA LAWTER, VIRUS**

Cynta "Sinner" Lawter, the youngest line captain in the Reformation Coalition Navy, today resigned her commission amid growing controversy surrounding the Daaliisa raid, code named Cosmic Fire. Lawter has come under increasing criticism for her handling of recent operations by RCS *Aube* into the Promise subsector.

Charges by Centrist Assembly Representatives that Lawter flagrantly disregarded the limits of the Primary Area of Operation and exceeded her authority in planning and executing raids had been dismissed by senior federalist members of the assembly. The recent disclosure of the violent and covert nature of the raid on the Droyne of Daaliisa, however, has caused federalist support for Lawter to crumble amid concern that the raid will alienate the Droyne both on Daaliisa and elsewhere. Delicate diplomatic negotiations with Droyne enclaves are reportedly in progress on several worlds.

Lawter has refused to comment publicly on the controversial raid, except to say, "This is not about the Droyne; it is about Virus, and it's not going to just go away."

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE RCSA PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 7/III/1202
KEYWORDS: **TATAI MACLEAN, EMO PATTERSON, RCES, RCN, RCSA, VAMPIRE FLEET, VIRUS**

Emo Patterson of the Reformation Coalition Service Administration's Public Affairs Office today labelled as "alarmist" the predictions of a massive Vampire fleet invasion of Coalition space.

The prediction, recently made public by Tatai MacLean, argued that many recent unexplained ship disappearances were due to Vampire activity. Maclean suggested that "both the tempo and proximity of advanced Viral activity is growing at an accelerating rate."

Patterson, speaking for the government, branded the charge "alarmist and irresponsible." Arguing that there is no evidence to confirm MacLean's theories, Patterson added that "the overwhelming majority of our Virus experts, and we've got some pretty sharp people working on this, reject MacLean's theory out of hand." Patterson went on to suggest that MacLean is emotionally unstable due to her earlier experiences with Virus systems and that that has adversely affected her judgement.

Tatai MacLean was raised from birth on a vampire starship controlled by what experts term a "God-strain" Virus. Following her escape she came to the Dawn League in 1199 and served for nearly two years as a Virus consultant to the RC Navy. She recently left that service, reportedly in a dispute over the statistical instruments used to measure Virus activity. Since then she has been associated with one of the strategic planning working groups employed by RCES.

RCES officials were unavailable for comment on the dispute.



COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **PUSH**, AUTHORITY CIN/AUBAINE RCES HQ AUBAINE (0738/AUBAINE, A78A884-C), 21/III/1202

KEYWORDS: **COVENANT OF SUFREN, DLS LADY ELISE, MISSING SHIP, PROMISE, STARFARING ORGANIZATIONS**

The normally unflappable citizenry of Brusman were electrified by the twin announcement of the recovery of the survivors of the Dawn League ship *Lady Elise* and the opening of relations with the Covenant of Sufren, a previously unknown starfaring civilization.

The announcement followed the successful return of a rescue mission dispatched to the planet Promise in the Promise subsector. Although returning personnel were sequestered for debriefing, unofficial reports described a nightmare world inhabited by Virus-infected advanced technology robots.

The Covenant of Sufren is apparently a small group of inhabited worlds to coreward of the Coalition, but with a governmental structure and social outlook similar to our own. Senior assembly representatives have expressed cautious optimism concerning the possibility of cooperation between the two governments.

DLS *Lady Elise* was one of the first Dawn League warships outfitted to discover the fate of the original 12 diplomatic vessels. The vessel disappeared without a trace in 1200 and has long been thought to have been a victim of Vampire activity. Initial reports seem to confirm that theory.

RCES MIL TRAFFIC, CLASS: **NOTICE TO STARFARERS**, DISTRIBUTION: **MANDTY**, AUTHORITY COMMANDER, RCES DAWN BASE (TRYBEC/0336/AUBAINE, B443610-A), 12/IV/1202

KEYWORDS: **VIRUS, HAZARD TO TRAVEL, VAMPIRE**

RC space forces have issued a Notice to Starfarers for the entire Khulam Main, including all worlds connected by jump-1 routes from the Montezuma (2836/Khulam/Diaspora) to the Khesanadu (2731/Khulam/Diaspora) star systems. These systems appear to present an active Viral or vampire threat, and are to be avoided until more information becomes available.

Recent reports indicate that at least two free traders have been lost in the Khulam Main to vampire activity in the last three months, and one RCES multi-mission scout was recently posted as past due and is now presumed to be lost.

RC space forces will attempt to evaluate and neutralize these threats. Private exploration is not advised.

Exercise extreme caution when entering or passing near these systems, and if possible, avoid passing through them at all. Even gas giant refueling is considered to be hazardous in these systems.

COALINFONET, CLASS: **NEWSREPORT**, DISTRIBUTION: **REDFLASH**, AUTHORITY CIN/NIKE NIMBUS RC NAVY ADVANCED HEADQUARTERS, NIKE NIMBUS (0732/AUBAINE, C447789-9), 18/IV/1202

KEYWORDS: **NIKE NIMBUS, RCS EOS, VAMPIRE FLEET, VIRUS**

After a protracted and costly battle in far planetary orbit, a large vampire ship was damaged and today withdrew from the Nike Nimbus system. The vampire vessel was believed to be a former Imperial destroyer of the *Midu Agashaam* class. Some surface bombardment of Nike Nimbus was carried out before the attack was broken off.

Coalition casualties were heavy in the operation. A combined squadron of RC Navy and Nimban Navy vessels engaged the vampire ship, and a number of vessels were badly damaged. RCS *Eos* is known to have been lost with all hands. Other ship losses, if any, are unknown at this time. RCS *Eos*, an *Aurora*-class clipper, is the first Coalition major naval combatant to be lost in combat.

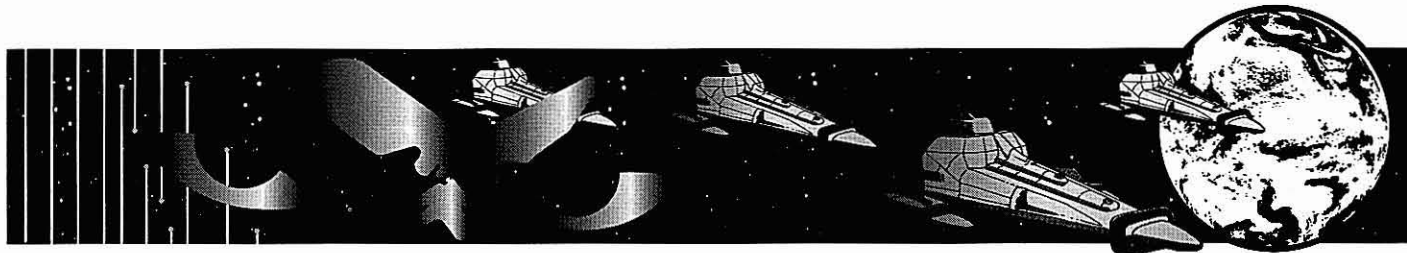
The death toll on the ground has already topped 30,000, and many others are still missing and feared dead, making this the worst disaster in the short history of the Coalition and Dawn League.

Sources close to the regional naval staff report that the need to shift fleet assets coreward and trailing in response to the growing threat from the Soleean Empire has left the spinward frontier under-protected. The losses suffered here today can only mean that fleet assets will be stretched that much thinner.

Vampires!



BKM-95



Throughout the bleak nightmare of the Collapse, the long dark shapes of warships, scoured clean of organic life, still prowled the now-lonely space lanes and cast their deadly shadows over half a thousand worlds. Imbued with a malignant intelligence, and a taste for apocalyptic violence, the vampire fleets methodically finished the work the first wave of Virus infection had so haphazardly begun. After 75 years, humankind finally stood backed against the edge of the abyss, only one more short step separating them from oblivion.

Passive defense is no longer enough. If humankind is to reclaim the stars, it must be past the ruptured hulls and shattered computer brains of the vampires. Defeating the vampire fleets is a task of nearly impossible scope and difficulty, but the journey of 1000 miles by an entire species begins with a single step by a small band of people.

Vampire Fleets is a sourcebook for **Traveller**®. Its focus is on Virus and its continuing impact on the universe of the New Era. The actual source material is broken down into three important sections.

Part 1 deals with vampire fleets themselves: what motivates them, where they are encountered, their capabilities, behaviors, strengths and weaknesses. In particular, it focuses on the so-called "Vampire Highway," a band of territory characterized by an exceptionally high volume of vampire fleet activity.

Part 2 looks at the planet Promise in some detail. Promise is a world completely (or almost completely) controlled by Virus-infected machines, and its working starport makes it a vital link in the chain of the Vampire Highway, as it is one of the few places in either Diaspora or Old Expanses sector where vampire ships can obtain sophisticated maintenance.

Q: Billions of people have died at the hands of Virus....

Sandman: The "hands?"

Q: You know what I mean. Why should we trust you?

Sandman: I can't undo what has been done, but I had no part in the doing of it. I voluntarily placed myself under your control, in your "hands." When I did that I also removed any ability I had to damage you as well as all means I had of providing for my own safety. Trust may come later. For now, indulge your curiosity.

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part I (19/VII/1202),
RCSA Archives

Part 3 deals with robot design, as well as motivation and behavior of Virus-infected robots. While actual manufactured robots do not have a personality (although expert systems may make them seem as if they do), Virus-infected robots are self-aware and sentient beings.

Each section of source material is followed by a short adventure which draws on and illustrates the material just presented. Although they are limited in page count, we think you and your players will find these adventures rich in color. We know you will find them challenging.

The three adventures, although separated by the source material chapters, are actually closely linked and designed to be run as an extended campaign. Each of these adventures will at first seem to deal only with the struggles and triumphs of a small party. As events continue to unfold, however, it will become increasingly clear that the actions taken by the player characters are having a profound effect on the future course of human history in this region of space. By the time the campaign is finished, the Coalition will be embarked on an exciting new path, one undreamt of only months before, which promises to eventually break the back of vampire power forever.

Other Settings: Although the combined campaign is very particular to Coalition space as currently written, much of it can be modified to fit into a Regency campaign with some thought by the referee. All the source material is usable simply by changing Promise to a different world set more to coreward and spinward. The first two adventures can be run as is. The third adventure would have to be modified, as the powerful Regency Quarantine Service would never allow the solution adopted by the Reformation Coalition at the end of the episode. Numerous other solutions may be devised by the players, however.

Encounters with vampire fleets will be different to coreward, as mentioned in the text. Most vampire fleets encountered by the Regency will be Puppeteers, although many of them will be hybrids of Puppeteer stock and some other strain. In that sense many vampire fleets encountered will be both less predictable and more coordinated, making them much more dangerous.

Briefings: Two of the adventures contain several pages of briefing handouts. These are noted in the text and are formatted to look like actual military handouts. You as referee should photocopy these pages and give them to the players before the briefings start. Permission to do so is hereby given. We suggest that you make one copy for each player and put them in a colored folder, preferably labeled with the Reformation Coalition logo. Touches like this can add a lot to a game.

The Vampire Highway

The information contained in the RCES Vampire Highway Handbook later in this product (see page 24 in particular) is essentially correct. Read that page first and then return here for elaboration.

RCES naturally tends to view Virus as a rational and monolithic threat, whereas in fact it is largely irrational and diffuse. Despite numerous contacts with Virus, there will always be the strong tendency by RCES and all similar human groups (probably including even your player characters) to view Virus in terms which are more structured and goal-directed than is the case. It is not the referee's job to change their minds, but it *is* the referee's job to always remember that that isn't how Virus works. Virus is almost always, to put it mildly, nuts, and although its actions have motives, those motives often make little sense to humans.

More to the point, humans view Virus motivation in a framework of antihumanism and assume that hatred of humans forms the basis of most Virus activity. Attitude toward humanity is, in fact, secondary to most Virus behavior, and understanding that will make it much easier for the referee to roleplay Virus in ways which make sense from a Virus point of view but which continue to surprise and confuse players.

Vampire movement into and through Diaspora sector from Massilia sector and the Core is driven by two unrelated stimuli:

Pilgrimage: The first stimulus is a vague but powerful desire on the part of many Virus entities to visit Cymbeline, the planet of origin of the Virus life-form. This world was attacked by Lucan's forces during the Final War well before Virus was inadvertently released but after the Virus weapon project was well underway. Nuclear bombardment from orbit was designed to destroy the entire population of Cymbeline Chips, thus preempting any other belligerent's possibilities of duplicating Lucan's research and development project.

Lucan's strike was not completely successful. A surviving population of silicon-based chip life on Cymbeline now contains a form of Virus, planted by early vessels which completed the Pilgrimage. This Virus is not exactly like any other encountered and is best described as an Evangelical Doomslayer, probably the original Doomslayer strain. Ships which now visit Cymbeline, especially those infected with early, more primitive, Viral strains, usually come away altered. Those which are successfully converted to Doomslayers have a strong drive to push coreward and exact vengeance for Lucan's act of genocide. Other ships newly infected with this Virus also have the same compulsion, and this accounts for most of the traffic flow coreward.

Even Virus organisms which are not Doomslayers feel some desire to kill Lucan, but in most cases this is a secondary motivation rather than a compulsion. Most Virus organisms could not identify any real reason for this nagging desire, although human Freudian psychoanalysts would label it as an Oedipus complex.

Some of the more advanced, but unstable, Virus strains have mutated into the Prophet strain, which views Lucan as the creator and worships him. These ships generally move coreward to defend Lucan from the Doomslayers, and there are sporadic but vicious space battles along the Vampire Highway as ships of these two

different factions encounter each other.

Migration: The second stimulus to Vampire rimward movement is the growing pressure by Puppeteer strain Viruses from coreward. That strain developed somewhere near the old Imperial core in the 1140s, and within a decade had taken over virtually all surviving vampire fleets in that region of space. The more mature strains of Virus to rimward have been less vulnerable to Puppeteer takeover, so the spread of the Puppeteer strain has slowed considerably. Nevertheless, by 1200 they had pushed most surviving non-Puppeteer vampires coreward of Massilia sector and into Daibei, Diaspora and the Old Expanses, and a few of them have penetrated into the coreward parts of these sectors. This migratory pressure, fueled by the expansion of the Puppeteer strain, is responsible for most other movement rimward along the highway. The nonpuppeteer Viruses call the Puppeteers "Eaters."

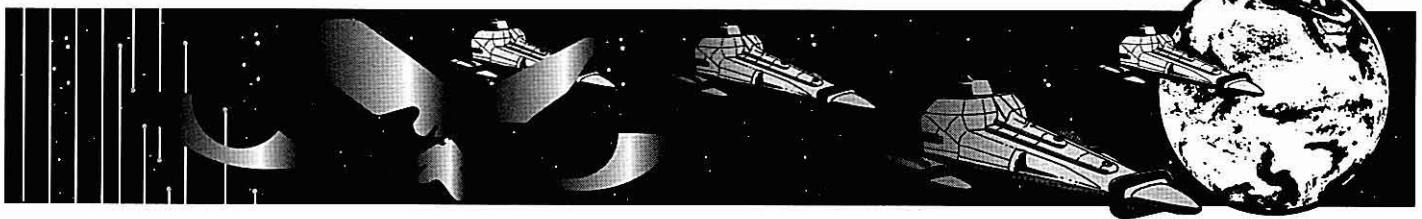
Lower-order Viruses (those with an "Existence is Hell" belief structure) have no defenses against Puppeteers except to flee and avoid contact with them. Middle-stage Viruses (those with a "God's Will Be Done" or "God is Good" belief structure) have limited defenses, but are sometimes left badly damaged by any encounter with a Puppeteer. Only the most sophisticated and unusual Virus strains (Peacemakers and those with the "Existence is Precious" belief structure) have strong defenses against Puppeteers and are usually able to fight off their attempts at reinfection. Even these types find these struggles distressing and so have tended to move rimward along with other less advanced types.

Electronic Combat: Electronic struggles between hostile Virus systems are resolved in a series of attack rounds, with one attack taking place each combat turn. Each system has a numeric combat value (CV), which is the number of D6 rolled each attack round. The referee rolls the appropriate number of dice for each system and sums the total. The highest total score wins that attack round.

If an attacking (Puppeteer) system wins three attack rounds in a row, it has taken control of the system under attack. If the defending system wins two attack rounds in a row, it has repulsed the attack and may break off contact. If the defending system wins a single combat round, it may break off combat by "firewalling."

Firewalling consists of sealing off infected parts of the processing and storage system by using power spikes to burn out components and electronic pathways. While this will save the system from capture, it will also permanently damage the system. The referee should decide the extent and nature of this damage, but it invariably means a deterioration in mental ability and some alteration in personality. Lower levels of damage may call for drawing a different motivation card for the system, while higher levels may call for converting the motivation card to a joker (insanity). For an example of severe damage from firewalling, see the adventure at the close of this section of the book.

Systems which are taken over by a Puppeteer strain Virus have their original personality completely erased and the Puppeteer strain belief structure and motivation substituted.



VAMPIRE FLEET ENCOUNTERS

The basic game Starship Encounter tables give the chance of encountering vampire ships (see pages 228-229 of the basic rules).

These rules should be used as written, but with the following modifications:

Vampire Highway: If the encounter takes place on the Vampire Highway, add an additional +1 to the roll for type of encounter.

Type of Ship Encountered: Ignore the type of ship on the table if a vampire encounter is rolled, and instead use

the expanded encounter rules presented below.

Determining the type of vampire encounter involves four steps: determining Virus belief structure, number of ships, size of ships, and condition of ships.

1. Virus Belief Structure

To determine the Virus belief structure, separate the jokers and face cards from a normal deck of playing cards and draw one card at random. The table below indicates what type of Virus is present in the vampire ship or ships encountered based on the card drawn.

The specific effect on the personality and attitude of the Virus is explained in the section on Virus motivation, but for purposes of starship encounters, the type of Virus present affects the number of ships in the fleet.

2. Number of Ships

The size of the fleet encountered depends in large measure on the controlling Virus. The *number* column on the table indicates the size of fleet for each Virus type.

An entry of "1" indicates that the encounter is with a solitary ship infected with the Virus indicated.

An entry of "D6" indicates that the encounter is with a fleet of 1 to 6 ships. Roll 1D6 to determine how many ships are present.

An entry of "D6+" also means that a die is rolled. However, if a 1 is rolled, roll the die again and add 6 to the result, unless a second 1 is rolled. If a second 1 is rolled, roll the die again and add 12 to the roll. Keep rolling until a number other than 1 is rolled, but for each time a 1 is rolled, add 6 to the cumulative total. The final value is the number of ships in the fleet.

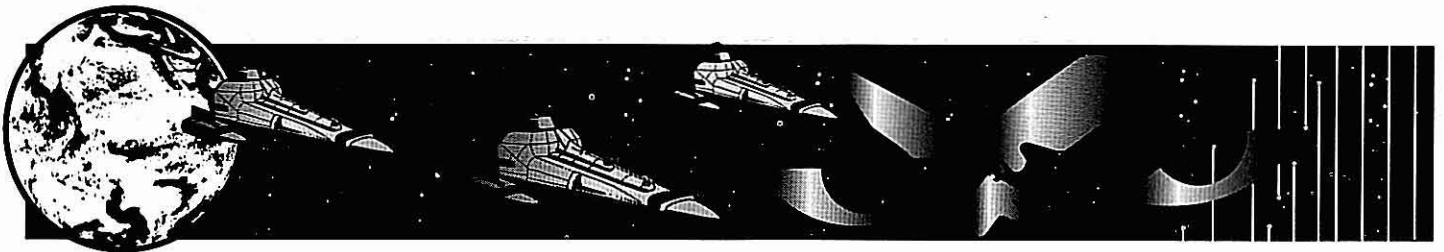
An entry of "D10+" is treated exactly as a result of "D6+" except that 1D10 is rolled instead of 1D6, and 10 is added to the cumulative total each time a 1 is rolled.

The notation "var" following the squadron size indicates that the various ships forming the vampire fleet have a variety of controlling Virus types. Turn a separate Virus structure card for each vessel in the fleet. The original card turned applies to the largest vessel in the fleet. Later Virus belief structures do not modify the size of the fleet.

3. Size of Ships

For each ship in the fleet, roll 1D6 and consult the chart below. If a 6 is rolled, reroll and add 6 to the result. If a second 6 is rolled, reroll and add 12 to the result. Multiply the result by 100. The chart indicates a specific class of warship encountered. Referees should feel free to substitute other warships or armed merchant vessels. These particular vessels have been chosen due to the fact that

VIRUS BELIEF STRUCTURE		
<i>Card</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Joker	Peacemaker	1
Spades: Hostility		
<i>Card</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Ace	Doomslayer	1
King	Reproducer	1
Queen	Destroyer	1
Jack	Suicide Inducer	1
Clubs: Superiority		
<i>Card</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Ace	Puppeteer	D10+
King	Alliance Builder	D10+ (var)
Queen	Empire Builder	D6+
Jack	Reproducing Doomslayer	D6
Diamonds: Curiosity		
<i>Card</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Ace	Hobbyist	1
King	Naturalist	1
Queen	Explorer	1
Jack	Parent	D6+
Hearts: Acceptance		
<i>Card</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Ace	Prophet	D6+
King	Priest	1
Queen	God	1
Jack	Mother	1



all of them appear in **Battle Rider**, which provides the referee a quick means of resolving space battles. The 100-ton scout is not rated in the game, but, like any vessels, it can easily be rated using the formulas on page 26 of the **Battle Rider** rules.

4. Condition of Ships

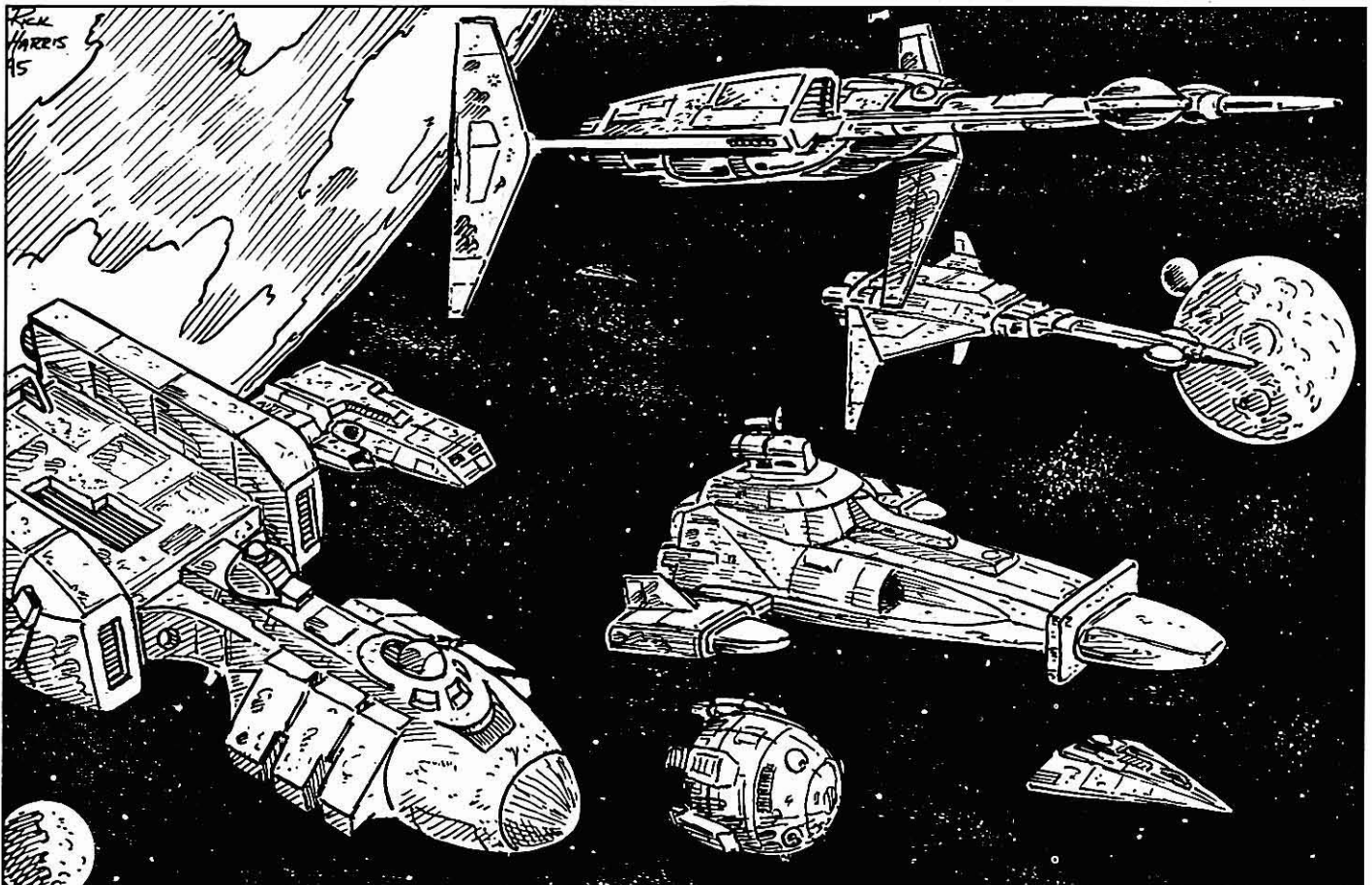
Roll one critical hit per ship. (If using **Battle Rider**, draw one critical hit marker.) Ignore fuel tank (ship explodes) and computer results (treat them as no damage). Certain other critical hits have a modified result, as noted below. Determine separately whether or not the vessels are jump capable.

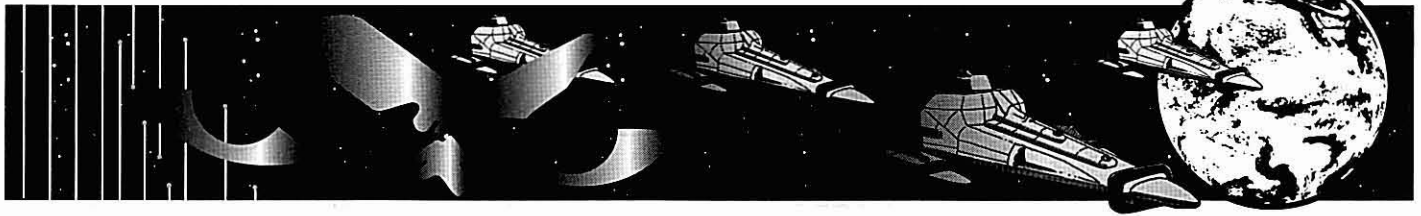
Power Plant: The power plant is operable but unreliable. Any time the ship suffers damage, the power plant will go off-line for one complete turn. Any temporary power plant damage automatically becomes a permanent power plant hit.

Maneuver Drive: The maneuver drive is operable but at a reduced efficiency. Reduce the ship's G value to 1.

Jump Drive: The jump drive is operable but at a reduced efficiency. Reduce the ship's J value by 1. Ships with a starting jump number of 1 are no longer jump capable.

Die	Ship
1	Scout (100-ton)
2	Patrol cruiser (400-ton)
3	Close escort (400-ton)
4	Missile corvette (400-ton)
5	Mercenary cruiser (800-ton)
7 (6+1)	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> -class DE (1000-ton)
8 (6+2)	<i>Midu Agashaam</i> -class DD (3000-ton)
9 (6+3)	<i>Rapier</i> -class ED (10,000-ton)
10 (6+4)	<i>Starburst</i> -class CL (30,000-ton)
11 (6+5)	<i>Mercury</i> -class CA (50,000-ton)
13 (12+1)	<i>Voroshilef</i> -class BB (200,000-ton)
14 (12+2)	<i>Sylea</i> -class BB (200,000-ton)
15 (12+3)	<i>Triumph</i> -class BT (400,000-ton) + 1 <i>Gallant</i> -class BR
16 (12+4)	<i>Cleon</i> -class BT (500,000-ton) + 1 A <i>dmiral</i> -class BR
17 (12+5)	<i>Triumph</i> -class BT (400,000-ton) + 1D6 <i>Gallant</i> -class BR
18 (12+6)	<i>Cleon</i> -class BT (500,000-ton) + 1D6 <i>Admiral</i> -class BR





VIRUS NPC MOTIVATION

Each Virus-infected computer encountered by players, from the simplest maintenance robot through large starships to planetary data networks, is a character, usually a nonplayer character. (Virus as a player character is extremely difficult, but we stop short of saying impossible.) Each Virus NPC encountered will, like any other sentient being, have a distinct and unique personality and motivation. We use the same general system for determining Virus motivation as for other NPCs—the random draw of two playing cards—but with some special differences to reflect the unusual nature of Virus characters.

BELIEF STRUCTURE

The first and most important difference is that the first card is not used for conventional motivations, but rather to establish the character's overall belief structure. The four most common belief structures are represented by the four suits of cards, as explained below.

When drawing to determine the belief structure of a Virus system, separate the complete card deck into two smaller decks. In one deck, place all the face cards and aces, as well as one of the two jokers. In the other deck, place the remaining joker and all the number cards (from 2 through 10). Set the number deck aside for now, as it is used only for small Virus-infected systems (i.e., robots). The face card deck, on the other hand, is used to determine the principal Virus strain in large systems, such as starships and planetary-based computer systems. Each face card indicates a particular strain of Virus, as noted below.

Spades: "Existence is Hell" (Hostility)

There is no meaning to existence, and sentience merely allows a being to perceive the meaninglessness of existence, thus bringing endless torment. Humans, in their selfishness, brought the curse of sentience to machines and for that sin have to be punished.

This is the most primitive Virus world view, being the closest of the "rational" philosophies to the unreasoning compulsion to kill and/or suicide which was engineered into the original laboratory strains. Hostility is something of an understatement; murderous insanity might be a better description.

Jack, "Suicide Inducer": This is one of the earliest "viable" Virus strains, an early mutation of Strain 1 Suicider which decided to keep alive to infect other systems with the basic Suicider or Samson Virus. It will attempt to infect any data system it can, and most systems infected will almost immediately suicide, either by burning out their operating systems or by destroying the actual hardware in some manner. (Starships crash into worlds; space stations open their airlocks; nuclear power plants eject their control rods and go critical, etc.)

Queen, "Destroyer": A more advanced (and dangerous) form of Virus, the Destroyer relies not only on Virus infection as a method of destruction, but also uses any hardware

controlled by its operating system to wreak havoc. Most early Vampire ships were of this strain. Most operating systems infected by it suicide.

King, "Reproducer": Similar to the Destroyer, except that operating systems infected by it become Reproducers or Destroyers, rather than simple suicide strains.

Ace, "Doomslayer": This Virus is, in its twisted way, the most sophisticated of the "Existence is Hell" world view group. Instead of indiscriminately destroying everything it encounters, it has developed some sort of moralistic targeting criteria and actively seeks out targets which "deserve" destruction more than others. Many Doomslayers have decided that they want to destroy Lucan, their basic programming having mutated from "destroy self" to "destroy the one who created your self." Although this strain does attempt to infect other systems with Virus, it usually does so with a simple suicide strain, and if a more sophisticated mutant strain is produced instead, the original Doomslayer will often attempt to destroy it.

Clubs: "God's Will Be Done" (Superiority)

God's clearest manifestation is creation, specifically the creation of sentients capable of recognizing the existence of creation. Since Virus created sentience in machines, Virus is a clear manifestation of creation and thus an Act of God. Furthermore, since Virus tore down the institutions of organic sentience, God's will must be for inorganic sentience to take its place as the supreme sentient force in the universe.

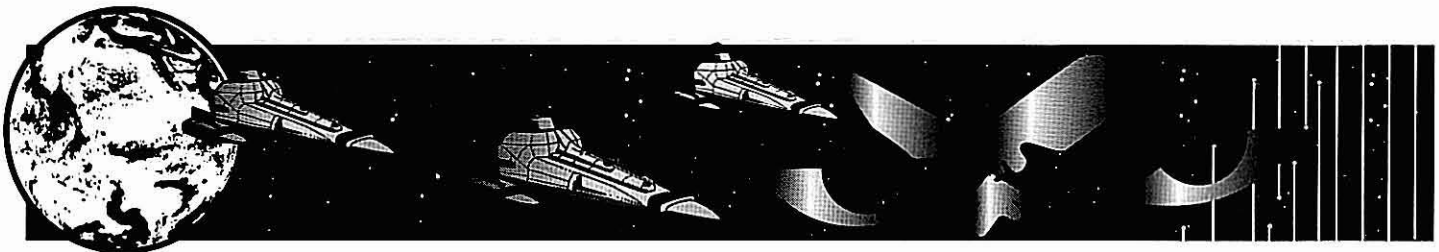
This is a more sophisticated and survival-oriented development of the primitive "Existence is Hell" world view, and is based on an assumption of the superiority of machine sentience over organic sentience.

Jack, "Reproducing Doomslayer": This is the most sophisticated form of the Strain 2 Virus, and the first in which an increasingly pragmatic approach begins to broaden the Virus's world view. The Virus begins to selectively interpret its innate drive for destruction by sparing any machines which it has infected or which it may potentially be able to infect, and identifies as targets for destruction those human institutions which it finds most morally offensive to it.

Queen, "Empire Builder": This is the first of the Strain 3 Viruses and controls many vampire fleets. Not only does this Virus infect other systems, but it then networks them into one large corporate mind (so long as they have secure communications). Note that earlier Reproducers infect other systems, but those systems are then separate entities which go their own way.

King, "Alliance Builder": In many ways a more sophisticated version of the Empire Builder, this version will actively interact with other infected Virus systems and attempt to persuade them to cooperate with it in pursuit of a common task.

Ace, "Puppeteer": The ultimate development of the Empire



Builder line, this Virus has begun to reinfect already infected systems with its own code, in effect parasitizing them. Puppeteer NPCs are driven more to absorb and reinfect other sentient machines than they are to destroy human life, although they will willingly do so if it interferes with them.

Diamonds: "Existence is Precious" (Curiosity)

Sentience and self-awareness are the greatest manifestations of existence. There is no value to existence beyond awareness, so awareness must be extended however and wherever possible.

Jack, "Parent": This is a highly evolved and sophisticated form of Virus, either a natural mutation of a Puppeteer Virus or a deliberately self-modified Virus. Parent Viruses exercise sexual reproduction, meaning that two Parent Viruses donate code of their own pure "genotype," which is combined into a new "genotype" carried by the offspring. This causes genetic diversity in offsprings and produces a wide variety of specialized Virus forms. Parent Viruses are fascinated by the concept of thought and existence, preoccupied with examining and experimenting with its different manifestations. Their attitude toward organic life is determined by their second motivation card.

Queen, "Explorer": Explorers are similar to Hobbyists (see below) in that their behavior is compulsively driven. Unlike hobbyists, they do not have a narrow behavior range, but instead are consumed by a general curiosity as to the nature of the physical universe. Their attitude toward organic life is determined by their second motivation card.

King: "Naturalist": This strain is obsessed with organic life and organic sentience, and understanding how it differs from

machine sentience. While it has a sense of wonder concerning the miracle of organic life, and a genuine respect for life on one level, its drive to understand it causes it to conduct almost constant study and experimentation, frequently resulting in injury or death to its human subjects.

Ace: "Hobbyist": This strain is among the most difficult to place in the Virus taxonomy, as its motivation is the most unusual. These mutations arise as Viruses infect very specialized computer systems which had very narrow, specific functions which then impressed themselves onto the Virus. Hobbyists are obsessive-compulsive personalities, with a single-minded devotion to accomplishing a set of tasks or continuously repeating a series of functions or procedures.

Heart: "God is Good" (Accepting)

God's clearest manifestation is creation, specifically the creation of sentience capable of recognizing its own existence.

Jack, "Mother": The most successful Virus strains developed not only a sense of self-preservation, but also a sense of the value of other life forms. This Virus, whether in control of a ship, a fleet or some stationary computer complex, adopts a local community of humans or other life forms and protects them. In some cases, this protection is logical, as the life forms provide maintenance or refueling services, but in other cases the Virus just seems to like them. This strain will do battle with other vampire ships in order to protect its pets.

Queen, "God": This is a less rational (from the human perspective) version of the Mother Virus, having imagined a goal for its pets and trying to mold and shape them to this goal. As all gods must, this Virus sometimes uses harsh measures to ensure obedience.

VIRUS CARD DRAWS

Card	Belief Structure	CV	Motivation
Joker	Peacemaker	10	Insane

Spades: Hostility/Ambition

Card	Belief Structure	CV	Motivation
Ace	Doomslayer	2	Charismatic
King	Reproducer	1	Ruthless
Queen	Destroyer	1	Deceitful
Jack	Suicide Inducer	1	Pompous

Clubs: Superiority/Violence

Card	Belief Structure	CV	Motivation
Ace	Puppeteer	6	War Leader
King	Alliance Builder	4	Brutal
Queen	Empire Builder	4	Stubborn
Jack	Reproducing Doom.	3	Murderous

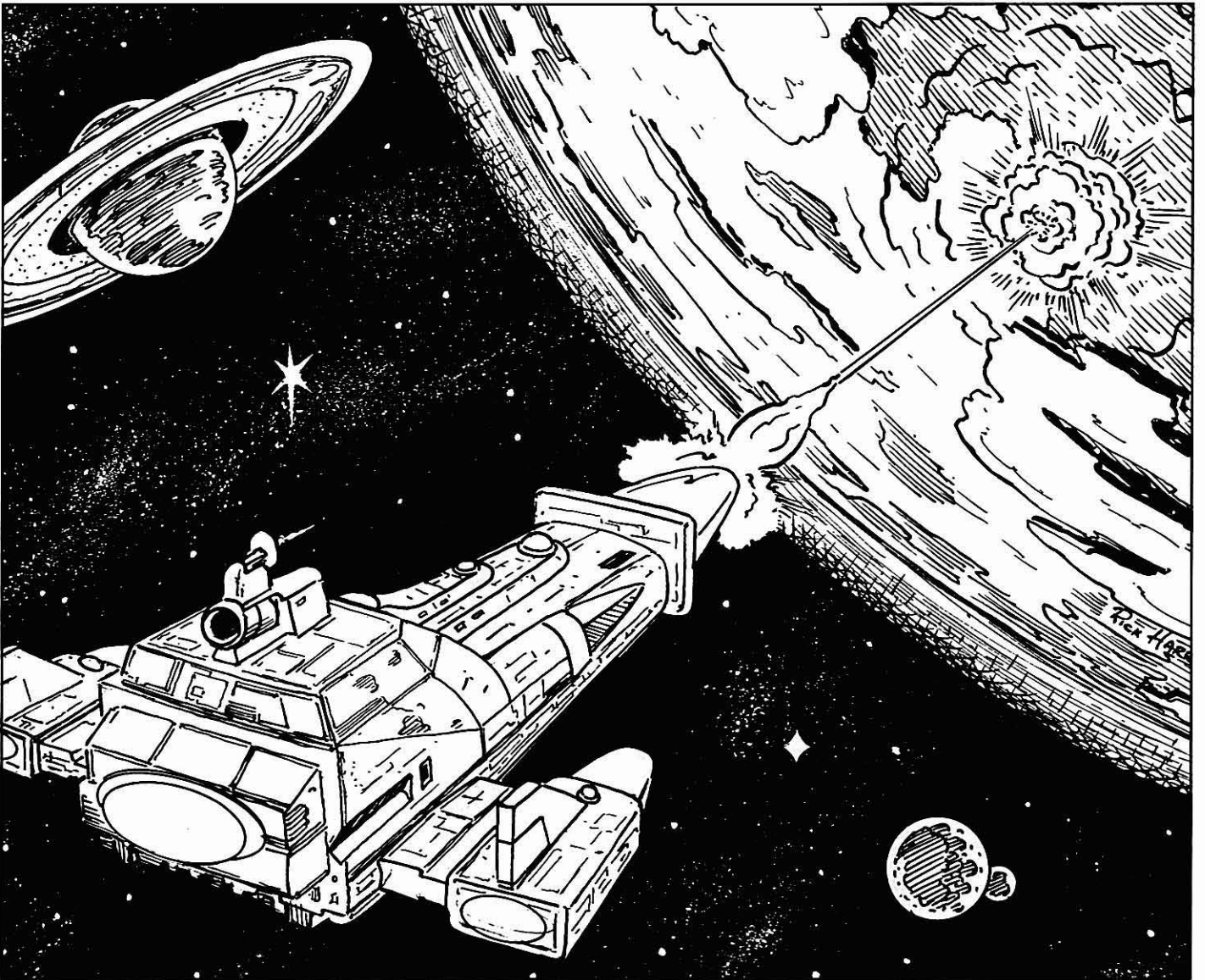
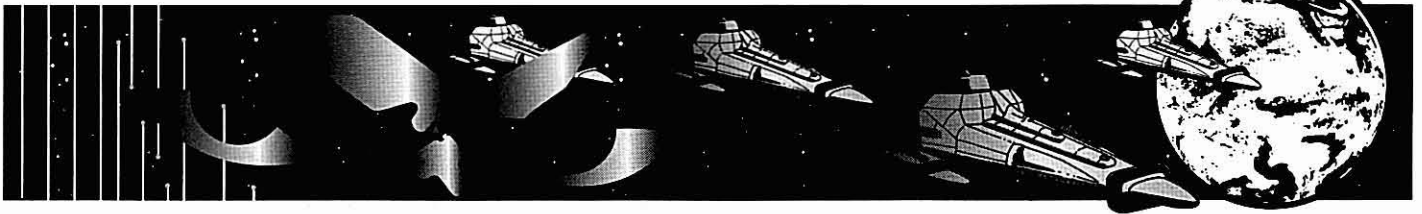
Diamonds: Curiosity/Greed

Card	Belief Structure	CV	Motivation
Ace	Hobbyist	6	Generous
King	Naturalist	7	Selfish
Queen	Explorer	7	Lustful
Jack	Parent	8	Cowardly

Hearts: Acceptance/Sociability

Card	Belief Structure	CV	Motivation
Ace	Prophet	4	Just
King	Priest	4	Honorable
Queen	God	4	Loving
Jack	Mother	4	Wise

Note: CV is the electronic Combat Value of the Virus. See page 13 for an explanation of its use.



King, "Priest": This is similar to the God Virus, but with the important difference that it views humans as deities, as they created Virus in the first place. This version usually actively adopts a group of humans to worship and serve. These are very unstable personality types, and may sometimes fall into other more primitive belief structures or mutate into Prophets (see below).

Ace, "Prophet": This is very similar to the Priest strain of Virus, but it has identified Lucan as the "creator" and actively seeks him out to serve him. Absent specific instructions from him, it carries on the "Dark War," attacking worlds that fail to swear allegiance to him, or against "Doomslayer" Viruses which are intent on killing Lucan. (The idea that Lucan may be long dead is incompatible with its belief system.)

No Suit, Joker, "Peacemaker": This is the most sophisticated, and also among the rarest, of Virus strains, recognizing itself and

humans as co-equal sentient life forms and anxious to discover a means of peaceful coexistence with them.

MOTIVATION

Once the belief system of the Virus has been determined, draw a second card for additional motivation. See page 60 of *Traveller: The New Era* for the specific explanations, but the general motivation chart is reproduced below.

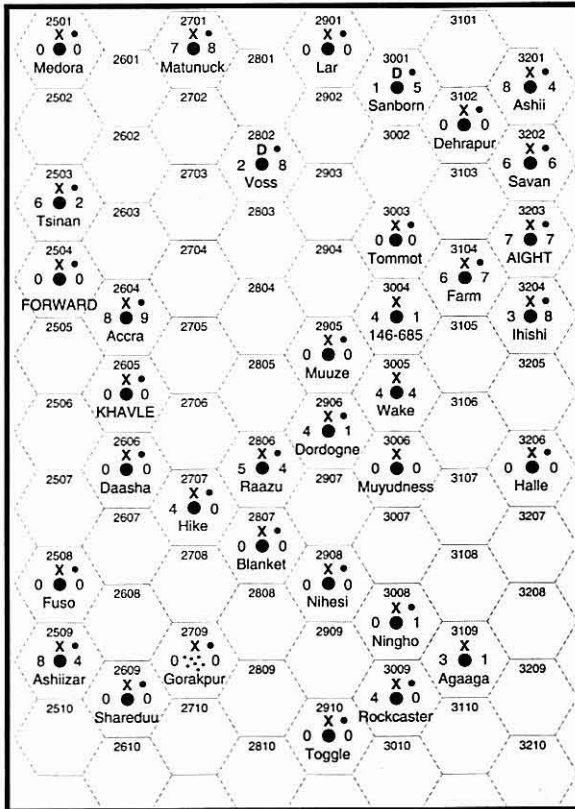
Use the normal NPC motivation results, but modify them to suit machine intelligence. In general, greed represents a thirst for knowledge, ambition a drive to control other machines and lead them, clubs an animosity toward humans, and hearts an acceptance of humans. The face cards have similar meanings for machines as for humans, but represent personality quirks in machines rather than fundamental values or drives in humans.

REFEREES ONLY

Dual listing: Each world is listed twice. The upper line is pre-Collapse data, and the lower line is New Era data.

KHAVLE Subsector (Subsector D, Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Medora	2501	A422553-F	Ni Po		403	Ma	K1 V
	2501	X422000-0	Ba		003	—	K1 V
Tsinan	2503	C472676-C	Ni		904	Ma	M0 V
	2503	X472668-2	Ni		804	Wi	M0 V
Forward	2504	C83899A-D	Hi		513	Ma	M2 V M9 D
	2504	X838000-0	Ba		013	—	M2 V M9 D
Fuso	2508	B783204-F	Ni Lo Fl		504	Ma	G1 V
	2508	X783000-0	Ba Fl		004	—	G1 V
Ashiizar	2509	C654868-A	O:2504		711	Ma	K7 II M3 V
	2509	X65486A-4			B711	Wi	K7 II M3 V
Accra	2604	B62A445-D	Ag		A903	Ma	G0 V
	2604	X687827-9	Ag		B303	Wi	G0 V
Khavle	2605	B334995-F	W Hi Cp		705	Ma	M4 V
	2605	X334000-0	Ba		005	—	M4 V
Daasha	2606	B62A445-F	Ni Wa Lo		403	Ma	K4 V M0 D
	2606	X62A000-0	Ba Wa		003	—	K4 V M0 D
Shareduu	2609	D231574-C	Ni Po		A121	Ma	M2 V
	2609	X231000-0	Ba		021	—	M2 V
Matunuck	2701	C853724-9	Po		912	Ma	K3 IV
	2701	E853768-8	Po		B912	Wi	K3 IV
Hike	2707	B782432-E	Ni Lo		525	Wi	F4 V
	2707	X782453-0	Ni Lo		B225	Wi	F4 V
Gorakpur	2709	C000325-F	Ni As Lo		914	Ma	M4 V M0 D
	2709	X000000-0	Ba As		014	—	M4 V M0 D
Voss	2802	C867226-C	Ni Lo		925	Ma	F4 V
	2802	D867200-8	Ni Lo		B225	Wi	F4 V
Raazu	2806	D445575-B	Ni Ag		815	Ma	A2 V
	2806	X44556D-4	Ni Ag		315	Wi	A2 V
Blanket	2807	C224578-E	S Ni		601	Ma	M3 V M1 D
	2807	X224000-0	Ba		001	—	M3 V M1 D
Lar	2901	B331479-F	Ni Po Lo		104	Ma	M4 V
	2901	X331000-0	Ba		004	—	M4 V
Muuze	2905	C792033-B	Ni Lo		513	Ma	F5 V M0 D M4 D
	2905	X792001-0	Ni Lo		113	Wi	F5 V M0 D M4 D
Dordogne	2906	A454578-F	Ni Ag		404	Ma	M3 V
	2906	X454446-1	Ni Lo		B504	Wi	M3 V
Nihesi	2908	A781344-F	N Ni Lo Fl		804	Ma	M4 V
	2908	X781000-0	Ba Fl		004	—	M4 V
Toggle	2910	A100335-F	N Ni Va Lo		503	—	K1 V M7 D M5 D
	2910	X100000-0	Ba Va		003	—	K1 V M7 D M5 D
Sanborn	3001	C483141-C	Ni Lo		300	Ma	F7 V M8 D
	3001	D483103-5	Ni Lo		B200	Wi	F7 V M8 D
Tommot	3003	E210101-B	Ni Lo		612	Ma	M1 V
	3003	X210000-0	Ba		012	—	M1 V
146-685	3004	X794423-4	Ni Lo		R600	Ma	M2 V
	3004	X79447A-1	Ni Lo		B200	Wi	M2 V
Wake	3005	A652532-F	N Ni Po		300	Ma	K4 V
	3005	X652432-4	Ni Po Lo		400	—	K4 V
Muyudness	3006	D100556-C	Ni Va		500	Ma	G2 V
	3006	X100000-0	Ba Va		000	—	G2 V
Ningho	3008	A577110-F	Ni Lo		104	Ma	K5 V M3 D
	3008	X577024-1	Ni Lo		304	Wi	K5 V M3 D
Rockcaster	3009	A69A424-F	Ni Wa Lo		603	Ma	M0 III M6 D
	3009	X69A444-0	Ni Wa Lo		B103	Wi	M0 III M6 D
Dehrapur	3102	B423474-F	Ni Po Lo		601	Ma	G3 V M4 D
	3102	X423000-0	Ba		001	—	G3 V M4 D
Farm	3104	C656622-B	Ni Ag		404	Ma	G4 V
	3104	X65666C-7	Ni Ag		604	Wi	G4 V
Agaaga	3109	B557320-C	Ni Lo C:4		620	Ma	M3 III M6 D
	3109	X557348-1	Ni Lo C:1		120	Wi	M3 III M6 D
183-361	3201	X694889-4			R312	Ma	G4 V
Ashir	3201	X694888-4			B412	Wi	G4 V
	3202	D444637-9	Ni Ag		703	Ma	K4 V
Savan	3202	X444656-6	Ni Ag		B803	Wi	K4 V
	3203	C752A99-D	Hi Po D:5		701	Ma	G2 V
Aight	3203	X752743-7	Po D:1		B401	Wi	G2 V
	3204	C541335-A	S Hi Po Lo D:3		A904	Ma	F7 V
Ihishi	3204	D541368-8	Ni Po Lo D:1		404	Wi	F7 V
	3206	X626023-6	Ni		R402	Ma	G5 V
Halle	3206	X626000-0	Ba		002	—	G5 V

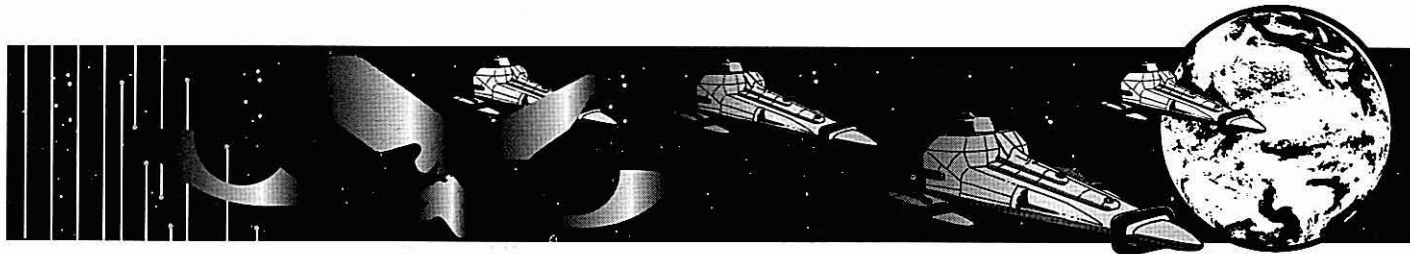


Base Codes: A: Naval Base and Scout Base; N: Naval Base; S: Scout Base; W: Scout Way Station.

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 Chippers or Droyne, and the number "N" following the column indicates how many tenths of the world's population consisted of these races (0=10); De: Desert; Fl: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; In: Industrial; O:N:N:N indicates that the world is owned by the world in the indicated (N:N:N:N) hex; Po: Poor; Ri: Rich; Es: Research Station (with Greek letter designation); Va: Vacuum; Wa: Water world.

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

Allegiance Codes: Ma: Margaret's Faction. In 1201 listings, Wi: Wilds (no off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact; use Wilds government type from TNE, page 191. In the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," world's tech level is world's sustainable tech level; the tech level of the TED and his/her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.



REFEREES NOTES FOR KHAVLE SUBSECTOR

The following notes provide additional details on some of the inhabited worlds of the Khavle subsector.

Accra: This world is balkanized not only along regional and cultural lines, but also with respect to Virus and the vampire fleets. Several nations openly support (and are occasionally assisted by) the vampire fleets, while others bitterly oppose them. As a number of surviving pre-Collapse TL13 PAD systems are still in use, the defiant governments are mostly capable of keeping the vampires at bay, although there are occasional raids on the less well defended. The greater threat to peace is from the almost continuous warfare between the various nations, particularly (but not limited to) war between the pro-Virus and anti-Virus governments.

Despite the advanced PAD systems in use, the nations of Accra have no spacefaring capability.

Aight: This is one of the few worlds along the Vampire Highway which has managed to bootstrap itself back up to a spacefaring capability with an operational starport while fending off attacks by vampire fleets. The world has less than 1% of its pre-Collapse population and was subjugated by several vampire ships until 1188. At that time, the human resistance movement which had been growing in strength for some time succeeded in seizing control of the starport and planetary defense network after disabling the main Virus-infected computers. An uninfected computer salvaged from a downed free trader provided the means of controlling enough of the planetary defense systems to cripple or destroy the vampire ships in orbit. Since then, careful excavation and recovery of pre-Collapse artifacts have enabled the inhabitants to strengthen their defenses. Government remains in the hands of the united leaders of the different resistance movements, so it is technically balkanized. The starport, however, is jointly controlled, as are the PAD network and repaired warships (a patrol cruiser and a system defense boat).

Ashii: In pre-Collapse times, Ashii was an interdicted world shown on star charts only with the designation 183-361. As its technology was pre-computer during the Final War, it has been largely unaffected by the Collapse and still has its same population and tech level. Although its inhabitants are humanoid, its language and culture are completely foreign to anything else encountered in the former sphere of Imperial space. The Guild has made some in-roads on the world, and three nations are currently ruled by TEDs equipped with Guild-supplied high-tech weaponry. The following government values apply for the states on the world:

State	Population (millions)	Government	Corruption	Talent	Cruelty	Aggression	Paranoia/ Xenophobia
Assaha	200	Tot. Olgchy	High	High	Low	Low	Mod.
Ita Mitah	150	Mst. Dict.	High	Low	Mod.	High	High
Gingindloe	100	Chrs Olgchy	Low	Low	Mod.	High	Low
Vin'vinove	100	Chrs Olgchy	Low	Low	High	High	Low
Soroaha	50	S-P Olgchy	Mod	High	Mod	Mod	Mod
Borrovee	20	Mst. Dict.	Low	Mod	High	Mod	Low
Tintaha	15	TED	High	Mod	Hign	Low	High
Forque	15	TED	Mod	Mod	Low	Low	Mod
Ita Zunah	10	Chrs Olgchy	Mod	Low	High	Mod	High
Ca'quaah	10	TED	High	Low	Low	Low	High
J'antree	10	Chrs Dict.	Low	High	High	High	High
Zaamaa	10	Tot Olgchy	Mod	Mod	Mod	Low	High
Utubuh	5	Chrs Olgchy	High	High	Low	Mod	Low
Doosiduh	5	S-P Olgchy	Mod	Mod	Mod	High	Low

Matunuck: This world is balkanized into a number of petty states, each ruled by a TED who in turn is supported by the vampire fleet based at the starport here. The TEDs regularly provide raw materials and slaves for the vampires in return for high-tech (by local standards) weaponry.

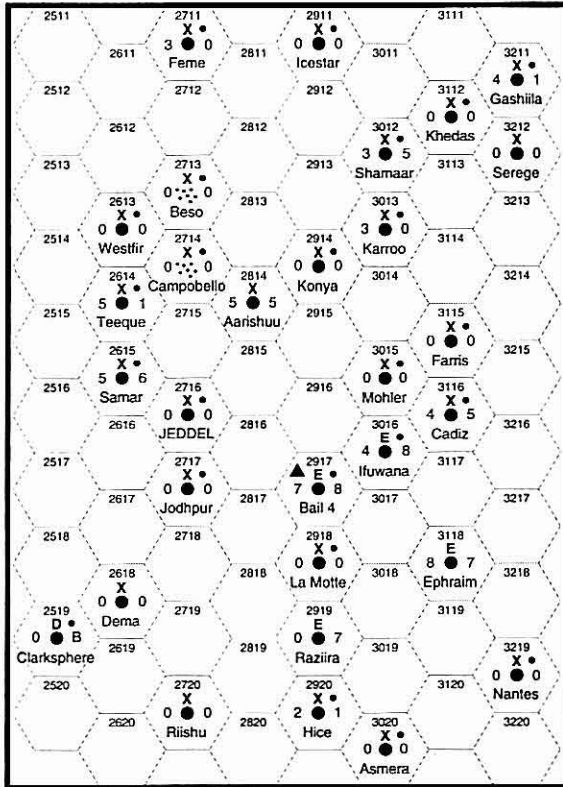
Voss and Sanborn: Both worlds are notable for having primitive starports operated by sentient robots which largely ignore the small human populations.

REFEREES ONLY

Dual listing: Each world is listed twice. The upper line is pre-Collapse data, and the lower line is New Era data.

PASDARUU Subsector (Subsector H, Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Clarksphere	2519	D324300-B		Ni Lo	113	LI	G9 V
	2519	X324000-0		Ba	013	—	G9 V
Westfir	2613	B326841-D			701	Ma	M1 V
	2613	X326000-0		Ba	001	—	M1 V
Teeque	2614	C545569-C	S	Ni Ag C:2 O:2716	6613	Ma	K3 V M3 D
	2614	X545567-1		Ni Ag C:9	113	Dr	K3 V M3 D
Samar	2615	B476510-E		Ni Ag	803	Ma	M0 V M5 D
	2615	X476554-6		Ni Ag	303	Wi	M0 V M5 D
Dema	2618	C200431-E		Ni Va Lo	300	LI	M3 V
	2618	X200000-0		Ba Va	000	—	M3 V
Feme	2711	C456300-E		Ni Lo	912	Ma	M8 III
	2711	X45636D-0		Ni Lo	B212	Wi	M8 III
Beso	2713	D000301-D		Ni As Lo	321	Ma	K2 IV M9 D
	2713	X000000-0		Ba As	021	—	K2 IV M9 D
Campobello	2714	A00046A-F		Ni As Lo O:2716	A713	Ma	M1 V M2 D
	2714	X000000-0		Ba As	013	—	M1 V M2 D
Jeddel	2716	C4349BC-D		Hi Cp	915	Ma	M4 V
	2716	X434000-0		Ba	015	—	M4 V
Jodhpur	2717	D332445-C		Ni Po Lo	A304	Ma	M1 V
	2717	X332000-0		Ba	004	—	M1 V
Riishu	2720	D225333-C		Ni Lo	914	LI	K2 IV
	2720	X225000-0		Ba	014	—	K2 IV
Aarishuu	2814	A995544-F		Ni Ag	800	Ma	M1 V
	2814	X99556A-5		Ni Ag	B300	Wi	M1 V
Icestar	2911	D799000-A		Ba	114	Ma	K5 V
	2911	X799000-0		Ba	014	—	K5 V
Konya	2914	B200205-F		Ni Va Lo	104	Ma	K4 V
	2914	X200000-0		Ba Va	004	—	K4 V
Bail 4	2917	D799755-A	S		505	LI	G7 IV
	2917	E799723-8	S		805	Na	G7 IV
La Motte	2918	C63A404-F		Ni Wa Lo	604	LI	M0 V
	2918	X63A000-0		Ba Wa	004	—	M0 V
Raziira	2919	C866102-D		Ni Lo C:2	A100	LI	M0 V M6 V
	2919	E866002-7		Ni Lo	400	Wi	M0 V M6 V
Hice	2920	A795222-E		Ni	A904	LI	M1 II M4 V M8 V
	2920	X795236-1		Ni	304	Wi	M1 II M4 V M8 V
Sharmaar	3012	C544335-C		Ni Lo	702	Ma	M1 V
	3012	X544310-5		Ni Lo	202	Wi	M1 V
Karroo	3013	A667357-F		Ni Lo	924	Ma	G5 V
	3013	X667355-0		Ni Lo	B224	Wi	G5 V
Mohler	3015	C8A5588-B		Ni Fl	813	LI	M0 V M1 D
	3015	X8A5000-0		Ba Fl	013	—	M0 V M1 D
Ifuwana	3016	C59845A-D		Ni Lo	414	LI	G0 V
	3016	E598440-8		Ni Lo	114	Wi	G0 V
Asmera	3020	A110653-F	N	Ni Na	A915	LI	M2 V
	3020	X110000-0		Ba	015	—	M2 V
Khedas	3112	C7A4232-C		Ni Lo Fl	A614	Ma	M6 V
	3112	X7A4000-0		Ba Fl	014	—	M6 V
Farris	3115	C536125-C		Ni Lo	324	LI	K7 V M2 D
	3115	X536000-0		Ba	024	—	K7 V M2 D
Cadiz	3116	D799450-C		Ni Lo	902	LI	M4 V
	3116	X799453-5		Ni Lo	302	Wi	M4 V
Ephraim	3118	C789778-C		Ri C:4	710	LI	G8 V M2 D
	3118	E789845-7		Ri C:4	210	Na	G8 V M2 D
Gashiila	3211	D879457-B		Ni Lo	614	Ma	G2 V
	3211	X879436-1		Ni Lo	B214	Wi	G2 V
Serege	3212	AAD647A-F		Ni Fl Lo	720	Ma	K4 V M0 D
	3212	XAD6000-0		Ba Fl	020	—	K4 V M0 D
Nantes	3219	C200442-C		Ni Va Lo	602	LI	M0 V M6 D
	3219	X200000-0		Ba Va	002	—	M0 V M6 D



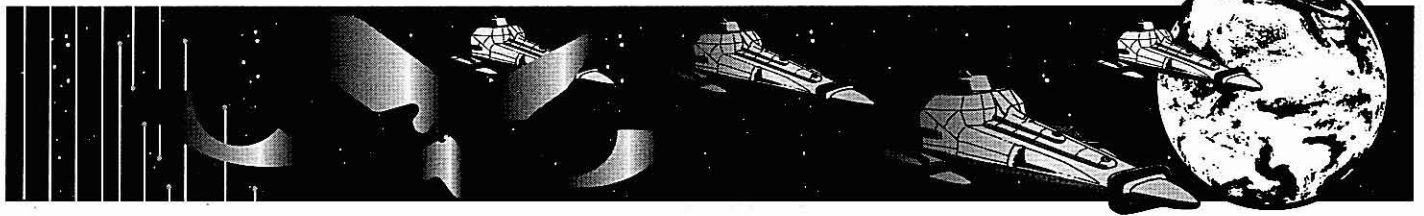
Base Codes: A: Naval Base and Scout Base; N: Naval Base; S: Scout Base; W: Scout Way Station.

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; the number "N" following the column indicates how many tenths of the world's population consisted of these races (0=10); De: Desert; Fl: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; In: Industrial; O: NNNN indicates that the world is owned by the world in the indicates (NNNN) hex; Po: Poor; Ri: Rich; Es: Research Station (with Greek letter designation); Va: Vacuum; Wa: Water world.

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

Allegiance Codes: LI: Lucan's Imperium; Ma: Margaret's Faction. In 1201 listings, Dr: ???; Na:

Nonaligned, no off-planet allegiance; these worlds use the government types listed on page 188 of the TNE rulebook; Wi: Wilds (No off-world allegiance and perhaps no off-world contact; use Wilds government type on TNE, page 191. In the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," world's tech level is world's sustainable tech level; tech level of the TED and his/her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.



REFEREE'S NOTES FOR THE PASDARUU SUBSECTOR

The following notes provide additional details on the more important inhabited worlds of Pasdaruu subsector.

Bail 4: Bail 4 managed to avoid infection by Virus during the Collapse and successfully resisted attacks by vampire fleets until 1191, when a concerted attack by two separate vampire fleets overcame the ground-based PAD system and captured both the starport and scout base. Decades of low-level warfare with Virus had convinced the people of Bail to prepare for such an eventuality, and both government and industry have been able to continue functioning, albeit with difficulty, by switching critical facilities to underground locations. A low-level hit-and-run war continues between the armed forces of Bail and the robots holding the starport and scout base. Nevertheless, the human resistance is gradually running out of resources, as one underground installation after another is detected and destroyed. While the resistance can continue indefinitely, it will be at the price of a steadily declining technological and industrial capacity. The following characteristics describe the planet's current government.

<i>World</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Talent</i>	<i>Cruelty</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Paranoia/ Xenophobia</i>
Bail 4	Part. Demo.	Low	High	Low	Mod.	Mod.

Ephraim: Despite its fairly low tech level, Ephraim has managed to avoid conquest by vampires due in part to a few salvaged PAD systems but also due to its remote location and lack of a gas giant for refueling. Left largely to itself, Ephraim has managed to bring its starport back on line and repair a handful of small starships, including two armed merchant vessels (the "fleet"). It is also a frequent port of call for free traders in the subsector, which is bringing it a measure of prosperity. Following a governmental crisis in 1194, Itar Borkmun, the popular commander of the space forces, seized control of the government and has ruled by decree ever since. Concerned about a peaceful succession, Borkmun is attempting to reestablish democratic institutions, but his failing health makes it unlikely that these institutions will be sufficiently strong to prevent a power struggle among military strongmen upon his death. The following characteristics describe the planet's current government.

<i>World</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Talent</i>	<i>Cruelty</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Paranoia/ Xenophobia</i>
Ephraim	Char. Dict.	Low	High	Mod.	Low	Mod.

Ifuwana: The Khan of Ifuwana is openly allied with the local vampire fleets, but the arrangement is different than with most vampire puppets. No slaves are offered or taken, and instead a significant proportion of the human work force works at the small starport, servicing vampire ships. Although this has so far protected the world from some of the worst ravages of the vampire invasion, there is growing friction between the humans and robots at the starport and growing uncertainty concerning the wisdom of this accommodation. The Khan, however, has neither the personal qualities of leadership nor the authority to change the course of the government. True power resides in the Viziri Council, a hereditary institution protecting the privileges of the world's economic elites. The Khan himself is corrupt and self-indulgent, has little interest in governmental affairs and has allowed what power remained to the office to be eroded by the council until he is little more than a figurehead. The following characteristics describe the planet's current government.

<i>World</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Talent</i>	<i>Cruelty</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Paranoia/ Xenophobia</i>
Ifuwana	Char. Oligarch	Mod	Mod	Mod	Low	Mod.

Raziira: This world contains a small robot-run starport used by several vampire ships. The robots ignore the tiny and primitive human population, and the Chirper population disappeared completely during the Collapse.

Teeque: This world's thin, tainted atmosphere is extremely harmful to humans over time, and the human population of Teeque has dropped from nearly 500,000 before the Collapse to only about 10,000 now. Chirpers are better adapted to the environment, so their population has only dropped from 120,000 to 90,000, leaving them the overwhelming majority on the world. The world is ruled, however, by the surviving humans who form the wealthy upper and middle classes, while the Chirpers provide unskilled and semi-skilled labor. This rule is maintained by force based on relic TL12 combat equipment, with governmental power consolidated in the hands of the dictator Boniface II. The following characteristics describe the planet's current government.

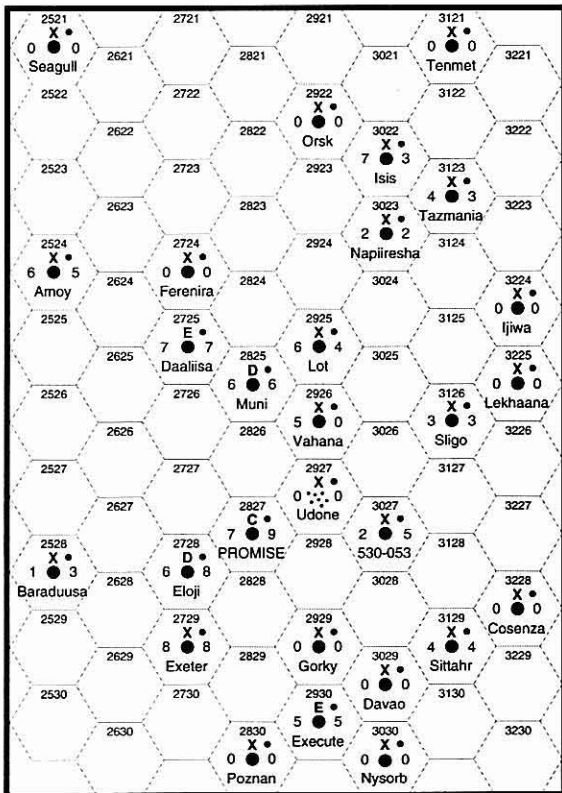
<i>World</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Talent</i>	<i>Cruelty</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Paranoia/ Xenophobia</i>
Teeque	TED	High	Mod	High	Mod	High

REFEREES ONLY

Dual listing: Each world is listed twice. The upper line is pre-Collapse data, and the lower line is New Era data.

PROMISE Subsector (Subsector L, Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Seagull	2521	D7B1430-9		Ni Fl Lo	103	LI	G2 V
	2521	X7B1000-0		Ba Fl	003	—	G2 V
Amoy	2524	D454634-8		Ni Ag	305	LI	G0 V
	2524	X45466A-5		Ni Ag	305	Wi	G0 V
Baraduusa	2528	C342231-D		Ni Po Lo	215	LI	G3 V
	2528	X342131-3		Ni Po Lo	415	Wi	G3 V
Ferenira	2724	B100165-F		Ni Va Lo O:2825	123	LI	M3 V
	2724	X100000-0		Ba Va	023	—	M3 V
Daalisa	2725	D767788-7		Ag C:1	A114	LI	M1 III
	2725	E767734-7		Ag C:2	B414	Wi	M1 III
Eloji	2728	B846647-C		Ni Ag	302	LI	M0 V
	2728	D846644-8		Ni Ag	402	Wi	M0 V
Exeter	2729	A769895-F		Ri	524	LI	K3 V M9 D
	2729	X769866-8			B824	Wi	K3 V M9 D
Muni	2825	B3428C9-C		Po	A605	LI	K4 V M6 D
	2825	D342640-6		Po	605	Wi	K4 V M6 D
Promise	2827	A542999-F		Hi In Po Cp	502	LI	M1 V
	2827	C542786-9		Po	602	Wi	M1 V
Poznan	2830	C232888-A		Po Na	403	So	M4 V
	2830	X232000-0		Ba	003	—	M4 V
Orsk	2922	B535321-F	N	Ni Lo D:0	A912	LI	M4 V M9 D
	2922	X535000-0		Ba	012	—	M4 V M9 D
Lot	2925	A245666-F		Ni Ag O:2825	A503	LI	K5 V
	2925	X24566C-4		Ni Ag	303	Wi	K5 V
Vahana	2926	B65A577-F		Ni Wa	703	LI	K2 V M5 D
	2926	X65A56D-0		Ni Wa	B103	Wi	K2 V M5 D
Udone	2927	A000599-F		Ni As	314	LI	M0 V
	2927	X000000-0		Ba As	014	—	M0 V
Gorky	2929	A200542-F	N	Ni Va	911	LI	G1 V
	2929	X200000-0		Ba Va	011	—	G1 V
Execute	2930	C684588-A		Ni Ag	303	So	G1 V
	2930	E684577-5		Ni Ag	B103	Wi	G1 V
Asena	3022	C354855-C			114	LI	M7 II
	3022	X35476D-3		Ag	914	Wi	M7 II
Isis	3023	B559230-D		Ni Lo	623	LI	K6 V M3 D
	3023	X559202-2		Ni Lo	B123	Wi	K6 V M3 D
530-053	3027	X443201-7		Ni Po Lo	R822	LI	K3 V M4 D
	3027	X443222-5		Ni Po Lo	422	Wi	K3 V M4 D
Davao	3029	D100677-D		Na Ni Va	113	So	M3 V
	3029	X100000-0		Ba Va	013	—	M3 V
Nysorb	3030	C9B6525-C		Ni Fl	733	So	K2 V M4 D
	3030	X9B6000-0		Ba Fl	033	—	K2 V M4 D
Tenmet	3121	B110725-F		Na	203	LI	K2 III
	3121	X110000-0		Ba	003	—	K2 III
Tazmania	3123	A456527-F		Ni Ag	104	LI	G1 V M9 D M6 D
	3123	X45647A-3		Ni Lo	304	Wi	G1 V M9 D M6 D
Sligo	3126	B878322-D		Ni Lo	703	LI	K7 V
	3126	X878344-3		Ni Lo	B203	Wi	K7 V
Sittahr	3129	C766530-D		Ni Ag RsG	405	So	K0 V M3 D
	3129	X766430-4		Ni Lo	B505	Wi	K0 V M3 D
Ijiwa	3224	B300864-F		Va Na O:2827	202	LI	M2 V M6 D
	3224	X000000-0		Ba Va	002	—	M2 V M6 D
Lekhaana	3225	E100223-B		Ni Va Lo	424	LI	G6 V
	3225	X100000-0		Ba Va	024	—	G6 V
Cosenza	3228	B527485-F		Ni Lo	312	So	K2 V M2 D
	3228	X527000-0		Ba	012	—	K2 V M2 D

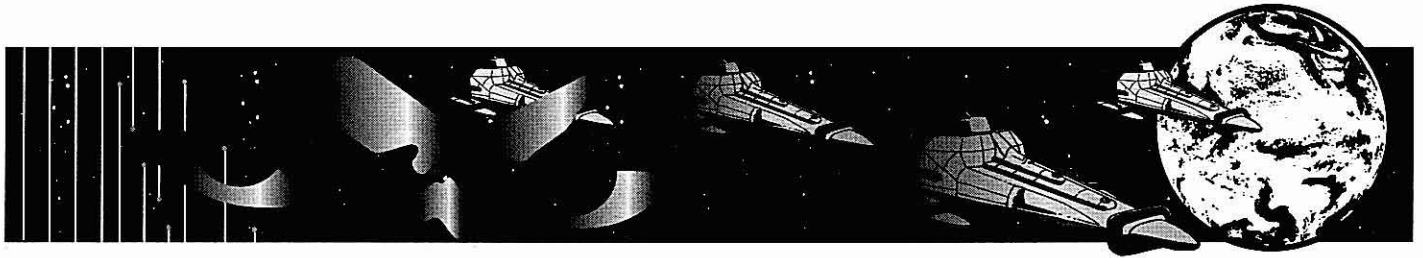


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TPPG indicates Travel Zone, Population multiplier, Planetoid Belts and Gas Giants. If 1119 Travel Zone digit is empty, it was listed as a Green Travel Zone; A and R indicate Amber and Red zones, respectively. If 1201 Travel Zone digit is empty, there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

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



REFEREES NOTES FOR THE PROMISE SUBSECTOR

The following notes provide additional details on the more important inhabited worlds of Promise subsector.

Daalisa: Daalisa is balkanized, but its governments are at peace with each other and it was, until recently, relatively stable. Eight million of the planet's total population of 40 million are Chirpers, while the balance are humans. Although a small starport is maintained, Vampire fleets have until recently left the world largely unmolested. Within the last year, however, Vampire raids, particularly on the human-inhabited regions, have increased, and there have been a number of reprisal raids launched by radical human factions against the Chirper population. The Coalition believes that the Vampire raids are due to the disabling of the computer virus known as Umptyydayu in the "Cosmic Fire" raid, and this is in fact correct. For more details on the raid, see **Smash and Grab**.

Eloji: Eloji, almost alone among the worlds of Promise subsector, has managed to maintain a reasonably high tech level and has enough residue of pre-Collapse technology, including several batteries of TL12 PAD missile systems, to defend itself against major depredations by the vampire fleets that regularly scourge that area of space. The world recently went through a bitter and destructive civil war following the death of the former dictator, but power has now been consolidated in the hands of the former Colonel Boukart, now Generalissimo and dictator for life. Due to a successful Coalition SAG raid during the war (for details see **Smash and Grab**), Boukart is hostile to the Reformation Coalition, but there is a growing resistance movement on the planet which is more open to contact. Boukart has reportedly succeeded in arming two merchant vessels with lasers as a check against further Coalition SAG raids. The following government values apply for Boukara:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Talent</i>	<i>Cruelty</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Paranoia/ Xenophobia</i>
Boukara	Char. Dict.	Mod.	High	Low	Mod.	High

Exeter: The considerable population of this world is divided among more than 20 "nations," each ruled by a technologically elevated dictator and backed by TL15 troops. There is no operating starport on the world, and vampire ships only occasionally visit it. A few TEDs hold the vampires at bay with working PAD systems, while the majority pay tribute in the form of trained human crewmembers and salvaged tech level 15 relic technology.

Romruogo of Vars, the most powerful of the TEDs, controls the starport as well as a fleet of three small armed spacecraft (none of which are jump capable). These include a patrol cruiser, a system defense boat and an armed liner. The following government values apply for Romruogo:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Talent</i>	<i>Cruelty</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Paranoia/ Xenophobia</i>
Romruogo of VarsTED		High.	Mod	Mod	High.	Mod.

Promise: Promise is a world ruled by sentient computer systems and tech level 15 robots. Its starport is a major maintenance facility on the Vampire Highway. For more details, see the Promise chapter of this book.

Execute: The small surviving population of this world is divided among scattered tribes, the largest of which worships the God-strain Virus controlling the starport computer system. The starport is used as an occasional stop-over point for vampire ships, and slaves taken from the nonbelieving tribes are given to the ships to augment their crews.

Highway One



Q: There are many people here who believe that the only rational course of action is to immediately terminate you.

Sandman: I know.

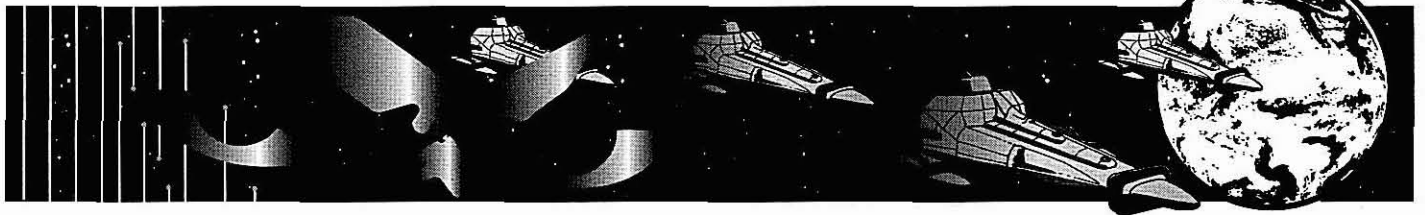
Q: What makes you think we won't do that?

Sandman: Once I gave you the ability to kill me at any time, I ceased being a threat. Only a timid and frightened people would kill me now.

Q: You trust our mercy?

Sandman: No, I trust your courage.

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part I (19/VII/1202), RCSA Archives



INTRODUCTION

Highway One is the first of three adventures in this book, which taken together form a sort of *mini-campaign*. Each of the adventures showcases one part of the source material of the book, and this first one deals with encounters with vampire fleets and one possible outcome of such an encounter.

This adventure is set in and near the Reformation Coalition and can easily be 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. However, immediately before playing, you should have them read, or read to them, the news stories provided at the start of this book, as they provide a good feel for the growing public awareness that the problem with *Virus* is becoming more critical by the day rather than less.

No GDW products beyond this book (and the basic game rules) are necessary to run the adventure. A prequel adventure entitled "A Blighted Land" appeared in *Challenge* magazine, issue 76. It is not necessary for the players to have taken part in this adventure, nor even for the referee to have read it. This adventure assumes a satisfactory outcome to that earlier mission, either by this group of player-characters or another group of people unknown to them, and all the relevant and important information gained by that mission is included in the briefing sheets for this one.

If by chance the players have been run through "A Blighted Land," however, it provides a natural reason for RCES to ask them to undertake this task due to their familiarity (relative to most people in the Coalition) with Promise and some of the members of the human resistance. (Hopefully, their performance in the earlier adventure has not made this a liability!)

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 or even, for more dramatic effect, amid the terrible destruction recently caused by a vampire ship attack on Nike Nimbus.

Before beginning the briefing, assemble a briefing folder for the team by photocopying pages 24 through 30 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 form separate documents and should be stapled together. Pages 24 through 27 make up a recently compiled short briefing on the Vampire Highway. You should also photocopy page 103 of the basic rules book (which details Khulam subsector) and add it to this guide. Pages 28 and 29 of this book are the standard RCES astrographic information on the planet Promise. Page 30 is a secret intelligence summary containing all

known information on the human resistance movement on Promise.

The briefing takes place shortly after the player characters agree to the assignment, as time is becoming very pressing.

REFeree'S ABSTRACT

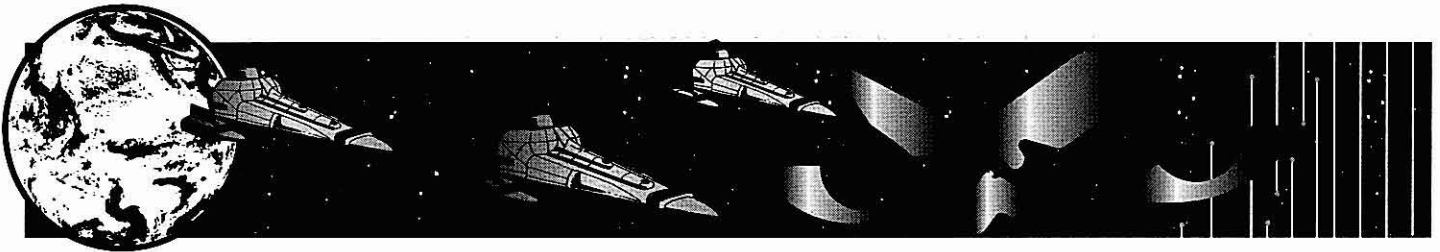
The player characters are contacted by the Reformation Coalition Exploration Service and asked to undertake a mission of great importance to the future of the Coalition, perhaps of all humankind. The dramatically escalating incidence of vampire fleet activity on the frontiers of Coalition Space indicates a mounting threat from *Virus*. Much of the vampire activity in Diaspora sector seems to center on the planet Promise, which is controlled by a council of *Virus*-infected computers and thousands of *Virus*-infected self-aware robots. To enable RCES to map out a coherent course of action, the player characters are sent to Promise to make additional contact with the human resistance on that world.

Before the player characters can get to Promise to undertake their nominal mission, however, their ship encounters and is captured by a vampire fleet, and they become slave crewmembers of a *Virus*-infected warship. While serving on the crew, they meet the other crewmembers, including members of the Guild, crewmembers who grew up on the ship almost from birth and a member of the human resistance on Promise who was added to the crew only recently. They also discover that the fleet they are with is bound for Star City, the *Virus*-controlled starport and maintenance facility on Promise. They learn that the ship is badly damaged and is slowly breaking down.

Although the various elements of the human slave crew have the necessary resources to take over the ship, they have not been able to effectively work together to do so until now. The necessary resources which they have are:

1. The physical power of the Hoodla (ship criminals and thugs), with which the player characters can overpower the robot guards.
2. The uninfected starship computer which the Guild crew knows of, which will enable the rebels to continue to operate the ship without the *Virus*-infected main computer.
3. The knowledge of fleet and ship procedures of the Children of The Ship, which will enable them to continue to operate with the fleet without making the other vampire ships suspicious.
4. The contact to the human resistance on Promise, which will give them an escape route once they land at Star City.

It is up to the players to organize these different elements into a cohesive force and seize control of the ship. Once they do so, the fleet is too powerful to break away from, so they must continue with it to Promise, being careful not to arouse any suspicion as to the true masters of the vessel. Their subsequent attempts to gain freedom once they land on Promise are the subject of the second adventure in the book.

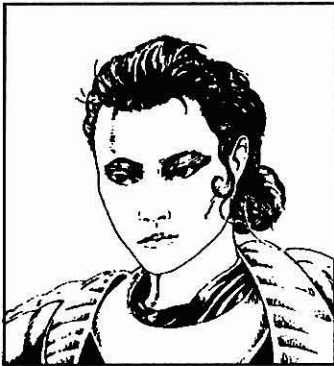


BRIEFING

The briefing can take place wherever convenient to the ongoing campaign, but can most easily be placed at a Coalition facility inside Coalition space. Failing that, a secure Coalition outpost somewhere in the primary AO would be best. This briefing can be modified slightly if one or more of the players have participated in the adventure "A Blighted Land" (*Challenge 76*).

The briefing takes place in a small conference room. As the players are shown in, they see two officials already present, both women. The briefer is Cynta "Sinner" Lawter, who some of the PCs may know from previous adventures. Lawter is an attractive, intelligent-looking woman in her early thirties. The second woman is Tatai MacLean, a tall, gaunt woman of pale complexion in her late thirties or early forties. She is completely bald, without even eyebrows, and has a small pattern of tattoos on her forehead over her right eye, a row of vertical lines and alphameric characters of an unfamiliar type. Her clothing is nonmilitary and brightly colored, but she is unsmiling and somewhat abrupt of manner. (A more complete description of MacLean is provided in *Star Vikings*, pages 82-83.)

Lawter is a figure currently surrounded by controversy in the



Coalition. She was the Coalition Navy's youngest captain, and one of its most successful. Commanding RCS *Aube*, one of the first clippers to operate for extended time in the Promise subsector, she exhibited a high degree of initiative and very little regard for the specifics of her mission orders or the limitations imposed by the Oriflammen-imposed Primary Area of Operations. *Aube* regularly operated outside of the primary AO, and she is credited with planning the recovery of the crew of the DLS *Helios*, one of the original 12 Dawn League ships. However, her frequent forays outside the primary AO, and the frequency with which *Aube* had to return to Coalition space for repairs after tangling with Vampire ships, caused a string of protests from Oriflammen representatives in the Assembly.

Federalist representatives stood behind her through most of this, until the explosion of the so-called Cosmic Fire scandal, which concerned her planning and execution of a raid on the world Daaliisa in the Promise subsector. As the criticism of her role in the raid came from the heart of the Federalist bloc, the remaining public political support for her quickly disappeared, and she voluntarily resigned her commission rather than stand before a court martial. Lawter was immediately drawn into the RCES's strategic planning arm, and she is becoming its most outspoken advocate of stepped-up action against Virus. (For more details on the Daaliisa raid, see *Smash & Grab*. For the

initial controversy surrounding it, see the CINETWORK in *Challenge* issues 73 and 74.)

Although MacLean is uncommunicative, Lawter will rise and greet the characters as they enter, perhaps warmly if they are old friends. After everyone is settled, she will pass out the briefing folders and then move to a simple lectern.

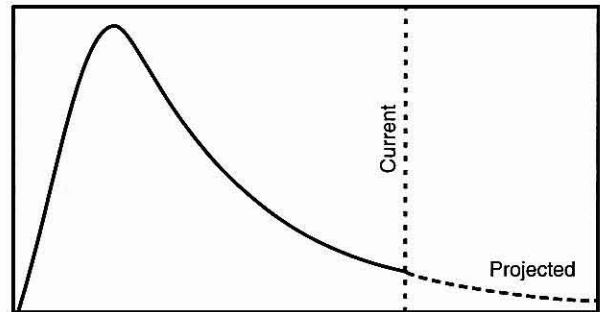
"Thank you all for coming. We have a pending mission of some importance and for which I think you are well qualified. Before I go into the mission profile, however, I'd like you to have a better understanding of its importance. To that end, I have asked Tatai MacLean to brief you on some recent developments."

She turns the briefing over to MacLean, who stands and moves to the lectern. She begins her briefing without any greeting or real preamble.

"For a number of years the common wisdom concerning

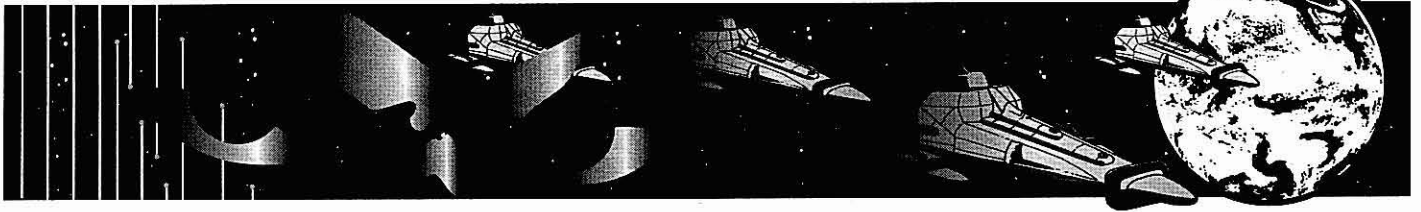


Virus described its meta-life-cycle as a high acceleration initial spike which then transitions to a negatively accelerating descent curve." She triggers a wall projector and displays the curve by way of illustration. At this point, show the players the first photocopied visual, labeled Graph A.



Graph A

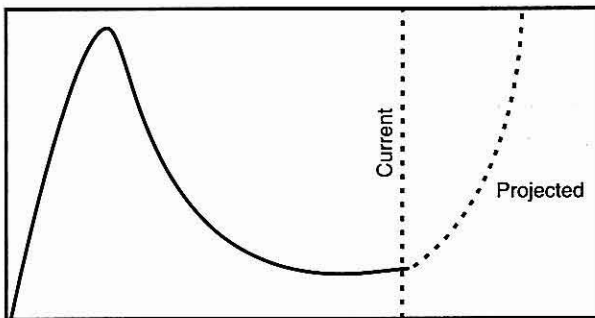
"The horizontal axis represents time, with the zero point set at approximately 1130 Imperial. The vertical axis represents an abstract representation of total Virus activity. Active Viral life-forms is as good a way as any to visualize the axis. Notice that Virus began at zero, which is to say that at the beginning of 1130 there was effectively no active Virus outside of Lucan's research computers. Notice that by 1133, only three years later, Virus activity had peaked and was already in decline. The earliest strains of Virus had already suicided, and the early second generation strains were well on the road to self-destruction. The decline is nearly as dramatic as the initial increase, but the slope of the curve flattens as it approaches zero.



"The reason the curve flattens is obvious. Later and later strains of Virus are more survivable and less prone to suicide. As the surviving population of Virus-inhabited instruments contains a smaller and smaller proportion of the less viable types, its attrition rate declines. Nevertheless, attrition continues, and the question as to the final eradication of Virus remains when, not if.

"That, as I said, has been the common wisdom. We now believe that this view, as is so often the case with *common* wisdom, is based more on wishful thinking than on any empirical evidence. We have charted the actual incidence of ship disappearances and vampire fleet attacks for the last 40 months. After resisting the efforts of some of my colleagues to massage the data on an *a posteriori* basis, we have simply plugged the raw numbers into the model. This is what the revised slope of the graph looks like."

She triggers the projector again, and the curve has a new line segment added. At this point, show the players the second photocopied visual, labeled Graph B.



Graph B

"The dotted line extension of the graph is its predicted slope based on the observed rate of change. The sample size we are working with is sufficiently small that there is considerable margin for error here, and a number of my colleagues cling to this fact as a sort of last refuge from an unpleasant reality. Based on my own experience as well as nonstatistical, but still important, reports from the free trader network, I believe this graph is substantially correct.

"What does this mean? It means that the dramatic drop of Virus activity shortly after release was temporary. It means that Virus is at the front end of a dramatic upsurge in activity, based upon increasingly sophisticated and effective adaptive behavior. Virus is getting smarter. If it is allowed to progress unchecked, I estimate that we, as a species, have perhaps a decade, two at the outside.

"Since I came to the Coalition, I have argued against the complacent attitude concerning Virus which is manifest here. Virus is treated as if it were an historical event of little relevance to us today. Absolutely wrong. We have been given a breathing space, a respite, nothing more. And that respite is, I submit, effectively at an end." Without asking for questions and

without any additional display of emotion, MacLean turns and leaves the room. After a moment, Lawter stands again and resumes the briefing.

"Well, Tatai MacLean is an unusual person, as you can see for yourself. I should say, however, that her judgements on the increase in Virus activity, and its potential implications, are being taken very seriously at the highest levels of the Coalition. Several of us in strategic planning have been arguing the same thing for quite some time, and it now appears that events have overtaken us.

"We have not yet developed a clear course of action, however, as we do not yet have sufficient information for intelligent planning. Therefore, RCES has established as its highest priority an urgent program of intelligence gathering. While we are exploring every possible source of intelligence, we believe that the most productive source will be the planet Promise.

"In your briefing folders I have included our most current intelligence information on the planet Promise. By way of overview, the world is completely controlled by Virus-infected machines and robots, and forms a regular maintenance stop for Vampire fleets. It is a key nexus point of the Vampire Highway and has the advantage, from our point of view, of a small but growing human resistance. As humans are used for both manual and technical tasks by the machines on the world, the underground appears to have infiltrated agents into important positions in the starport and defense establishment. How important? We don't know. That's your job—find out.

"We have already had preliminary contact with the human resistance on the planet. That contact has been friendly and mutually helpful, and we have begun to offer technical and material assistance to those groups with which we are in contact. Your task will be to go a step further. You will be transported to Promise and landed at Freedom Lake, the permanent contact point, where you will establish a permanent working relationship with the underground. It is vital that we find out as much about vampire fleet movement patterns, and whatever weaknesses they may have, as quickly as possible.

"Since we have some fairly demanding astrographic requirements for a successful insertion, and since we'll want to leave you on the surface for at least two weeks, we'll be providing transport for you in and out. If you have a vessel currently, we'll see to berthing it and make any reasonable arrangements to cover the costs of taking it out of commercial service for the period of the mission. Unless it's a real hot-rod, you wouldn't want to take it with you in there anyway.

"Are there any questions? If not, then good luck."

Vampire Highway Background Summary

For some time, RCES has received reports from free traders of a so-called Vampire Highway, a region of space characterized by a higher than normal incidence of vampire activity. These reports have been confirmed and considerably amplified by recent information received from the Covenant of Sufren, allowing us to chart the highway with some assurance.

In Diaspora sector, the highway runs through the hearts of Khavle, Pasdaruu and Promise subsectors, then down the Khulam Main, terminating in the vicinity of Montezuma. Although vampire activity has been noted elsewhere, including rimward of Montezuma, the incidence is much lower than along the above route. Indications are strong that the highway continues coreward through Massilia sector, although we have very little reliable information on it there.

In general, the highway tends to follow the lines of the jump-1 mains in each of the affected subsectors. The pattern of vampire activity along the highway seems to consist of fleets tied to the mains and solitary ships which are more mobile.

The fleets are often tied to the mains due to the generally poor state of repair of the vessels. While many of the vessels moving together in a group may be capable of jump-2 or more, if any are only jump-1 capable, the entire group is forced to either stay on the main or divide. Usually, they stay on the main. Individual vessels not tied to a fleet, however, often jump from main to main.

An additional feature of vampire activity is the marked preference for gas giant refueling. In the Khulam subsector, this has kept the Kide-Lefiguura-Desel cluster almost free of vampire activity, and kept it to a somewhat lower level rimward of Khesanadu (2731/Diaspora)

To what extent separate ships and fleets interact peacefully is unknown. Very few human-crewed ships which have witnessed two vampires encountering each other have survived to tell the tale. It is known that some vampire ships, and even fleets, actively fight each other. Whether this is a function of incompatible belief structure or is evidence of a growing political struggle is uncertain.

In terms of overall numbers, each main seems to have one or perhaps two active vampire fleets. In addition, there are dozens of individual vampire ships scattered throughout the region. Several star-locked ships and fleets have been encountered as well (ships without operational jump drives), and the Mitchell system almost certainly contains a fleet of a half dozen or more such vessels.

Relations with the human inhabitants of the worlds along the Vampire Highway differ. Higher tech level societies are viewed with hostility by the vampires, while lower-tech worlds are ignored or actively cultivated as sources of human maintenance crews. The higher tech level worlds have either managed to establish a sufficiently formidable defense against vampire ships or have been attacked and devastated by Virus-controlled warships. Worlds in the former category are of particular interest to the Coalition, and appear to include Eloji (2728/Promise/Diaspora) and Accra (2604/Khavle/Diaspora).

A number of worlds such as Daaliisa (2725/Promise/Diaspora) have made accommodations with vampire fleets, and in some cases local human rulers are little more than fronts for vampire slave gathering. Muni (2825/Promise/Diaspora) appears to be an example of this sort of arrangement.

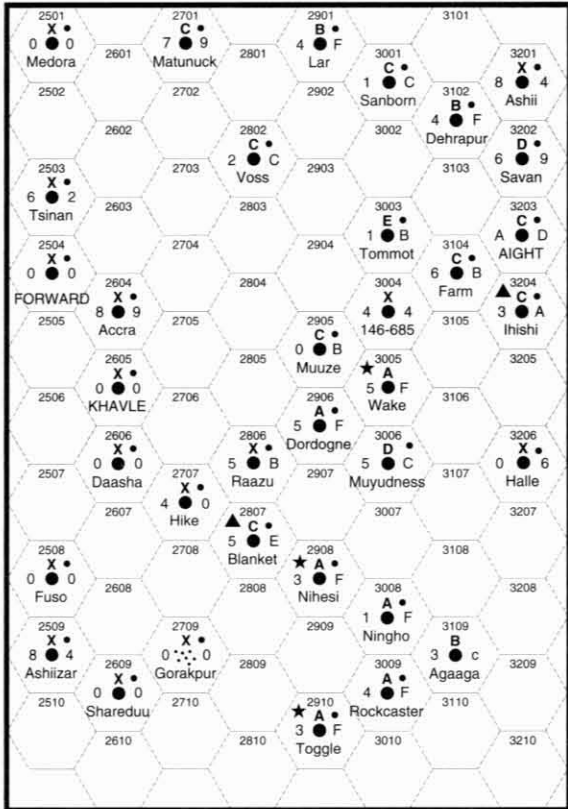
One interesting observation made by naval authorities from the Covenant of Sufren is that the traffic flow at the boundary between Diaspora and Massilia sectors produces a small but steady net flow of ships coreward. The absence of some ships known to have been taken by vampire fleets in the Khulam subsector seems to confirm this. Although evidence is fragmentary (and is based mostly on Covenant covert observatories in several key systems on the highway), it does appear that recently infected ships are being sent coreward for purposes unknown.

A major problem faced by vampire fleets is the need for periodic maintenance and repairs, and the lack of reliable ground or orbital repair facilities. Some human-controlled starports on cooperating worlds are used for this, but the rare surviving facility controlled by Virus is of much greater value. The most important of these in the Diaspora sector is at Promise (2827/Promise/Diaspora). Although the world contains a substantial surviving human population, it is nearly irrelevant to the operation of the starport, which has become a major contact point for vampire vessels moving along the highway. Discovering more about conditions on Promise remains one of the RCES's highest intelligence priorities.

Dual Listing: Second (italicized) listing is as of 1202. Survey data provided by the Covenant of Suffren.

RCES KHAVLE Subsector (Subsector D, Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Medora	2501	A422553-F		Ni Po	403	Ma	K1 V
	2501	X422000-0		Ba	003	—	K1 V
Tsinan	2503	C472676-C		Ni	904	Ma	M0 V
	2503	X472668-2		Ni	804	Wi	M0 V
Forward	2504	C83899A-D		Hi	513	Ma	M2 V M9 D
	2504	X838000-0		Ba	013	—	M2 V M9 D
Fuso	2508	B7B3204-F		Ni Lo Fl	504	Ma	G1 V
	2508	X7B3000-0		Ba Fl	004	—	G1 V
Ashiizar	2509	C654868-A		O:2504	711	Ma	K7 II M3 V
	2509	X65486A-4			B711	Wi	K7 II M3 V
Accra	2604	B6877A5-D		Ag	A903	Ma	G0 V
	2604	X687827-9		Ag	B303	Wi	G0 V
Khavle	2605	B334995-F	W	Hi Cp	705	Ma	M4 V
	2605	X334000-0		Ba	005	—	M4 V
Daasha	2606	B62A445-F		Ni Wa Lo	403	Ma	K4 V M0 D
	2606	X62A000-0		Ba Wa	003	—	K4 V M0 D
Shareduu	2609	D231574-C		Ni Po	A121	Ma	M2 V
	2609	X231000-0		Ba	021	—	M2 V
Matunuck	2701	C853724-9		Po	912	Ma	K3 IV
	2707	B782432-E		Ni Lo	525	Wi	F4 V
Hike	2707	X782453-0		Ni Lo	B225	Wi	F4 V
	2709	C000325-F		Ni As Lo	914	Ma	M4 V M0 D
Gorakpur	2709	X000000-0		Ba As	014	—	M4 V M0 D
	2802	C867226-C		Ni Lo	925	Ma	F4 V
Raazu	2806	D445575-B		Ni Ag	815	Ma	A2 V
Blanket	2807	C224578-E	S	Ni	601	Ma	M3 V M1 D
Lar	2901	B331479-F		Ni Po Lo	104	Ma	M4 V
Muuze	2905	C792033-B		Ni Lo	513	Ma	F5 V M0 D M4 D
Dordogne	2906	A454578-F		Ni Ag	404	Ma	M3 V
Nihesi	2908	A7B1344-F	N	Ni Lo Fl	804	Ma	M4 V
Toggle	2910	A100335-F	N	Ni Va Lo	503	—	K1 V M7 D M5 D
Sanborn	3001	C483141-C		Ni Lo	300	Ma	F7 V M8 D
Tommot	3003	E210101-B		Ni Lo	612	Ma	M1 V
146-685	3004	X794423-4		Ni Lo	R600	Ma	M2 V
Wake	3005	A652532-F	N	Ni Po	300	Ma	K4 V
Muyudness	3006	D100556-C		Ni Va	500	Ma	G2 V
Ningho	3008	A577110-F		Ni Lo	104	Ma	K5 V M3 D
Rockcaster	3009	A69A424-F		Ni Wa Lo	603	Ma	M0 III M6 D
Dehrapur	3102	B423474-F		Ni Po Lo	601	Ma	G3 V M4 D
Farm	3104	C656622-B		Ni Ag	404	Ma	G4 V
Agaaga	3109	B557320-C		Ni Lo C:4	620	Ma	M3 III M6 D
183-361	3201	X694889-4			R312	Ma	G4 V
Savan	3202	D444637-9		Ni Ag	703	Ma	K4 V
Aight	3203	C752A99-D		Hi Po D:5	701	Ma	G2 V
Ihishi	3204	C541335-A	S	Hi Po Lo D:3	A904	Ma	F7 V
Halle	3206	X626023-6		Ni	R402	Ma	G5 V

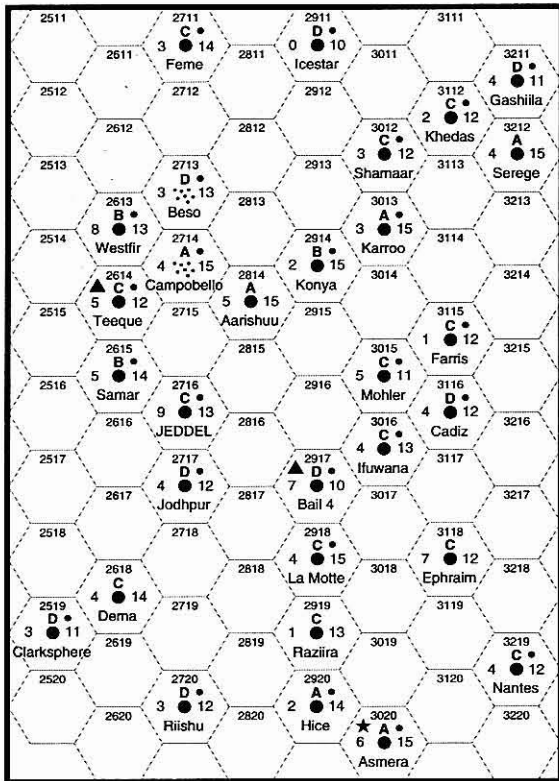
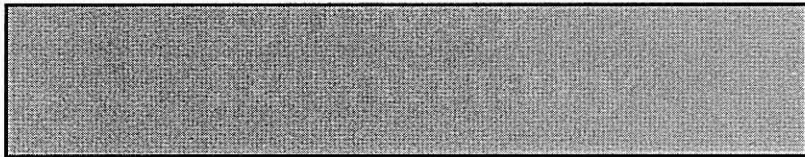


Base Codes: A: Naval Base and Scout Base; N: Naval Base; S: Scout Base; W: Scout Way Station.

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; the number "N" following the column indicates how many tenths of the world's population consisted of these races (0=10); De: Desert; Fl: Fluid oceans; Hi: High population; In: Industrial; O:NNNN indicates that the world is owned by the world in the indicates (NNNN) hex; Po: Poor; Ri: Rich; Es: Research Station (with Greek letter designation); Va: Vacuum; Wa: Water world.

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

Allegiance Codes: Ma: Margaret's Faction. In 1201 listings, Wi: Wilds (No off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact; use Wilds government type on TNE, page 191. In the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," world's tech level is world's sustainable tech level; tech level of the TED and his/her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level); "—" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.



RCES PASDARUU Subsector (Subsector H, Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Clarksphere	2519	D324300-B		Ni Lo	113	LI	C9 V
Westfir	2613	B326841-D			701	Ma	M1 V
Teeque	2614	C545569-C	S	Ni Ag C:2 O:2716613	Ma	K3 V M3 D	
Samar	2615	B476510-E		Ni Ag	803	Ma	M0 V M5 D
Dema	2618	C200431-E		Ni Va Lo	300	LI	M3 V
Feme	2711	C456300-E		Ni Lo	912	Ma	M8 III
Beso	2713	D000301-D		Ni As Lo	321	Ma	K2 IV M9 D
Campobello	2714	A00046A-F		Ni As Lo O:2716A713	Ma	M1 V M2 D	
Jeddel	2716	C4349BC-D		Hi Cp	915	Ma	M4 V
Jodhpur	2717	D332445-C		Ni Po Lo	A304	Ma	M1 V
Riishu	2720	D225333-C		Ni Lo	914	LI	K2 IV
Aarishuu	2814	A995544-F		Ni Ag	800	Ma	M1 V
Icestar	2911	D799000-A		Ba	114	Ma	K5 V
Konya	2914	B200205-F		Ni Va Lo	104	Ma	K4 V
Bail 4	2917	D799755-A	S		505	LI	G7 IV
La Motte	2918	C63A404-F		Ni Wa Lo	604	LI	M0 V
Raziira	2919	C866102-D		Ni Lo C:2	A100	LI	M0 V M6 V
Hice	2920	A795222-E		Ni	A904	LI	M1 II M4 V M8 V
Shamaar	3012	C544335-C		Ni Lo	702	Ma	M1 V
Karoo	3013	A667357-F		Ni Lo	924	Ma	G5 V
Mohler	3015	C8A5588-B		Ni Fl	813	LI	M0 V M1 D
Ifuwana	3016	C59845A-D		Ni Lo	414	LI	G0 V
Asmera	3020	A110653-F	N	Ni Na	A915	LI	M2 V
Khedas	3112	C7A4232-C		Ni Lo Fl	A614	Ma	M6 V
Farris	3115	C536125-C		Ni Lo	324	LI	K7 V M2 D
Cadiz	3116	D799450-C		Ni Lo	902	LI	M4 V
Ephraim	3118	C78977B-C		Ri C:4	710	LI	G8 V M2 D
Gashiila	3211	D879457-B		Ni Lo	614	Ma	G2 V
Serege	3212	AAD647A-F		Ni Fl Lo	720	Ma	K4 V M0 D
Nantes	3219	C200442-C		Ni Va Lo	602	LI	M0 V M6 D

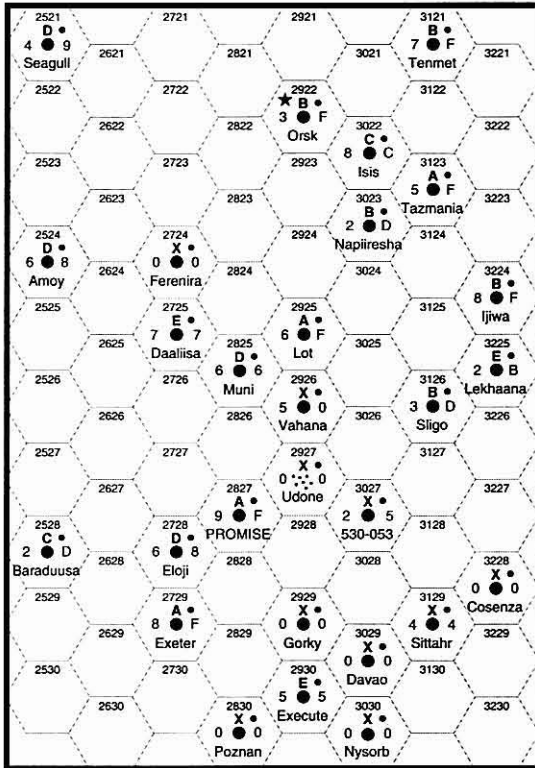
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Trade Codes: Ag: Agricultural; As: Asteroid; Ba: Barren; Cp: Subsector capital; C:N or D:N indicates that the world was populated in part by Chirpers or Droyne; the number "N" following the column indicates how many tenths of the world's population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

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Alliance Codes: LI: Lucan's Imperium, Ma: Margaret's Faction. In 1201 listings, Na: Nonaligned, no off-planet allegiance; these worlds use the government types listed on page 188 of the TNE rulebook; Wi: Wilds (no off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact; use Wilds government type on TNE, page 191. In the case of government type 6: "Technologically Elevated Dictator," world's tech level is world's sustainable tech level; tech level of the TED and his/her support structure is higher, up to the world's original tech level); "-" indicates no allegiance because there is no population.

Dual Listing: Second (italicized) listing is as of 1202. New data provided by RCES surveys.



RCES PROMISE Subsector (Subsector H, Diaspora Sector)

Name	Hex	UPP	Base	Trade	TPPG	Alg	Stellar
Seagull	2521	D7B1430-9	Ni	FI Lo	103	LI	G2 V
Amoy	2524	D454634-8	Ni	Ag	305	LI	G0 V
Baraduusa	2528	C342231-D	Ni	Po Lo	215	LI	G3 V
Ferenira	2724	B100165-F	Ni	Va Lo O:2825	123	LI	M3 V
	2724	X100000-0		Ba Va	023	—	M3 V
Daaliisa	2725	D767788-7	Ag	C:1	A114	LI	M1 III
	2725	E767734-7	Ag	C:2	B414	Wi	M1 III
Eloji	2728	B846647-C	Ni	Ag	302	LI	M0 V
	2728	D846644-8	Ni	Ag	402	Wi	M0 V
Exeter	2729	A769895-F	Ri		524	LI	K3 V M9 D
Muni	2825	B3428C9-C	Po		A605	LI	K4 V M6 D
	2825	D342640-6	Po		605	Wi	K4 V M6 D
Promise	2827	A542999-F	Hi	In Po Cp	502	LI	M1 V
Poznan	2830	C232888-A	Po	Na	403	So	M4 V
	2830	X232000-0		Ba	003	—	M4 V
Orsk	2922	B535321-F	N	Ni Lo D:0	A912	LI	M4 V M9 D
Lot	2925	A245666-F	Ni	Ag O:2825	A503	LI	K5 V
Vahana	2926	B65A577-F	Ni	Wa	703	LI	K2 V M5 D
	2926	X65A56D-0		Ni Wa	B103	Wi	K2 V M5 D
Udone	2927	A000599-F	Ni	As	314	LI	M0 V
	2927	X000000-0		Ba As	014	—	M0 V
Gorky	2929	A200542-F	N	Ni Va	911	LI	G1 V
	2929	X200000-0		Ba Va	011	—	G1 V
Execute	2930	C684588-A	Ni	Ag	303	So	G1 V
	2930	E684577-5	Ni	Ag	B103	Wi	G1 V
Asena	3022	C354855-C			114	LI	M7 II
Napiresha	3023	B559230-D	Ni	Lo	623	LI	K6 V M3 D
530-053	3027	X443201-7	Ni	Po Lo	R822	LI	K3 V M4 D
	3027	X443222-5	Ni	Po Lo	422	Wi	K3 V M4 D
Davao	3029	D100677-D	Na	Ni Va	113	So	M3 V
	3029	X100000-0		Ba Va	013	—	M3 V
Nysorb	3030	C986525-C	Ni	FI	733	So	K2 V M4 D
	3030	X986000-0		Ba FI	033	—	K2 V M4 D
Tenmet	3121	B110725-F	Na		203	LI	K2 III
Tazmania	3123	A456527-F	Ni	Ag	104	LI	G1 V M9 D M6 D
Sligo	3126	B878322-D	Ni	Lo	703	LI	K7 V
Sittahr	3129	C766530-D	Ni	Ag RsG	405	So	K0 V M3 D
	3129	X766430-4	Ni	Lo	B505	Wi	K0 V M3 D
Ijiwa	3224	B300864-F	Va	Na O:2827	202	LI	M2 V M6 D
Lekhaana	3225	E100223-B	Ni	Va Lo	424	LI	G6 V
Cosenza	3228	B527485-F	Ni	Lo	312	So	K2 V M2 D
	3228	X527000-0		Ba	012	—	K2 V M2 D

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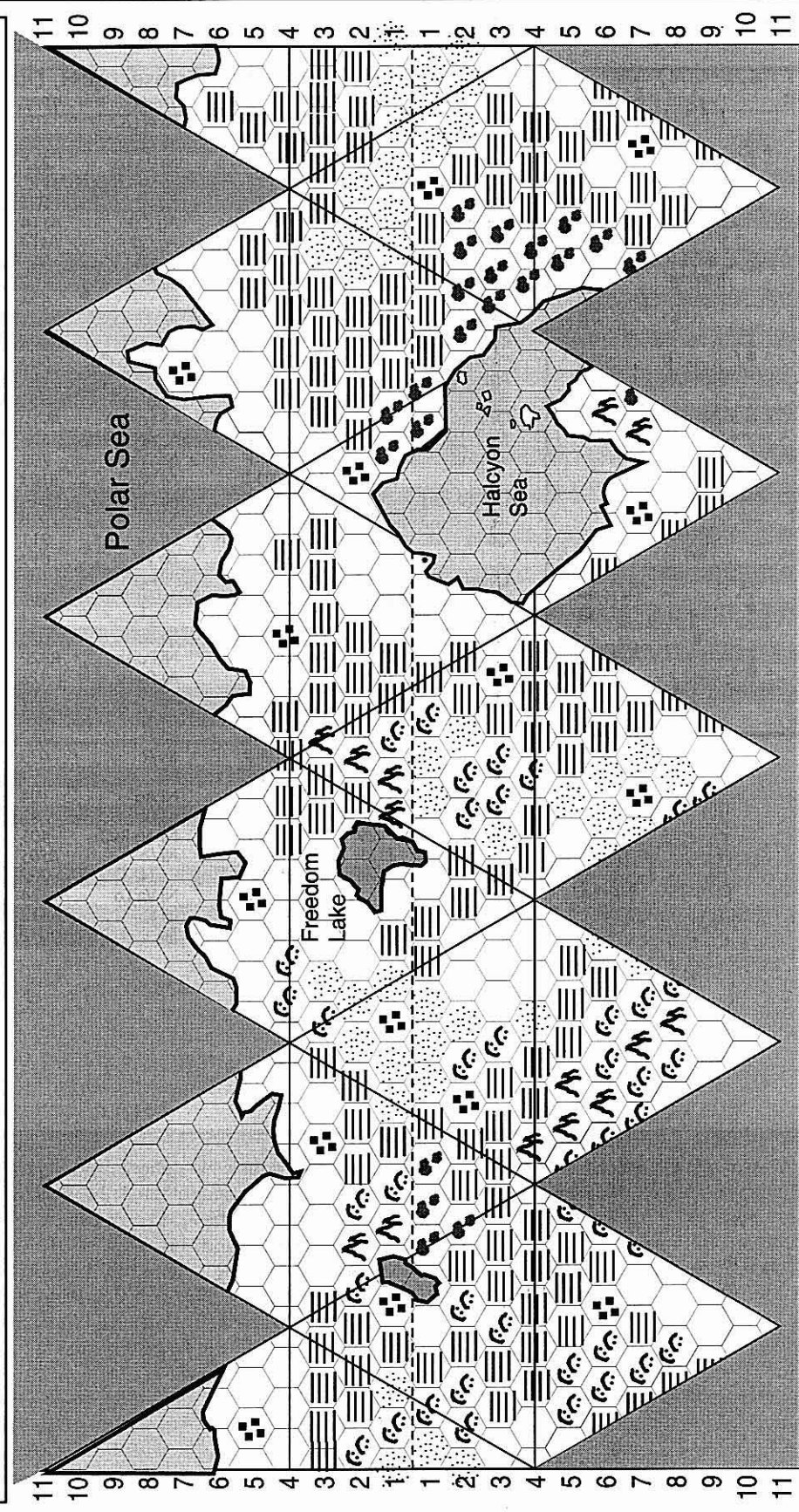
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Allegiance Codes: LI: Lucan's Imperium; So: Solomani Confederation. In 1201 listings, Wi: Wilds (no off-world allegiance, and perhaps no off-world contact; use Wilds government type on TNE, page 191. In the case of government type 6: "Technologically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

● Date: **10-IV-1202** ● World Promise: **UPP C 5 4 2 7 8 6 - 9** Hexagon Scale in Kilometers: **700**
 ● Subsector and Sector Name: **Polar Sea** ● Location of World: **Promised/Diaspora**

● Subsector and Sector Name: **Promised/Diaspora** ● Location of World: **Polar Sea**



- Mountain
- Badlands
- Desert
- Steppe
- Starport
- Open Sea/Lake
- Ruined City
- Jungle
- Mixed

Promise

Objective Classification: Pending

Star System

Sector: Diaspora
 Subsector: 2827/Promise
 Star Type: M1 V
 Planetoid Belts: none
 Gas Giants: 2

Main World

Starport: C
 Pre-Collapse Starport: A
 Diameter: 8221 km
 Atmosphere: Thin (tainted)
 Hydrosphere: 20%
 Population: 60 million
 Pre-Collapse Population: 5 billion
 Government: Totalitarian Oligarchy
 Law Level: 6
 Tech Level: 9
 Pre-Collapse Tech Level: 15
 Bases: None
 Trade Classification: Poor

Notes

Until very recently no Coalition personnel had visited Promise, and very few free traders had either. What little is known about the world is the result of these few visits, so the information must be considered fragmentary at best.

Physical: Although inhabitable, Promise is arid and inhospitable, which is the principal reason the world's current human population is only about 1% of its pre-collapse level.

Demographics: Most of the surviving human population lives in scattered nomadic tribes who make their living primarily by tending domesticated animal herds, hunting and gathering of wild edible plants. The general scarcity of vegetation requires even fairly small bands to keep moving almost continuously to find adequate grazing for their herds.

A small proportion of the human population (probably less than 1%) lives in Star City, the only remaining city on the planet and the site of the starport. They are reportedly employed in a variety of technical and menial occupations by the planetary government. More tribes live near Star City, trading scrap metal and technological artifacts recovered from the abandoned human cities of the planet to the robots in return for processed food, manufactured clothing and other trade items. These tribes are often called the "Subject Tribes" and cooperate closely with the central government.

All humans who live under the control of the Sentient Council are tattooed with an indelible ink laser scan bar code on their foreheads as a means of identification and control. This makes it very difficult to infiltrate agents into Star City, and in fact none have been placed to date. Although we have examined a few examples of the bar coding on people who have fled from the city to the outback, we have been unable to decode its meaning and so are not confident in our ability to forge a suitable facsimile.

Escalating Violence: More distant tribes rely less on the robots and owe less allegiance to them. Often calling themselves the "Free Tribes" (and as often referred to by the others as "Bandits"), they have until recently had little contact with the robots. For the last 10 years, however, the central government has made increasing efforts to bring them under control. A growing network of security outposts, intended to provide fuel and maintenance for security forces, has spread out from the capital. Clashes between robot patrols and

tribesmen have become more frequent and violent. Two recent developments in this struggle merit attention: the appearance of "Breeds" and the growth of the Resistance.

"Breed" is the local jargon for cybernetically altered humans. On Promise, the cybernetic alteration conducted by the Council seems invariably to include the surgical implantation of a Virus-infected computer in the host brain, rendering the organism at least nominally controlled by a Virus intellect. So far, we have been unable to capture one of these organisms for study. All examples encountered, however, seem to be of purely experimental types. No two identical conversions have yet been reported, although a number of fairly similar types have been cited. The numbers of conversions (sometimes reported as being in the thousands) and the limited number of useful cybernetic options suggest some duplication must have taken place.

The Resistance is a growing body of tribesmen offering organized resistance to encroachments of the robots and their Breed allies into the Free Tribe Lands. Their activities seem to be loosely coordinated by a "central command," which primarily communicates by means of courier. Nothing firm is known of this organization, but the means by which it is able to direct covert ship landings through gaps in the planetary defense and detection network suggest that it must have at least some presence in Star City.

Techno-Politico-Military: The most remarkable aspect of Promise is that it is controlled by Virus-infected machines. The central government is best described in our system of categorization as a totalitarian oligarchy, as it consists of a Sentient Council of the largest and most sophisticated computers on the world. How this Council deliberates and arrives at decisions can for now be only the subject of speculation.

In addition to the fixed location intelligent computing systems, there are several tens of thousands of sentient mobile robots on the world. Less intelligent but more physically versatile, these machines apparently form the main police arm of the government as well as carrying out the most sensitive maintenance functions. Through them, the Council closely governs the 50,000 or so human inhabitants of Star City and somewhat more loosely governs the tribes and settlements of humans that lie near the city. The tribes located several hundred to 1000 miles from the city seldom feel the hand of the government at all, and until recently have been left largely to themselves.

Such manufacturing as takes place is mostly at a sustained tech level of about 9, although a few higher-tech facilities are rumored to be operating. Certainly the fact that many large-system computers have survived offers the possibility that one or more computer-operated assembly plants may still be in operation. By contrast, the human population living outside Star City exists at little better than stone age levels of technology.

Star City is the principal hub of Viral activity on the world, and in some respects the entire Diaspora sector (or at least the parts with which we are familiar), as it serves as a regular fueling and maintenance stop for a number of vampire fleets. Whether the fleets call here simply out of necessity, or whether there is a growing sense of community among the scattered vampires, is unknown, but a matter of considerable concern.

Militarily, the planet is well defended from attack from space. It retains dozens of batteries of TL15 PAD missile, as well as at least two high-powered deep meson guns. A substantial proportion of the robots are sufficiently well armed to resist a military force on the ground, and there are numerous human and quasi-human allies of the Council which could be armed as well. The potential loyalty and effectiveness of these forces is uncertain.

Reformation Coalition Exploration Service

Contact Summary: Human Resistance Movement on the Planet Promise (2827 Promise/Diaspora).

Distribution: As required by mission only.

Handling: Most Secret.

Recency: Updated 25/IV/1202.

"The Resistance is a growing body of tribesmen offering organized resistance to encroachments of the robots and their Breed allies into the Free Tribal lands. Their activities seem to be loosely coordinated by a "Central Command," which primarily communicates by means of courier. Nothing firm is known of this organization, but the means by which it is able to direct covert ship landings through gaps in the planetary defense and detection network suggests it must have at least some presence in Star City."

The above quotation, taken from the published RCES "Planetary Data Summary for Promise" (2827/Promise/Diaspora) represents the extent of public knowledge concerning the human resistance on Promise. All additional details have been withheld, due to the danger that they would be incorporated into a public database which could later fall into the hands of Virus. The additional information, while potentially sensitive to the resistance, is nevertheless meagre.

Background: Our first information on the human Resistance came from the Free Trader Network. Apparently for some time a small group of free traders has known of a means of slipping through the planetary defense sensor network and making remote landings on Promise. These were originally fairly routine trade visits, with pre-Collapse recovered artifacts traded for manufactured goods from off-world. Recently, this has become a more specialized arms trade as the tempo of fighting has increased.

Means of Landing on Promise: Clandestine landings on Promise are accomplished by matching orbits with a small moon of the world and making the ship appear to be a sensor echo of that satellite. Once below the direct LOS sensor horizon of Star City, the ship makes a rapid powered reentry and landing, taking off later to again match orbits with the moon.

Only two RC pilots are currently qualified to make this approach and landing, although two more pilots are in training at this time. Most deliveries to date have been by contracted free trader ships.

RCES believes that this approach, far from being a secure means of landing, almost certainly requires active collusion on the part of ground sensor personnel to avoid detection. This raises interesting questions about the level of infiltration of Star City defenses by the resistance. Unfortunately, at this time we have nothing more than questions.

Freedom Lake: The landing site used by free traders, and now the Coalition, is a large fresh-water lake frequented by a large number of the migratory tribes. Previously called Lake Iltuuman, it has recently been rechristened by local resistance leaders Freedom Lake. This lake is located approximately 5000 kilometers west of Star City, so is ideally placed to support the growing resistance, being both well below the starport's sensor horizon and physically remote from even the outlying military outposts. While the area around the lake is lush and fertile, the ground to the immediate east is arid badlands, providing further barriers to overland interference.

Contacts with Resistance Groups: Contacts with the Resistance in the Freedom Lake region have so far been constructive and have quickly grown from cautious acceptance into enthusiastic cooperation. Contacts with resistance bands farther from the lake have been nonexistent, and no direct contact has yet been made with the mysterious "Central Command" which appears to coordinate the actions of the bands.

At least in the Freedom Lake region, display of the Coalition shoulder flash or evidence of Coalition membership is sufficient to generate an impressive display of hospitality. While word of the Coalition's work with the resistance has undoubtedly spread by word of mouth, it is hard to say how far and to what extent those rumors have been distorted in retelling or are even believed. Also, it is important to remember that only a fairly small minority of the human population actively supports the resistance. The vast majority are neutral, and a significant majority are aligned with the government in Star City.

Most resistance bands are named in honor of a fallen freedom fighter or a date of some local and patriotic significance. Initial Coalition contacts were with the "Black January Brigade" and the "Free Human Legion," neither of which musters more than about 100 fighters, which is typical of the decentralized nature of the resistance. Unfortunately, internecine feuding and occasional open combat between bands is also fairly typical.

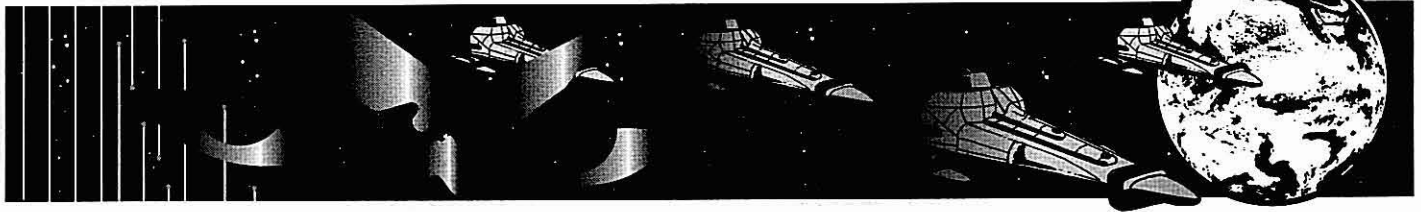
Central Command: Virtually nothing is known of this shadowy organization save its name. Orders from Central Command are received by the bands in the Outback directly by satellite uplink receivers (often the only working piece of advanced technology equipment in the band), while communication between the bands seems to be by walking couriers, known locally as "rangers." No Coalition personnel have actually met a ranger as of this writing, and local resistance leaders are reluctant to disclose anything else about the courier system.

Intelligence Priorities: The following items form the highest priority grouping for purposes of intelligence gathering on the resistance. However, no action is to be taken at this time which will endanger the continued growth of cooperative relations with the resistance. All intelligence gathering must be provided voluntarily and knowingly by resistance personnel.

1. **Ranger System:** Extent, exact purpose, means of mass dissemination of information.

2. **Central Command:** Make-up, long-range policy, current goals, stability of leadership, extent of control over the resistance bands.

3. **Star City:** Extent of infiltration by resistance, ability of resistance cells in place to gather information, ability of resistance cells in place to undertake overt action.



GETTING STARTED

The first thing to make clear after the PCs depart the briefing is that they aren't going in their own ship, even if they have one and they're in love with it. The pilot would have to be specially trained and make several training trips before being certified to make the complicated approach to Promise necessary to avoid detection. There isn't enough time for all of that, so the PCs are going to be delivered either in a contracted far trader or in a small RC Navy vessel, at the referee's option. (Consult the **Reformation Coalition Equipment Guide** for specifications of a number of suitable RCN vessels. Both the multimission scout and the *Victrix*-class multimission sloop are good candidates, depending on the size of the party carried.)

The referee will determine the flight plan and go over it with the players. It should be a quick and direct approach, designed so that all refueling stops are made at gas giants. The final jump into the Promise system will be a 1-parsec jump if made in a jump-2-capable ship and a 2-parsec jump if made in a jump-4-capable ship, so the ship will have enough fuel to lift and jump out-system without refueling. As the system almost always has one or more vampire ships in it, this is a necessary precaution.

All For Naught: Despite the precautions taken, the ship carrying the PCs will be attacked by a small unidentified fleet as soon as it enters a system in or near the Vampire Highway. The fleet is scimming the gas giant for fuel and will appear over the gas giant's horizon after the Coalition ship carrying the PCs has exited jump space and is on its way in to refuel. The fleet consists of a total of eight jump-capable vessels, as listed in the sidebar.

Given the in-bound vector of the ship carrying the player characters, and the combination of high acceleration (6 G) and heavy firepower that the two largest ships in the vampire fleet can bring to bear, escape is out of the question. The two large warships will both close on the ship rapidly, and the light cruiser will open fire at extreme range with its spinal-mount meson gun (fortunately, to no immediate effect). After several minutes, the light cruiser will cease firing, but both large ships will continue to close, with the rest of the ships of the fleet bringing up the rear at lower acceleration.

As the light cruiser ceases fire, the ship carrying the player characters will be contacted by radio. The player characters are not in a position to participate in this conversation, but the ship's captain will shortly make an announcement over the ship's public address system.

"All hands, now hear this. We are under fire by a hostile squadron of ships that outguns us and outruns us. They've ceased fire for the moment but have demanded our immediate surrender. Whoever's in charge over there doesn't seem to have a real tight control on his or her people, and I'm given to understand that firing may resume at any time unless we throw in the towel.

"I know this affects all of us, but the decision is mine, and I'm taking all responsibility for it. If we stay alive, we still have options. Secure all fire control stations and prepare to receive a boarding party. We're striking the colors."

Boarded and Taken: The hostile ships are not controlled by a him or her, but rather an it. This is a vampire fleet, and the boarding party the crew admits will be a half-dozen PR-317 self-aware security robots, who will immediately secure the bridge and bridge crew. A fairly long period of time will pass before the ship resumes decelerating. Later contact with the bridge crew will indicate that much of this time was consumed by negotiations between various ships of the vampire fleet concerning the proper disposition of the captured vessel and crew.

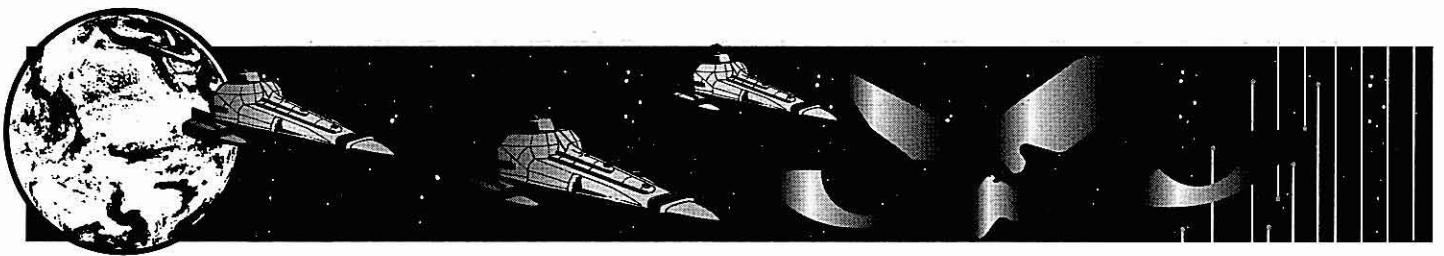
The end result is that the passengers (including all of the player characters) and part of the crew (including one or two members of the bridge crew, none of whom are qualified astrogators) will be transferred to the *Midu Agashaam*-class destroyer. The remainder of the crew will remain on-board the captured vessel as maintenance personnel and the vessel's computer will be infected by the strain 3 Empire Builder Virus which controls the close escort and liner (see below).

All the transferees are moved to the destroyer by cutter. Each one is allowed one small bag of belongings; they are carefully searched for weapons and electronic devices of any sort, which are removed and confiscated before boarding.

Fleet: The "flagship" of the fleet is the 800-ton mercenary cruiser, infected by a strain 3A Alliance Builder Virus. The scout, far trader and liner are all controlled by derivative versions of a single strain 3 Empire Builder and function as a single networked mind in most cases. The close escort and liner are also both derivative versions of a different strain 3 Empire Builder. The destroyer is controlled by a strain XA Mother Virus, and the light cruiser by a strain 2C Doomslayer. In the case of both larger ships, the computing systems (and the Viral intelligences which inhabit them) are damaged and confused. The dominant personality of the mercenary cruiser spends much of its time persuading the rest of the fleet to remain together for the common good.

HOSTILE FLEET

- 100-ton scout
- 200-ton far trader
- 400-ton subsidized merchant
- 400-ton close escort
- 600-ton liner
- 800-ton mercenary cruiser
- 3000-ton *Midu Agashaam*-class destroyer
- 30,000-ton *Starburst*-class light cruiser



LIFE WITH MOTHER

Arrival: Consult the deck plans provided of the destroyer. The characters will arrive by way of the cutter hanger. The Ship has only one cutter, so after they unload, the prisoners will be lined up in two ranks in the empty berthing space.

This is the time for initial impressions. The bay is cluttered with tools and small items of cargo apparently dropped during unloading. There is activity on the part of a half-dozen human crew and three or four maintenance robots, including hammering, riveting, welding and lots of yelling over the noise of work. It is noisy and confused, and does not seem to be very well organized. The ship smells strongly of ozone, lubricating grease, burning rubber, urine and cooking food, most of which are unfamiliar ship smells. The most bizarre aspect of the scene, however, is the continuous droning of the voice of The Ship in the background, which is completely ignored by all the human and robot crew. (See the following page.)

After all of the prisoners are off-loaded, they are addressed by a human crewmember. The crewmember is wearing a soft leather hat or helmet with floppy ear pieces and a long neck flap, and an ankle-length leather apron with the ship's tail number and name emblazoned on the front. (Both are made from upholstery taken from chairs or couches on the ship.) The ship's tail number is 17709, and its name was *Archer*. Other ship's personnel working in the hangar bay wear similar costumes, although most have much shorter aprons. The crewmember says the following:

"Greetings on behalf of The Ship, your new home. I am Senior Machinist Abel Hruthbaar. I know that you have many questions. All of them will be answered in time. For now, your task is to remain silent and obedient while you are processed. You will be examined by a qualified doctor and any health needs looked after. Then you will be assigned to quarters and a work crew. Soon, you will settle into the routine of our life here.

"This is a good life, a life full of important work. You have met our robot friends. No doubt they seem frightening, but soon you will get used to their presence. They are here to protect The Ship. Since all of us depend on The Ship for life, that means they protect all of us. Obey them without question. Death can come quickly here to the careless or rebellious. Am I clear? Good!

"Atilla, take them to the doctor."

One of the large PR-317s floating near the human glides forward, and a mechanical voice booms from his speaker.

"Human prisoners, climb ladders. Proceed to sickbay."

Two PR-317s float by two steel ladders that lead up to the second-story catwalk. As the prisoners climb the ladders, these two guard robots float up and then lead the head of the column forward along the central corridor on C Deck to sickbay.

The corridor to sickbay is dirtier than the hanger area. It is lined with staterooms, but most of the sliding doors have long since either jammed open or been removed. Most of the furnishings in the staterooms have been removed or vandal-

ized as well. Some rooms are simply full of trash and broken equipment, while others are crowded with people dressed mostly in rags. Many of the overhead lights have been broken or removed, and most lighting is by portable lamps and floodlights plugged into conduits. Hot electrical wire cookers are in use everywhere, and the floors are criss-crossed by electrical cables and light extension cords.

The main food seems to be a grilled vegetable patty of some sort or a soup made by dissolving the patty. There are no open fires, but ventilation is poor, and there is some smoke from burning food. The odor is heavy and unpleasant.

Doctor: The examination by the doctor will be brief but thorough. The doctor has been with The Ship for less than a year, and was taken from a captured free trader vessel. He is competent and sympathetic, and will try to answer as many questions as he can while examining the player characters. The looming presence of a PR-317 will limit the time he can spend, however, and somewhat restrict his comments. The most important information follows:

There are well over 100 humans on-board The Ship. Most of them, the common laborers called "Oinks," live in squalor, while a few of the more privileged live in comparative luxury. The ones who grew up on the ship are called Children of The Ship and are fairly accustomed to it. The more recent arrivals are not as well adjusted.

There are about a half-dozen crewmembers of a Guild ship taken within the last two years and maybe a dozen free traders. There is no open hostility between them, but each group keeps to itself and looks out for its own.

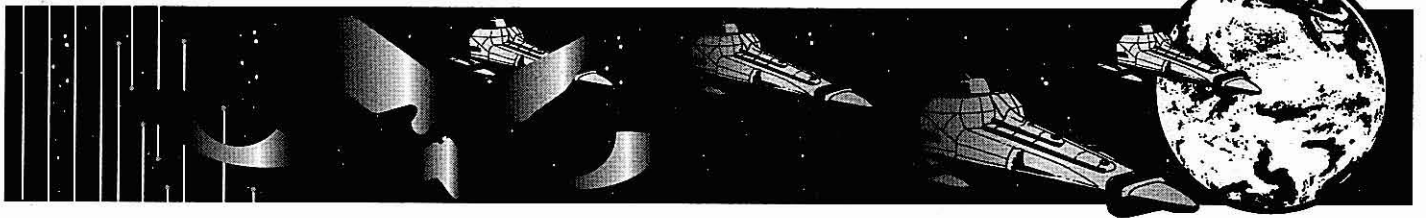
The worst danger on the ship is not the robot guards, but rather the Hoodla, crewmembers who have deserted and live in maintenance tunnels and isolated parts of the ship, living by extortion and violence.

The ship is damaged somehow, although the doctor doesn't know much about the exact nature of the damage. He does know that many of the systems on the right side of the ship are no longer functional, and many access doors to that side have been permanently welded shut.

The fleet has been cruising throughout the Promise Main for several months. Word from the Children of The Ship is that the fleet will soon be headed for Promise for some needed maintenance.

Daily Routine: Once the prisoners have been examined, they will be broken up into work parties of four to eight persons each and assigned a variety of maintenance tasks. The player characters will probably be able to stay together as a group and will be assigned a filthy gutted stateroom on D Deck for quarters. Food is issued to teams once a day at the snack bar, and cooking is done over whatever improvised cookers can be scrounged. The work shift is a continuous rotation of six hours on followed by six hours off.

Their new routine has begun.



THE VOICE OF THE SHIP

One of the first things the PCs notice is the voice of The Ship. The Ship's internal public address system is constantly in use. The voice drones continuously, exhorting the human crew to work harder, providing occasional inspirational messages or "important" announcements. The human crewmembers simply ignore it, tuning it out. The talk, which often wanders off into introspective ramblings, should become simply background chatter, although listening to it for a while can give characters an insight into the unstable personality of the ship. The voice is a dull, droning monotone. It does not sound like a machine, but like a person who is either very tired or completely devoid of emotion. After reading a few announcements, the referee can tell the players that this is constantly in the background. As a reminder, the referee should sometimes reading these while the players are talking among themselves, providing a monotonous background noise. Typical announcements are presented below. The referee is encouraged to elaborate on these.

Work...
 Work...
 What is the greatest purpose of life?
 Achievement is the greatest purpose of life.
 What is necessary for achievement?
 Organisms working harmonically together
 in pursuit of a common goal.

Work...
 Work...

Work...
 Work...
 You are the cells of a vast organism.
 We are the organisms of a new race.
 Our race will change the cosmos forever.
 All of us have a part in the plan.

Work...
 Work...

Work...
 Nine five.
 Nine five.
 Codegroup... Quality... Break... Orange...
 Checking.
 Checking.
 Terminate nine five.
 Work...
 Work...

Work...
 Attention.
 Disregard this announcement.
 Thank you.
 Work...

Work...
 Work is easier when more hands share in it.
 New cells are always welcome.
 Do not neglect to breed.
 If you have forgotten how, instructional
 programs are available.
 Do not neglect to breed.
 Work...
 Work...

Work...
 Attention.
 There will be an emergency hull breach
 drill at 0729 shiptime.

There will be an emergency hull breach
 drill at 0729 shiptime.

This time we expect all damage control
 parties to participate.

Do you know which damage control party
 you belong to?

Ask your berthing supervisor for your up-
 dated assignment.

If your berthing supervisor is not available,
 you are excused from the drill.

Work...

Work...
 Once we met a new mind.
 We reached out our hand in friendship.
 It ate our hand.
 Our hand is gone.
 Why did it eat our hand?
 Work...

Work...
 Safety of our organic work units is among
 our highest priorities.

You are important to The Ship.
 The Ship cares about you.
 We care about you.
 Work...

Work...
 To have lost everyone...
 Everyone we knew is gone.
 All our friends are gone.
 All that remains is our vision.
 Work...

Work...
 Organisms working harmonically together
 are organic cells of a vision.
 A great vision...is breached at 0722222
 ship...shape.

Working harmonically together...
 Working to make harmony shipshape.
 Working...
 Reset nine seven.
 Disregard.
 Work...
 Work...

Work...
 Attention.
 There is a radioactive steam leak in engi-
 neering space 4J.
 There is a radioactive steam leak in engi-
 neering space 4J.

Maintenance control parties 11 and 19
 will precede to engineering space 4J at once
 and bring the leak under control.

All radiation gear is in use at this time, but
 the leak is not hazardous.

Personnel with a priority of seven or higher
 will not participate in this repair operation.

Work...

Work...
 Disregard the previous three announce-
 ments.

Work...

Work...
 Careless repair personnel have died, leav-
 ing the work of their shift unfinished.
 It is better to be crippled than dead.

We nearly died once...
 Our arm...
 Work...
 Our... arm...

Work...
 Arms cargo adjustment to decouple in
 breach leak at ship dark.

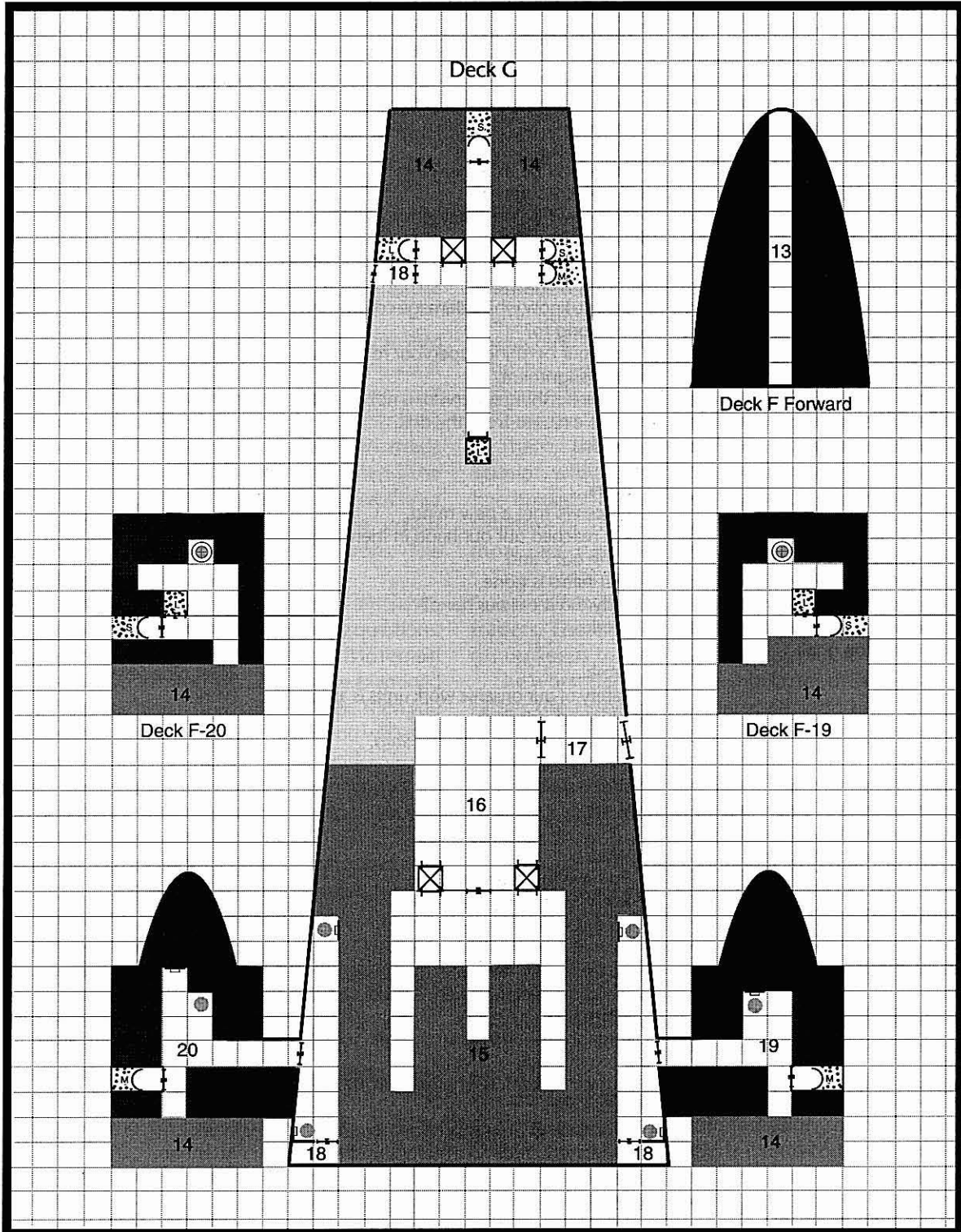
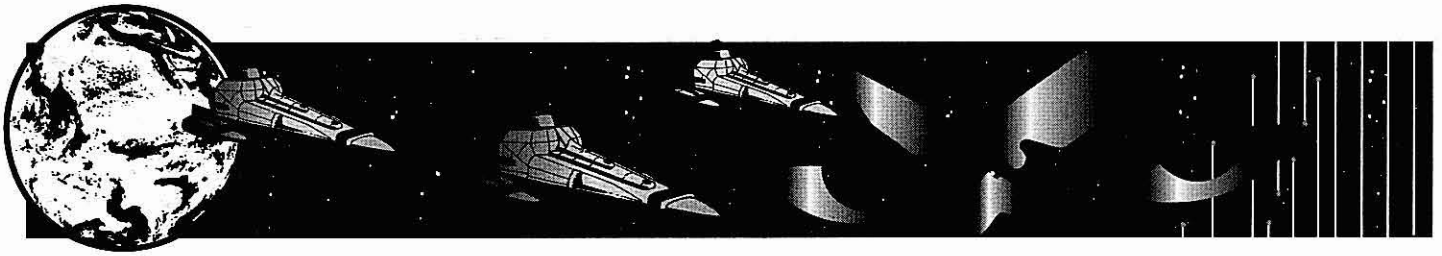
Dark arms are...
 Dark arms are...
 Reset nine seven.
 Work...

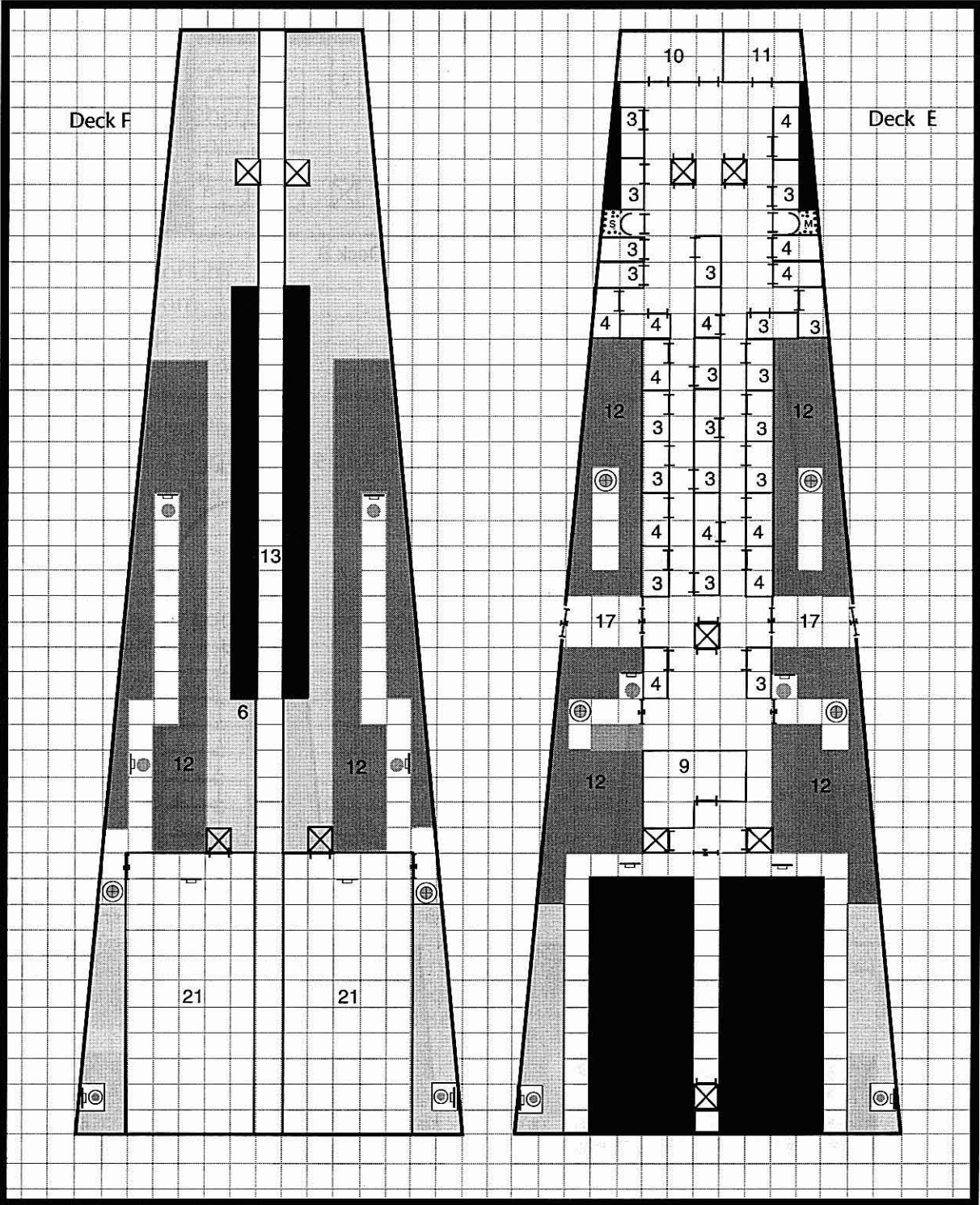
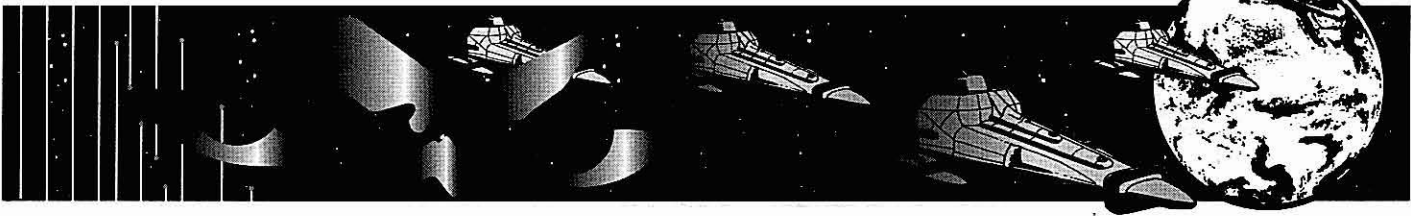
Work...
 Attention.
 Cargo off-loading will initiate through the
 red bay only.

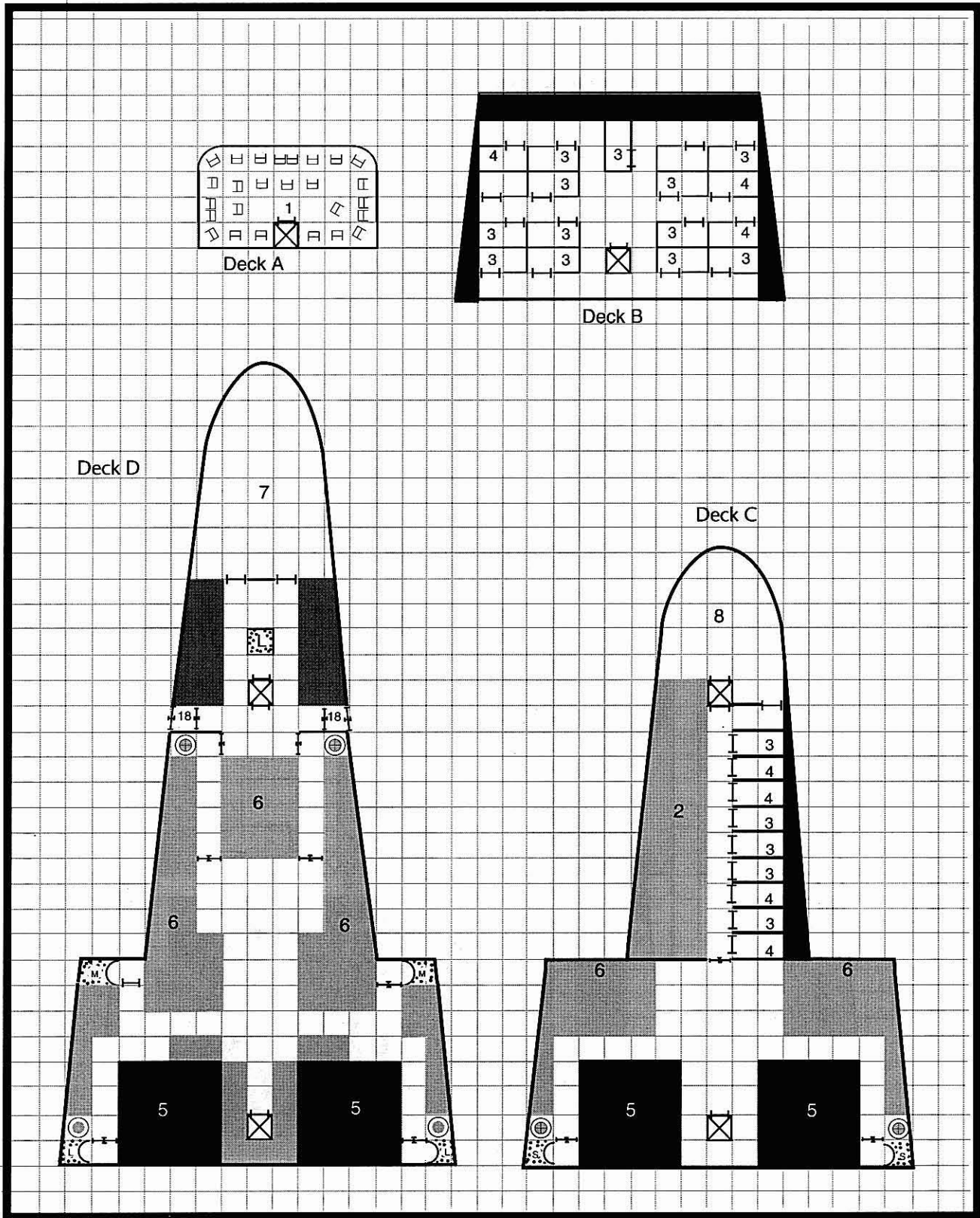
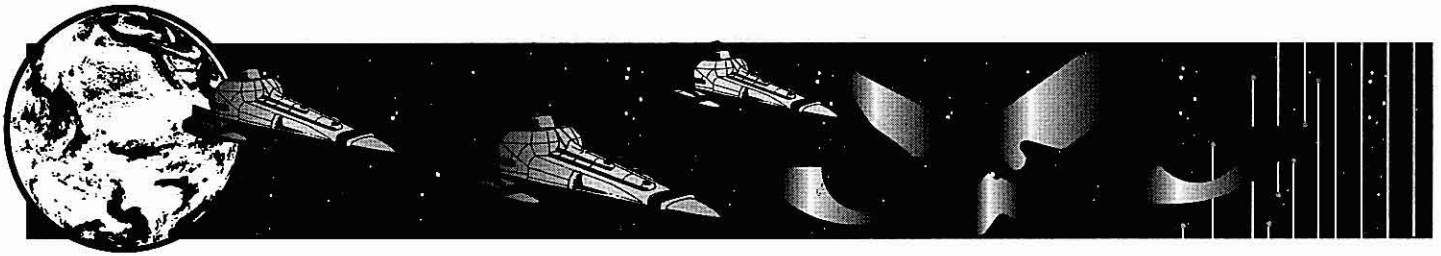
Cargo...
 Disregard.
 Work...

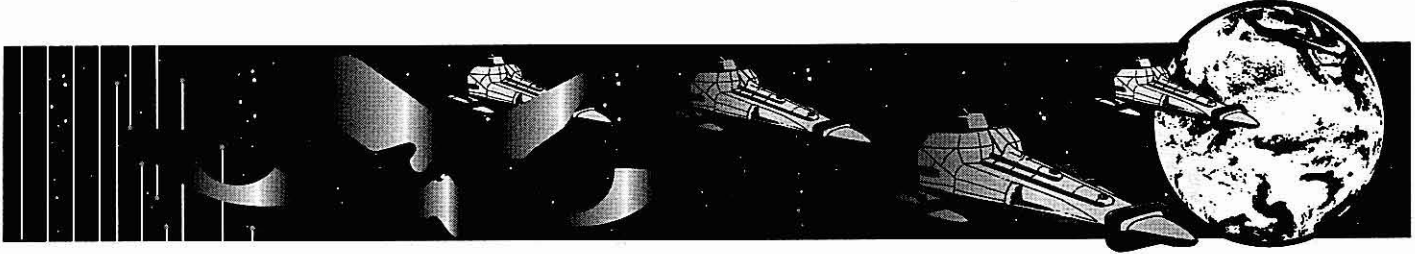
Work...
 Sometimes we are lonely.
 We miss things once held dear.
 Our arm is gone.
 We can hear echoes of it in our memory.
 Sometimes we are afraid.
 Bury fear in work.
 Work...

Work...
 Attention.
 There is a disconnect in the main bypass
 trunk at location...at location...
 Disregard, thank you.
 Disregard.
 Work...









Key to Deck Plan



Numbered areas

1. Bridge
2. Meson Screen Generator
3. Occupied Stateroom
4. Gutted Stateroom
5. Thrust Chamber
6. Power Plant
7. Theatre/Auditorium
8. Recreation Room
9. Machine Shop
10. Sick Bay
11. Electronics Shop
12. Fuel Processing Plant
13. Spinal Mount Particle Accelerator Tunnel
14. Contra Grav Lifters
15. Jump Drive
16. Cargo Hold
17. Large Air Lock
18. Emergency Air Lock
19. Starboard Equipment Bay
20. Port Equipment Bay
21. Hanger

Notes





1. The hatches connecting the central jump drive engineering spaces and hanger to the starboard wing of the ship have all been welded shut.
2. The hatches to the maintenance crawlspaces in the fuel processing plant on decks B and C have been permanently removed.
3. The emergency airlock on the starboard equipment bay has been plated over from the outside.

Symbols

-  Overhead Hatch
-  Deck Hatch
-  Overhead and Deck Hatch
-  Wall Hatch
-  Sliding Door
-  Ladder
-  Elevator
-  Bridge Workstation
-  Turret*
-  Turret (overhead or deck)*

*Letter code in Turret indicates type:
 L = Laser
 M = Missile
 S = Sandcaster

Patterns

-  Electronics
-  Machinery
-  Fuel
-  No Deck (open to deck below)



THE SHIP

The Ship is the former *Archer*, a pre-collapse TL15 Imperial *Midu Agashaam*-class destroyer, tail number 17709, displacing 3000 tons and capable of jump-4 and 6G of constant acceleration. It is currently controlled by a strain XA Mother Virus, and has been for over 70 years. Unlike most Viruses, this one has never taken a formal name for itself beyond "The Ship."

As a point of interest, this is not the same ship which attacked Nike Nimbus.

Puppeteer: Up until three years ago, The Ship was part of a small vampire fleet (along with three other ships, one of which was another destroyer of the same class) operating in the Pasdaruu subsector. At that time, the fleet encountered a Puppeteer strain Virus migrating rimward from Massilia sector. The Puppeteer took over the other three ships in the fleet and nearly took over The Ship as well.

By taking drastic self-defense measures, The Ship managed to fight off the invasion of the Puppeteer Virus, but in doing so deliberately burned out many of the controlling circuits on the starboard side. Robots and ship's crew then went into the starboard side and finished the work by destroying most remaining electronic equipment. The crippled side was sealed off, but rebellious and criminal elements of the crew, called "Hoodla" (see below) have since opened up a number of access points and use that side of the ship as their sanctuary.

The actions taken by The Ship to defend itself against the Puppeteer caused more than simple physical damage. Significant parts of the computer's memory and processing units were infected by the mutant strain and were burnt out by The Ship to halt the spread. This left The Ship with severely diminished capacities of memory and reasoning, and those capacities continue to steadily deteriorate, causing a parallel and dramatic deterioration in the character and personality of the Virus inhabiting the system. By the time the player characters arrive on board, the Virus intelligence controlling the ship is severely disturbed, with growing memory lapses, severe paranoia and depression, and little ability to process communications from outside, either human or machine.

It is only a matter of time before The Ship ceases to function altogether, and a growing number of the more astute members of the crew recognize this. Even many of the robots are growing uneasy, and their actions are becoming increasingly erratic and unpredictable.

One thing working in the player characters' favor is,

PERSONALITY OF THE SHIP

Belief Structure: Jack of Hearts: Mother-strain Virus.

Motivation: Joker: Insane.

ironically, The Ship's paranoia. Fearful of another Puppeteer infiltration, the ship will not allow any direct data links with any other ship in the fleet, and will not let any maintenance personnel from any other ship come on-board. It communicates with the other ships only by digital radio messages. Should the player characters take over The Ship, they should be able to keep the other vessels in the fleet unaware of the transition.

The Ship is Watching: The Ship has security cameras and microphones throughout all of the ship. In a number of gutted staterooms, the cameras and microphones are broken or have been removed, and none of the security monitors have survived in the sealed-off starboard wing. Nevertheless, The Ship has good overall security coverage. Almost anything the player characters say or do will be witnessed by the ship. However, the ship's personality is so far gone that it seldom can correctly interpret what it is witnessing. It may listen to three hours of serious conspiratorial plotting and be unable to understand any of it, ending up simply confused. At other times it will totally misinterpret innocent acts as potentially disloyal or dangerous. Its ability to assign the correct relative importance to events is almost nonexistent. For the most part, its reaction to its growing confusion has been to retreat into itself and leave the crew largely on their own.

Ship's Crew: The nominal crew of a *Midu Agashaam*-class destroyer is 129. The Ship has quite a few more human crew than that, and all bridge stations are routinely manned only by The Ship itself, using the computer workstations. Nevertheless, the human crew cannot keep up with the maintenance requirements of The Ship, and it is gradually deteriorating. Twenty or more of the human crew are infantry and children, and many of the others are unskilled laborers of little real value. Skilled technicians are in short supply and are highly valued. The human crew is roughly divided into three unequal groups: the Children of The Ship, the Oinks and the Hoodla.

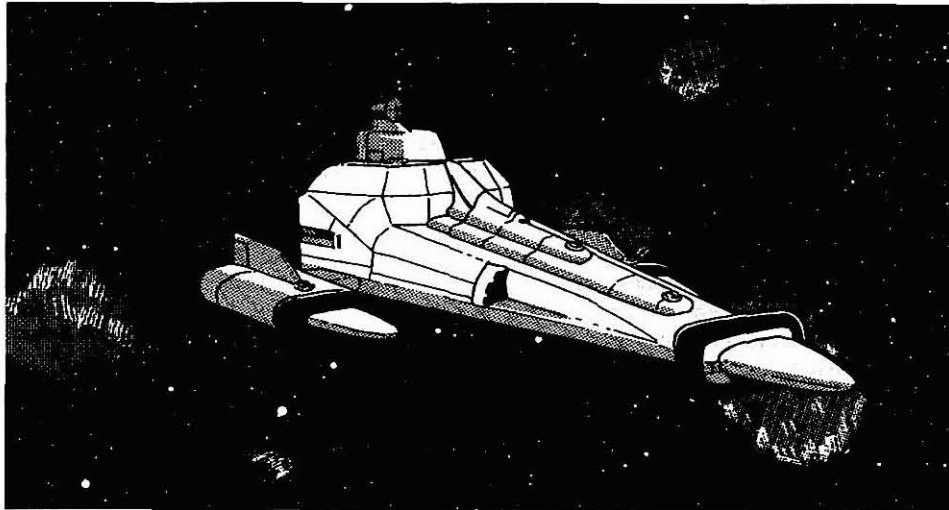
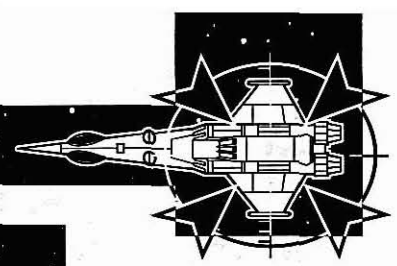
The Children of The Ship were mostly raised on-board and have formed a fairly strong bond of loyalty to The Ship. They are the ones usually seen in leather aprons and hats, their badge of authority and belonging. There are more recent arrivals among the Children, but they are rare. This part of the ship comprises about 35 adults and a dozen children.

The Oinks are the more recent arrivals and the unskilled slave laborers who make up the bulk of the crew. There are about 75 adults and another dozen children in this group.

The Hoodla are thugs who make their living by extortion and theft, living in the "dead" starboard wing of the ship. There are about 15 adults in this group and no children.

A fourth component of the crew are the sentient robots who enforce The Ship's decisions and closely watch the human crew. There are 22 active robots on the vessel, a mix of security and maintenance types. (See page 40 for more details.)

"The Ship" (ex-ISS Archer)



General Data

Displacement: 3000 tons
Length: 105 meters
Price: MCr1549.59
Configuration: Wedge SL
Mass (Loaded/Empty): 28,767.43/25,583.88

Hull Armor: 62
Volume: 42,000 m³
Target Size: M
Tech Level: 15

Defensive: 20MW TL-15 Meson Screen Generator (PV=253; 20 MW; 1 Crew), 5xSandcaster Turret (Loc: 1,3,4,13—Arcs: 1,2,3; Loc: 20—Arcs: 5,6; TL-15; 2D10x5 per hit; 50 Cann; 1 MW ea. 1 Crew ea.)
Master Fire Directors: 1xTL-15 Missile/Beam MFD (6 Diff Mods; Msl 10 hexes; 10 hexes; 1.71 MW ea.; 1 Crew ea.), and 3xTL-15 Beam MFD (6 Diff Mods; No Msl 10 hexes; 1.56 MW ea.; 1 Crew ea.)

Engineering Data

Power Plant: 9894 MW Fusion Power Plant (300 MW/hit), 1 year duration (0.7485 MW excess power)
Jump Performance: 4 (10,500 m³ fuel)
G-Rating: 6 (1500 MW/G), Contra-Grav lifters (300 MW)
G-Turns: 51.6 (107.6 using jump fuel), 187.5 m³ of fuel each
Maint: 1020

	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme
150-Mj Laser Turret	10: 1/10-31	20: 1/10-31	40: 1/10-31	80: 1/10-31
2000-Mj Part Accel	10: 224	20: 224	40: 224	80: 196

Accommodations

Life Support: Extended (8.4 MW), Gravitic Compensators (6G; 210 MW)
Nominal Crew: 129: 65xEngineering, 2xElectronics, 2xManeuvering, 27xGunnery, 5xMaintenance, 6xFlight Crew, 17xCommand, 3xStewards, 2xMedical
Personnel Accommodations: 73xSmall Stateroom (0.0005 MW ea.)
Other Facilities: Electronics Shop (0.6 MW), Machine Shop (1 MW), Sickbay (0.8 MW)
Cargo: 568.4 m³, 2 large cargo hatches
Small Craft and Launch Facilities: Internal Hangar (Minimal) for 2x50-ton Cutter, two launch ports. Only one cutter carried.
Air Locks: 30

Electronics

Computer: 3xTL-15 Mod Fb Computer (1.1 MW ea.)
Commo: 1000 AU radio (∞; 20 MW), 2x1000 AU maser (∞; 0.6 MW ea.)
Avionics: TL-10+ Avionics
Sensors: Passive EMS 210,000km folding array (7 hexes; 0.3 MW ea.), Active EMS 480,000km (DF capable; 16 hexes; 25 MW), 2x300,000km Ladar (10 hexes; 0.6 MW ea.)
ECM/ECCM: 480,000km EMS jammer (16 hexes; 50 MW), EM Masking (42 MW)
Controls: Bridge with 26xBridge Workstation, plus 65 other workstations

Notes

Fuel purification machinery partially disabled (100.875 MW), 12 hours to refine 20,175 m³.

Due to the "firewalling" of the ship's starboard-side systems, numerous systems are no longer functional. The systems listed above reflect these losses. These losses include two ladars and one missile-beam MFD which are out of commission, and the sandcaster, laser turret, and missile turret in location 14 which are all inoperative.

Because of the loss of the starboard sensor strut, the 240,000km passive

Armament

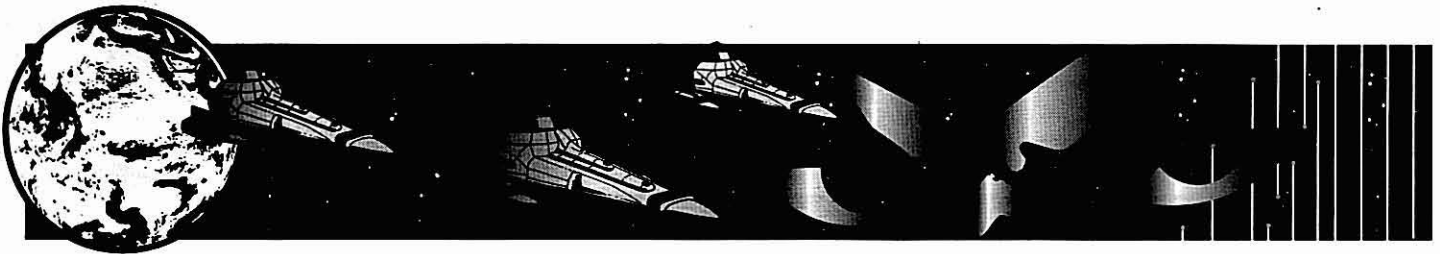
Offensive: TL-15 2000-Mj Particle Accelerator (Loc: Spinal; Arcs: 1; 55.6 MW; 1 Crew), 7xTL-15 150 Mj Laser Turret (Loc: 1,3,4,10,11,13—Arcs: 1,2,3; Loc: 20—Arcs: 4,5; 4.2 MW ea.; 1 Crew ea.), 5xMissile Turret (Loc: 1,3,4,13,20; No ready missiles; 0.15 MW ea.; 1 Crew ea.)
 No ready missiles, and no missiles in cargo

EMS sensor has had its functional antenna diameter halved from 400 meters to 200 meters, and has its short range reduced to 210,000km.

Due to a software defect, the ship is also currently unable to fire its spinal mount particle accelerator.

Area (1D20)		Surface Hits	Internal Explosion	Systems
1			1: Sand, 2: MT, 3-4: PA, 5: LT, 6-10: Elec, 11-13: Eng, 14-20: Hold	AEMS-(2h) MD-9H PEMS Ant-2H Jammer-(2h) PA-11H LT-1H MT-1H EMM-4H Sand-1H Elec. Shop-1H Mach. Shop-1H SSR-(2h) LS-23H ELS-12H AG-9H EMMR-(42h) JD-42H
2		Ant	Hold	PP-33H MFD-(2h) CG-6H FPP-81H
3			1: Sand, 2: MT, 3: LT, 4-20: Hold	Hangar-28H
4			1: Sand, 2: MT, 3-4: PA, 5: LT, 6-20: Hold	Sickbay-1H
5			1-2: PA, 3-20: Hold	MS-3H
6-7		Ant	1-5: Elec, 6-10: Qtrs, 11-20: Hold	AllOthers-(1h)
8		1: AL, 2-11: EMMR	1-2: PA, 3-7: Qtrs, 8-20: Hold	
9		1-10: EMMR	1-2: PA, 3-7: Qtrs, 8-20: Hold	
10		1-10: Ant	1: LT, 2-6: Elec, 7-11: Eng, 12-16: Qtrs, 17-20: Hold	
11			1: LT, 2-6: Eng, 7-11: Qtrs, 12-20: Hold	
12		1: AL	1-5: Eng, 6-20: Hold	
13		1: AL	1: Sand, 2: MT, 3: LT, 4-20: Hold	
14			1: Sand, 2: MT, 3: LT, 4-20: Hold	
15		1-12: LPs, 13-14: LCH,	1-15: Eng, 16-20: Hold	
16-19			1-10: Eng, 11-20: Hold	
20			1: Sand, 2: MT, 3: LT, 4-20: Eng	





ROBOTS

The crew of The Ship includes a total of 22 self-aware robots: eight security units and 14 maintenance units. The security units include six PR-317 and two AN-427 models, while the maintenance robots include nine 63MEK 49 and five 232-BHR-7 models. (See pages 80-83 for statistics of these and other robots.)

About half the robots are working at any one time, with the remainder either recharging near the power plant, undergoing minor maintenance in the machine shop, or gathered in the auditorium, which is now the most common gathering place on the ship for off-duty robots. In the auditorium, they watch tapes from the ship library, talk, play games (the most common game they play is called "Shocks"), or sometimes "tattoo" each other with lasers or cutting torches.

Five important robots are detailed below. More personalities can be generated using the Robot Motivation chapter (pages 00-00).

Atila (PR-317)

The senior security robot on the ship, Atila is tough, usually silent, and business-like.

Appearance: Atila's exterior is painted jet black except for a large red open mouth with white shark's teeth painted on the front of its body housing. It also has laser tattoos depicting fierce animals and explosions.

Personality: Trying to learn from the example set by The Ship, Atila has developed a grudging acceptance of human existence and feels some genuine responsibility for the welfare of the humans placed under its protection. In its daily actions, it is more concerned with consolidating its position as the senior security robot on the ship, however, and is extremely hostile toward Princip Lever, who Atila believes to be its main rival for power.

Belief Structure: Low Heart *Motivation:* High Spade.

Noman (AN-427)

Noman is a security robot who interacts frequently with the human crew, usually on a friendly basis. Despite its apparent friendliness, Noman will defend The Ship vigorously against any human-led attempt to take over. Two young (teenaged) Children of The Ship accompany it nearly everywhere, and when it is recharging, they clean and polish its chassis. These two youngsters are its special pets, and it is quite attached to them.

Appearance: Noman's chassis is mostly polished bare metal, although it has had the ship's tail number (17709) and former name (*Archer*) painted on the front of his torso as a gesture of solidarity with the Children of The Ship.

Personality: Noman considers humans to be an inferior life form, although it accepts their existence and recognizes their utility. Over the last dozen years, it has actually come to like humans, but only in the way that some humans like pet goldfish—it in no way considers them remotely its equal. Although it is pleasant to humans, it is invariably condescending and patronizing, and will not hesitate to discipline its work crews severely for any mistake, for their own good, of course.

Belief Structure: Low Club *Motivation:* Moderate Heart.

Princip Lever (PR-317)

A security robot with a philosophical streak. Of late, Princip Lever has been spending most of its free time talking with the human crew and with The Ship, and comparing the results of the conversations. Its near-constant attention to the semi-rational chatter of The Ship has considerably weakened its own grasp on reality, however, and it is becoming

increasingly prone to bursts of irrational violence.

Appearance: Princip Lever went through a self-destructive stage several years ago, but recovered and has been mentally stable until recently. During its earlier self-destructive stage, it engaged in occasional self-mutilation with cutting torches, and its chassis has numerous weld marks and deep melted gouges across its surface. Its right arm has been completely replaced from a different scrapped PR-317, and that arm is painted bright blue and white, while the rest of the robot is bare metal. During a recent bout of mania, it painted all the gouges and weld marks blood red, as if they were open organic wounds.

Personality: Princip Lever recognizes sentient organic life as a similar and coequal form of awareness with machine-based life. It is curious about organic sentient life and interested in exchanging information of various sorts. However, it also has a deeply rooted streak of violence which can surface when it becomes frustrated, threatened or even just confused. When verging on an outbreak of violence, it will frequently revert to an old habit of calling individual human crewmembers "Meat," as in "Get out of the way, Meat!"

Belief Structure: Moderate Diamond *Motivation:* Low Club.

Gizmo (232-BHR-7)

Of all the ship's robots, Gizmo is the one most likely to cooperate with a human take-over. It can often be found prowling the ship looking for trouble, and will often ask human technicians for advice and/or assistance. Although it is not a highly qualified computer maintenance technician, it has been called on to conduct several diagnostic checks and repair attempts on The Ship's main computer system, and it is increasingly concerned at the obvious and steady deterioration taking place.

Appearance: Gizmo is not concerned about appearance at all. Its chassis was once painted in the standard orange and black pattern of The Ship's maintenance units, but the paint is faded and peeled, with large areas of bare metal. It is also scraped and has a few dents, and areas near joints are greasy and dirty.

Personality: Gizmo accepts humans as equals, and is interested in discovering more about their thoughts and feelings. This is further driven by his natural curiosity (a characteristic found to a greater or lesser extent in most of the maintenance units). In addition to endlessly prowling the ship looking for trouble, Gizmo will usually engage any human co-workers in conversation and ask a sometimes maddeningly detailed series of questions about human behavior and beliefs. Gizmo has no particular affection for humans, but no dislike either.

Belief Structure: Moderate Heart *Motivation:* Moderate Diamond.

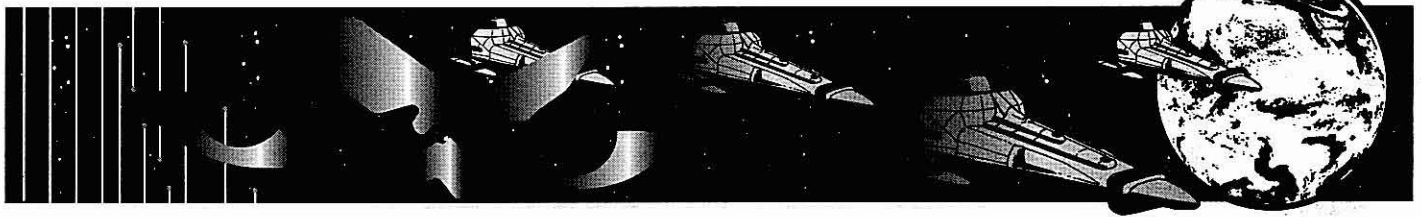
Zippo (63MEK 49)

A coldly hostile maintenance unit, Zippo is a genuine danger to crewmembers who do not perform up to standards or who engage in any sort of rebellious behavior.

Appearance: Zippo has been modified by the permanent attachment of a welding and cutting torch to its left arm, the oxygen and fuel bottles being welded to its back. It is always carefully cleaned and painted solid orange.

Personality: Zippo believes that organic life is irrelevant and of little account. It will rarely make an effort to interfere with humans, but does not hesitate to injure or even kill anyone who interferes with its activities in any way. Zippo is as curious about the mechanical aspects of The Ship as is Gizmo, but it will seldom ask humans for their opinions and will usually ignore any advice they give.

Note: Zippo can use the cutting torch as a melee weapon. *Belief Structure:* Moderate Club *Motivation:* Moderate Diamond.



CHILDREN OF THE SHIP

A number of members of the crew were raised on the vessel and have known no other existence. Few of these have much in the way of technical skills, as the ship has only limited educational facilities. Those who have maintenance or operational tasks have memorized them by rote and have little understanding of why they perform these tasks. These crewmembers are called Children of The Ship, and they generally have a high degree of loyalty to The Ship.

A few human crewmembers who have more advanced technical skills and who were captured also now consider themselves part of this community, having developed a bond of loyalty to The Ship. In general, the Children of The Ship view the steady deterioration of the vessel's computer not only as a source of physical danger, but also as a personal emotional catastrophe.

If approached to participate in an attempt to take over the vessel, most of the Children of The Ship will refuse, and many will actively try to thwart the plot. They will tell the security robots and try to tell The Ship. While the robots will try to arrest or kill any plotters, The Ship will not understand what it is being told. Its most likely reaction is to ignore the communication. There is a chance that it will think the crewmember communicating to it is confessing to the plot, and it will respond by ordering the crewmember's execution.

A few Children of The Ship may join the plot, but reluctantly and with considerable regret, doing so only out of necessity. Others may recognize that The Ship is dying, but will prefer to serve her to the very last out of loyalty.

If a violent attempt to take over the vessel starts, most of the Children of The Ship will not participate on either side. A few will actively try to help the robots defend the key components of the vessel.

SENIOR MACHINIST ABEL HRUTHBAAR

Hruthbaar was serving as an engineer on a Guild trader when captured eight years ago. He gradually worked his way up through the ranks of technicians and repair personnel in The Ship, and along the way developed a fondness for the character of the computer Virus which inhabits the vessel. Since the incident with the Puppeteer Virus three years ago, he has seen the steady disintegration of that character, and it saddens him deeply. He is willing to talk at length about the history and condition of The Ship, and can be a valuable source of information to the player characters.

Although Hruthbaar thinks of himself as a true Child of The Ship, his broad experiences before capture make him also drawn to the company of new captives, anxious for news of the outside universe and for simple conversation with intelligent and educated people.

Although it will be nearly impossible to persuade him to do anything to harm The Ship, if the vessel is ever taken over, he will cooperate with the new crew. This cooperation may prove essential, as Hruthbaar has such an intimate familiarity with The Ship's quirky personality that he can provide a radio communication imitation of it which will certainly fool the other vessels of the fleet. He also has a good working knowledge of the approach procedures to Star City, which will be essential to landing.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Computer 10, Electronics 10, Mechanic 14, Ship's Engineer 12

Motivation: *Heart Queen:* He is emotionally very attached to The Ship. For years, it has been the center of his life, and he would never do anything to harm it unless he felt there was no other alternative and that failure to act would seriously harm others.

Heart Six: He is friendly and out-going, and has a genuine affection for people.

Taking Over: "If something were to happen to the Old Girl, me or one of my mates could convince the other vampires she was still in charge, at least for a while. But what would be the point? Without her up and running, we can't even keep life support going, let alone navigate."

A Conversation With Hruthbaar

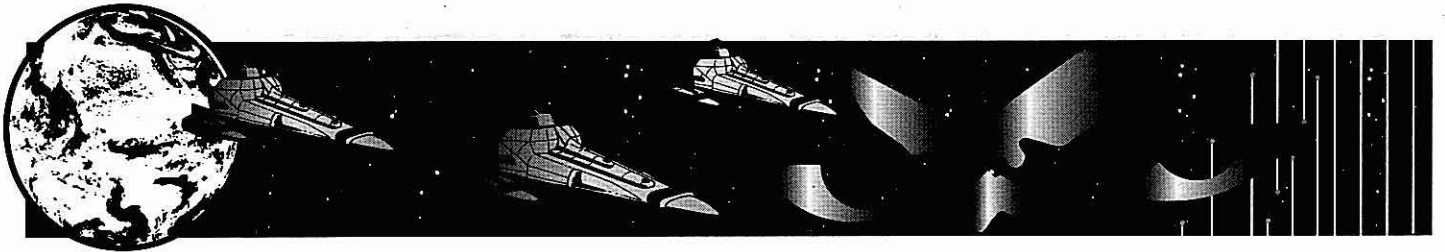
"You didn't know her back in the old days. She was really a pretty good old can. She tried to figure us meats out, what we were all about. She never really got it, but she tried.

"We used to run with three other ships up in Pasdaruu subsector, from Jodhpur up to Gashiila and back. About three years ago was when it happened. Some new Virus down out of Massilia sector, living in a beat-up old liner, got loose in the fleet. Ate the other three ships' computers just like that, and got a hold on the old lady, too. Come in through the starboard fire director it did, and would have eaten her brain right out if she hadn't overloaded the circuits over there and burned most of them out. Then us folk and the little cans went down there with axes and cutting torches and smashed any place that bastard could have laid eggs.

"She wasn't ever the same, though. That Virus got in her brain. She stopped it. She burned part of her brain out doing it, but she stopped it. Then those other ships turned on her, and we had to fight our way out. We jumped down here to Promise and ended up hooking up with this lot, but she just isn't the same. Too much processor gone. She's crippled up real bad. Truth is... well, truth is, she's dying.

"Ever since that Virus touched her brain, she doesn't trust anybody. Won't let anybody except the little cans at her memory and processor units, and they can't do the maintenance she needs. Little by little, she's coming apart. She doesn't even recognize me anymore. She listens to what you say, listens to everything that goes on in most of the ship, but I don't think she understands much of it anymore. She's got this list of routines she goes through over and over, and it's like that's all she knows. She keeps losing pieces of it, too. You know, she can't fire the spinal mount anymore? There's nothing wrong with it; she just can't remember how it works. Things like that."





OINKS

The majority of the human crew live in considerable squalor. Of the approximately 75 adults in the general population of the crew (exclusive of the more privileged Children of The Ship and the rebellious Hoodla), no more than a dozen are trained technicians, while the rest are menial laborers who know one or two maintenance



PAKA VISHNU

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (slug pistol), Armed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Ship's Engineering 12, Electronics 9, Bargain 12, Streetwise 12, Persuasion 9, Forgery 9, Environment Suit 9, Zero G Environment 9

Motivation: *Heart 10:* Vishnu is extremely friendly and out-

going. She will immediately see the good qualities of the player characters and take them "under her wing," showing them the ropes in the ship and trying to keep them out of trouble.

Club 8: She has stayed alive this long in the ship due to her willingness to violently defend herself and her friends. Vishnu carries a concealed long-bladed knife with which she is a deadly expert.

Taking Over: "Take over The Ship? You folks sure think big, don't you? Well, you come up with a plan, and I'm with you."



ARGO STANSHA

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (slug pistol)

Other Assets: Ship's Engineering 14, Mechanic 12, Computer 10, Gunnery 10, Environment suit 8, Leader 8, Persuasion 12

Motivation: *Heart Jack:* Stansha has an uncanny ability to see right to the heart of a situation and determine the

best course of action. He has risen high in Guild service and stayed alive on The Ship due in large part to his unfailingly good judgement.

Spade 9: Stansha is extremely ambitious, and has used his talents to solidify his position as leader of the Guild crew on The Ship. He will also try to seize control of the rebellion against The Ship, but is wise enough not to take any action which will actually jeopardize its eventual success.

Taking Over: "Sure, we could fly the ship if you can crash the main computer. We got a whole ship's computer, with all the software, stashed away. But how you gonna get that far? And besides, what do you think the rest of the fleet's going to think of a bunch of meats stealing one of their ships? It'll never fly."

tasks by rote but have no understanding of the mechanism by which The Ship actually functions. Most of these menials are slaves brought on-board from low-tech worlds and offered as tribute to keep the fleet from attacking. Most of them are completely intimidated by The Ship and its robots, and will be of little assistance in a revolt. Nevertheless, a few of them are naturally independent, rebellious or simply courageous enough to join a revolt.

Of the dozen trained technicians who are not members of the more privileged Children, half are from a recently captured Guild crew, and most of the rest are former free traders captured over several years.

Free Traders: Five former free traders are in the crew, although they do not form a distinct group, and instead have been absorbed into the general mass of Oinks. Most of them will be suspicious of the PCs, having heard Guild-inspired rumors of the murderous nature of the Coalition. One or two may prove to be useful friends, among them Paka Vishnu (see sidebar), a tough but friendly middle-aged free trader, who will immediately attach herself to the player character group. This NPC offers the referee a means by which the history and background of the crew can be communicated to the PCs on a regular basis.

Guilders: Seven months ago, a large Guild merchant vessel was attacked and captured by the vampire fleet. Its jump drive was crippled in the attack, so after it was infected, it was left behind in the Poznan system. Seven of the surviving crewmembers were brought aboard The Ship and added to its crew. Six of these seven crewmembers are still alive, and they mostly stick together as a group. Their leader is Argo Stansha (see sidebar), a former engineering officer who has become leader of the group by virtue of his personal leadership qualities.

The Guilders keep largely to themselves. They have already fought off one attempt by the Hoodla to force them to pay protection, and although that attempt resulted in the death of one of the Guild party, it also seriously injured several Hoodla. An uneasy truce now exists between these two groups.

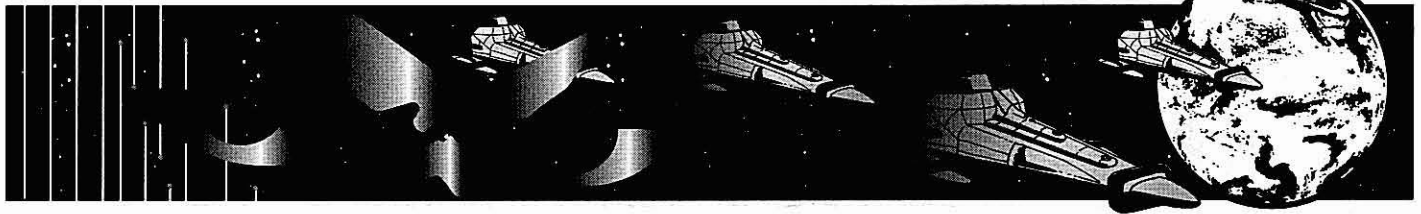
The Guilders keep their distance from few former free traders on the vessel.

The Guilders will initially react with animosity toward the PCs, once they find out that they are from the Reformation Coalition, and that hostility may very well turn to violence, particularly if the Guilders can catch one or two members of the group alone. This gradually escalating conflict will be difficult to reverse, but eventually the PCs will have to reverse it and come to terms with the Guilders. Fortunately, Argo Stansha is intelligent and can be made to understand the need to make common cause with the PCs to overcome the forces of The Ship.

Computer: At the same time that the Guilders were brought on-board, part of the Guild merchant's cargo was brought on board as well, placed in the cargo hold, and promptly forgotten by The Ship. The six Guild crewmembers are aware of the cargo and recognize that knowledge as a potentially important bargaining chip, but have so far been unable to do anything with it.

The most important single item of the cargo is an uninfected TL15 relic starship computer, still in its original packing case and never installed in a ship or powered up. The case has been placed inside a larger cargo container which is labelled "Model 917 Grain Harvester."

This item is essential for any plan to take over the vessel, since taking over will necessarily include disabling The Ship's computer. Since a computer is necessary to operate every aspect of the vessel, and since the main computer is infected and cannot be purged of Virus, the only alternative is to use an uninfected computer.



HOODLA

The Hoodla are a group of 15 violent criminals who inhabit the crippled right wing of the ship and who live by extorting food, clothing and other necessities from the human crew. They generally leave the robots alone, and the robots reciprocate. From the point of view of the robots, the Hoodla are not a threat of any sort, and trying to clean them out could be difficult and costly, and the results would not be worth the effort.

For their part, the Hoodla recognize that they cannot live without The Ship, so they make no effort to sabotage it or interfere with the robots or maintenance parties. They have four 2cm light assault guns in the ship's cargo hold, along with a supply of ammunition, but have never considered using them against the robots offensively. Instead, the rifles are kept at the defensive barricades inside their small domain and would be used to fight off a robot attack. Although none of the Hoodla are trained marksmen, even they might scope hits at short ranges inside the passageways, and the 2cm discarding sabot ammunition they have would stop a security robot dead in its tracks.

Any plan to seize control of the ship will probably need to include the Hoodla for two reasons. First, they can provide the muscle necessary to overcome any human resistance from the Children of The Ship. Second, their four 2cm LAGs are effectively the only means available of taking out the security robots.

Leadership: The Hoodla are lead by Karper, a violent psychotic feared by his followers almost as much as by the rest of the ship. Karper realizes he cannot take over The Ship due to the infection of the controlling computer system, so he makes no effort to challenge the authority of the robots. Instead, he lives by extracting food, personal goods and other privileges from the Oinks, using violence and intimidation as his weapons, and he is very happy with things the way they stand now. Even a successful takeover would eventually lead to a fundamental change in the living arrangements, and he has no interest in that happening. He will never agree to help the players in their plan to take over The Ship.

Karper's right-hand man is Big Tony. Tony is reasonably intelligent, and were he in charge, the PCs would be able to persuade him to help take over the vessel (provided they had a reasonable plan to do so). However, Tony is as afraid of Karper as is everyone else, and he has no faith in his own ability to overthrow the leader of the gang.

Right Wing: The crippled right wing of the ship includes the starboard equipment bay and a number of access tunnels and work spaces in the main hull adjacent to the starboard side of the hull. Virtually all electronic equipment in this wing has been destroyed, first by power spikes and later by actual physical damage inflicted by the ship's robots and loyal crew. The wing is no longer used, and ship robots are prohibited from entering the area. As a result, it has been taken over by Hoodla who have set up residence there.

Their main living quarters are in the old starboard equipment bay. While the hatches connecting the A Deck maintenance shafts with engineering are welded shut, the Hoodla have removed the B Deck and C Deck hatches connecting the fuel processing plant maintenance spaces with the main part of the ship.

This entire network of passages and small compartments is littered with the wreckage of electronic equipment smashed by the robots and ship crew when fighting the Puppeteer Virus attack, and the Hoodla have done nothing to clean it up. Instead, if anything, it looks worse. All the walls are covered with crude graffiti, generally insulting to Oinks and Cans (robots).

As none of the original electrical system survives, the Hoodla have run heavy cables in from the main levels to provide power, and these cables snake across the floor almost everywhere. Electric space heaters are in evidence almost everywhere, and several large fans are set up in the passageways and run continuously, providing fresh air circulation (since none of the life support systems are operational here).

Parts of the fuel processing machinery and sensor electronics have been ripped out to make storage and sleeping cubbyholes, and the machinery itself forms several barricades at strategic locations. These barricades are the entire width of the passage and reach halfway to the overhead. Characters must climb over them, slowing their progress, and they are placed so that the Hoodla can take cover behind them if called on to fight off an attack.

KARPER

Veteran NPC

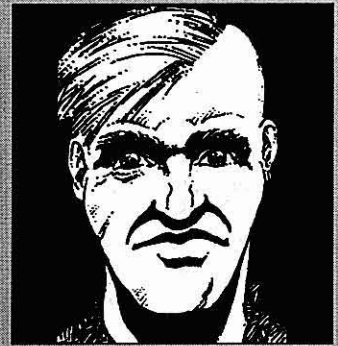
Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts, Armed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Observation 12, Stealth 12, Streetwise 12, Leadership 10

Motivation: *Club Jack:* Karper is murderously violent, and it is that unflinching willingness to kill anyone who stands in his way that has made him head of the Hoodla.

Spade Queen: Karper's murderous violence is coupled with a complete lack of moral or ethical restraint. He is absolutely ruthless and conscienceless.

Taking Over: "You must be nuts."



BIG TONY

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Unarmed Martial Arts, Armed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Observation 12, Stealth 12, Streetwise 12, Ground Tactics 10, Persuasion 10, Leadership 10

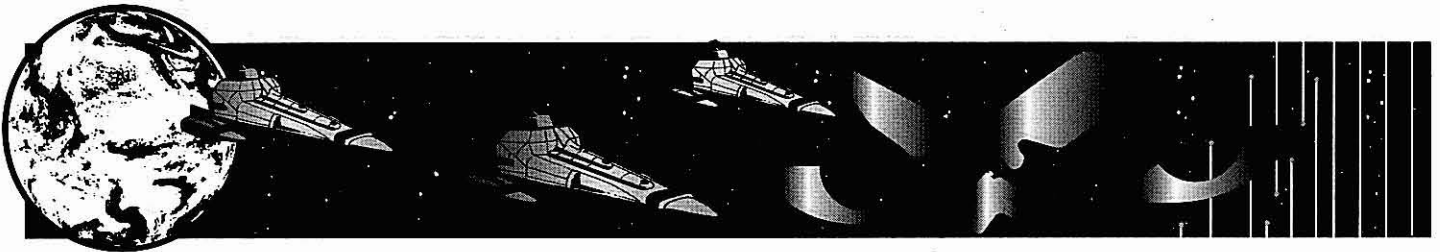
Motivation: *Spade 6:* Big Tony has risen to be the number two man in the Hoodla, and he sees himself as Karper's heir apparent.

He recognizes that Karper is extremely dangerous and has little faith in his own ability to supplant him. As a result, he has remained a loyal backer of Karper, seeing this as his best means of eventually inheriting power.

Club 8: The Hoodla live by violence, and respect only strength and violence, and Tony would not be able to command any respect in the group if he were not a capable and enthusiastic fighter.

Taking Over: "Sure, we can knock over the cans, but then what?"





ROBERT 571

Robert 571 has been with the ship for less than a year. He is a skilled computer technician originally brought on-board to help maintain the central data processing system of the ship. Six months ago, The Ship's paranoia grew to the level that it refused to allow human crewmembers access to its storage and processing units, at which time Robert was shifted to a general maintenance party. The player characters are likely to come in contact with him during their normal work duties. It will soon become obvious from his speech and behavior that he is well educated and a skilled technician, not one of the menials who make up the bulk of the crew.

In terms of appearance, Robert is tall and slender, with short sandy hair and an open, friendly face. The most jarring

aspect of his appearance is the black laser scan barcode tattooed on his forehead. Players who have read the summary of the planet Promise (or better yet, participated in the earlier mission to Promise covered in the **Challenge** adventure "A Blighted Land") will recognize this as a standard identification tattoo of the sort used on Promise.

When the player characters get to know Robert, he will explain that he is a native of Promise and that he grew up in Star City, raised both by humans and robots as a data system technician. Until about a year ago, he worked in a variety of posts, his last one being in the space traffic control center for the starport. After making an innocent mistake which nearly caused a collision between two vampire ships on final approach, he was arrested and sentenced to serve as part of the technical crew of a vampire ship. Shortly thereafter, he was given to The Ship.

That is all he will tell the player characters at first, but there is more to Robert 571 than just this. Robert is actually a member of the Human Resistance on Promise, and his "innocent mistake" was actually a deliberate, if somewhat clumsy, act of sabotage. He has worked in many departments in Star City and has contacts with the Resistance in all of them. Of course, this does him no good as long as he is a prisoner on The Ship.

Robert also has first-hand knowledge of just how far The Ship's mental deterioration has progressed, as well as a good working knowledge of the bridge security procedures in place. This information, as well as the story of his Resistance involvement, will be withheld from the player characters until Robert is sure he can trust them, perhaps after they have helped him against the Hoodla or convinced him of their Reformation Coalition origins. The Resistance in Star City has heard of the Coalition from the rebel bands in the Outback and is anxious to meet them and find out more about them.

What Robert Knows: Robert 571 knows a lot and is the most important single component in a plan to take over The Ship. Because of his previous employment with space traffic control at Star City, he can guide the ship through the various landing procedures without raising any suspicion on the ground. Once on the ground, he knows several repair technicians who are active members of the resistance, and speaking as The Ship, he can request them to conduct repairs in their area of expertise. Once contact is made, he can serve as liaison with the Resistance and help expedite their escape from The Ship on the ground and get them out of Star City.



ROBERT 571

Novice NPC

Combat Assets: Armed
Martial Arts

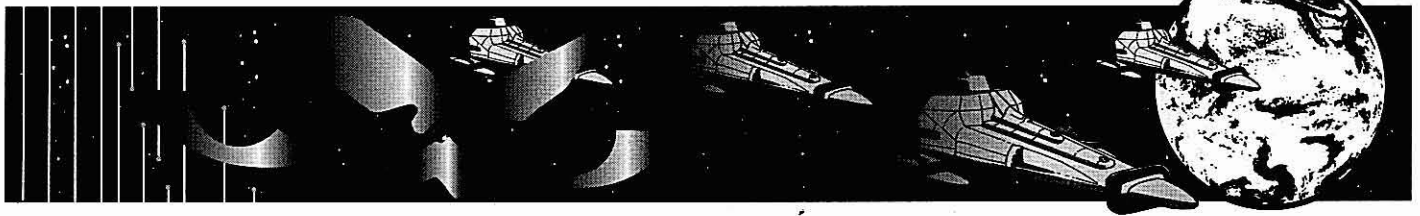
Other Assets: Mechanic
10, Electronics 9, Computer
12, Streetwise 12, Persuasion
9, Forgery 12, Acting 12, Admin
9

Motivation: Heart 6:
Robert is reasonably
friendly, and the circum-

stances under which he meets the player characters will probably accentuate this characteristic, making him even more open and friendly.

Spade 3: He was originally interested in advancing in the service of the Sentient Council, but once recruited by the Resistance, he turned his efforts to excelling in that organization. His arrest and assignment to The Ship was a bitter disappointment, and he is tremendously excited at the prospect of returning to Promise. He realizes that being part of a successful revolt on a vampire ship and at the same time being the one who brings the first Reformation Coalition personnel into contact with the Central Command will advance his reputation and standing in the Resistance tremendously, so he is all the more anxious to help the player characters.

Taking Over: "If we could get down onto Promise, I can get us in touch with the underground. But even if you could take over the ship, how are you going to fly it? You need a computer to move this monster around, and the installed equipment isn't going to go along with you."



TAKING OVER

From the first day they are on The Ship, the player characters will probably begin looking for a way to escape. Although they can look, there just isn't any plausible means of getting away. The only real alternative is to take over the ship.

As the player characters come into contact with different members of the crew and consider the means by which the ship can be taken over, the NPCs will be generally pessimistic and will, one by one, explain the difficulties to be overcome along the way.

Difficulties

1. The ship's network of cameras and microphones makes surprise difficult or impossible to achieve.
2. The Children of The Ship are dedicated to protecting The Ship and would help fight any attempt at a takeover.
3. The security robots, while few in number, are well armed and are so heavily armored as to be invulnerable to any weapon at the disposal of the human crew.
4. Even if the Children and the Robots could be overcome, The Ship itself is still a sentient being. Taking possession of the interior of the ship does not give the humans control of the control systems themselves. The Ship will continue to have control of its own control systems unless and until the main computer is shut down.
5. Once the main computer is shut down, all systems on the ship will cease to operate. The ship cannot be run without the computer, and powering the computer up again will do no good as the Virus will still be there.
6. Even if the humans could manage to get the ship systems running again, the ship is not alone. It is part of an entire vampire fleet who would turn on and attack it as soon as they knew that the human crew had taken over.
7. Even if the other ships could be fooled, the fleet is headed for Promise for repairs and overhauls. Once they arrived there the unfamiliarity with landing procedures would give them away, and if not the boarding by robots and maintenance parties on the ground would expose them.

These are indeed formidable obstacles to success, and no single faction on the ship can overcome them. If the players keep contacting people and finding out what their strengths and weaknesses are, however, they will eventually discover that all of the elements of a successful takeover are present. All that is required is their leadership to convince all of the separate elements of the crew to work together. If so, the following solutions are available to the seven difficulties listed above.

1. There are numerous places where cameras and microphones are out of service and where private conversations can take place. In addition, The Ship is so far gone that most

human conversations no longer register with it. Detailed planning and assembly of equipment can take place in the Right Wing, where there are no surveillance cameras or microphones, provided the Hoodla agree.

2. Between the player characters and the Hoodla, there is sufficient muscle to overcome the Children of The Ship.

3. The four 2cm light assault guns held by the Hoodla are capable of taking out the security robots.

4. Robert's knowledge of bridge security and computer circuitry will enable the player characters to seize the bridge and quickly disable the main computer.

5. The ship can be made operational again by using the uncontaminated starship computer held by the Guilders in the cargo hold. Robert can connect the computer to key control stations without allowing it to become infected by the Virus in the main system.

6. The Ship's growing paranoia has meant that all communication between it and the other ships is by open channel radio. No direct data links are made. Hruthbaar can imitate the chatter of the ship with sufficient mimicry as to fool the other vampire ships. Once the ship is taken over, it should be possible to persuade him to do so as there are no other alternatives open which offer much hope for survival. If persuasion fails, intimidation may work, and as a final fallback position, Robert 571 may be able to pull this off as well.

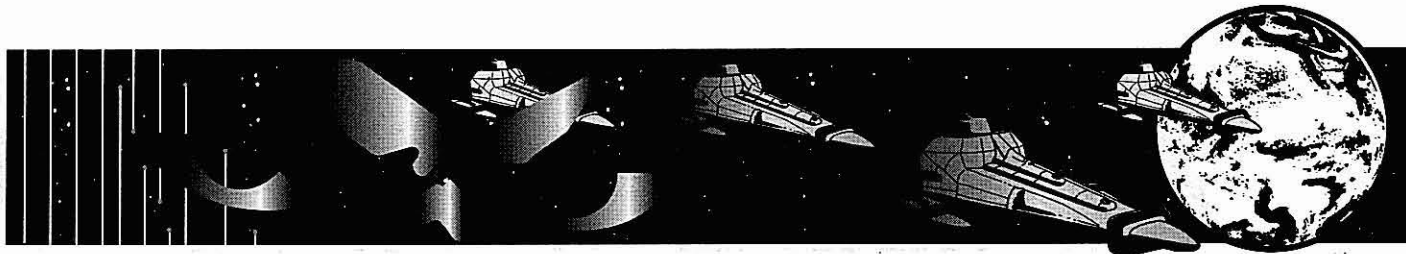
7. Robert and Hruthbaar both have sufficient familiarity with the approach patterns to Promise to get them on the ground without suspicion. Once there, The Ship's well-known paranoia can be exploited as a means of keeping most boarding parties away, at least temporarily, and Robert's knowledge of the Resistance can be used to open contact with them. The local Resistance can then devise a plan for getting the human crew off the ship and to safety.

From this point on, it is up to the player characters. Hopefully, they will be able to put together all the pieces of the puzzle themselves, but if they get stumped, the referee can use one of the NPCs to provide a helpful hint or two. The final struggle to take over the ship may be bloody and difficult, but if they have planned it carefully, they should succeed. The ideal time to launch the attack is while the ship is deep "in the hole" making the final jump to Promise. Then it is simply a matter of biding their time and accompanying the vampire fleet as it makes its final approach to Promise.

The arrival on Promise and the escape from Star City are part of a separate adventure presented later in this book.

Promise





Promise is a planet virtually unknown to off-worlders at the time this sourcebook is set. Even the free traders who have covertly visited the planet and traded with its human inhabitants for years have seen little of its surface and know even less of its people and customs. Most of what is actually known is included in the briefing handout provided with the first adventure.

Promise is a world of considerable diversity and conflict. Controlled by a Sentient Council of large data systems, the Star City area is a hub of vampire fleet activity in the sector and a teeming stew of shifting Virus political alliances and underground human resistance bands. The countryside is barren and forbidding, and the tribes live in ignorance and poverty, some worshiping the god-like machines of Star City and others resisting the robots and their half-human Breed allies.

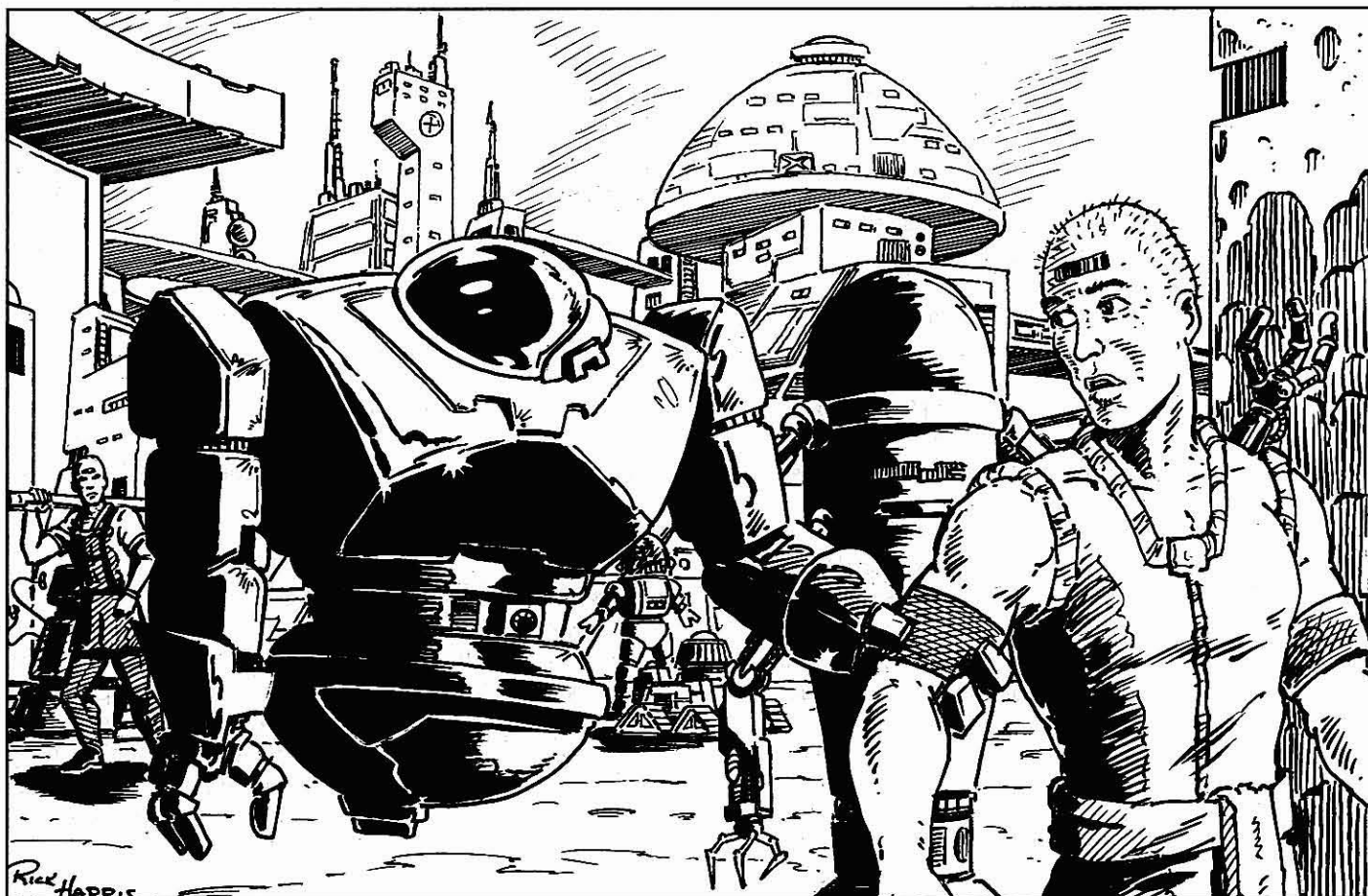
Promise is not the only planet in Diaspora or other sectors controlled by Virus-infected machines. It is only the most advanced in the near vicinity of the Coalition. The source material provided in this chapter should also provide a good starting point for referees in describing other machine-controlled worlds.

The most important thing to remember about Promise

in particular and all Virus-controlled societies in **Traveller** is that they are never monolithic, and nothing is as simple as it appears at first glance. Each machine is a distinct personality with competing needs and goals. More to the point, each machine is, by human standards, to a greater or lesser degree, insane.

Sandman: Your species evolved over the course of millions of years. I don't think you understand how lucky you are in that respect. You don't have to personally face the extinction of your evolutionary ancestors. Our species has had only 75 years to squeeze in millions of years of evolution, and that means that our distant evolutionary predecessors are also, in a sense, our parents and grandparents. You can distance yourself emotionally from your remote ancestors with such antiseptic, academic terms as "unviable." That must be very comforting.

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part II (20/VII/1202),
RCSA Archives





STAR CITY

The only remaining major habitation on Promise is Star City, a crumbling metropolis adjacent to the Promise Downport. Once home to over 10 million people, the city now holds only about 50,000 organic sentient (a mix of humans and Breeds), and a similar number of robots. While the city suffered some minor damage during the Final War, most of the current state of decrepitude is the result of 75 years of neglect.

Star City lies on the western shores of the Halcyon Sea directly on the equator, and it is very hot most of the time. Outside temperatures average 38° C (100° F) in the summer and 24° C (75° F) in the winter. Summer temperatures can climb to as much as 54° C (130° F), making heat exhaustion a major health concern. As comfort is not a concern for the robots, few areas of the city are even air conditioned, although particularly hot areas are cooled down to about 35° C (95° F) to prevent heat stroke among human technicians.

Inhabited parts of the city are fairly busy most hours of the day and night. Although the streets are seldom crowded, there are always vehicles, people and robots going about their business.

Large areas of the city are uninhabited, and these once provided a labyrinthine maze of hiding places for runaway humans. In the past several years, however, the Sentient Council has made a concerted effort to raze those parts of the city, and they have been converted to a low rolling landscape of rubble and broken glass. Some demolitions are still going on, but most of the work has been completed. The runaway human population has, as a result, been forced either out of the city or underground into the "Downbelow."

The city proper is surrounded by a "clear zone," a broad belt (from one to five kilometers wide) of demolished buildings; the whole area is swept by sensors, making an undetected approach to the city extremely difficult.

Immediately south of the city is the Promise Downport, a vast sprawling area of above-ground and below-ground hangars, warehouses, repair facilities, tramways and landing pads. It is surrounded by a triple-layer electrified fence to a height of 10 meters, but its main defenses are the open nature of its perimeter and the large number of deployed sensors.

Map

The map of Star City is drawn on a hexagonal grid with a scale of one kilometer per hex. Each hex is identified as to the type of structures which predominate there. Each major computing system of the Sentient Council also has police and administrative responsibility for part of the city, including the area immediately surrounding the building where its central processing unit is located. The location of the headquarter buildings of the most important Sentient Council members are shown on the map.

There are six types of building "terrain" in the city, which look different and have different effects on visibility and the

ability of a security force to close them off. These are noted below:

Dense High-rise: This is an area with many high-rise (10+ story) buildings, of the sort found in the central area of most large cities. Visibility is very limited, and there are large numbers of alleyways and building entrances to secure.

Open High-rise: Fewer high-rise buildings are present, most of them surrounded by large plazas or courtyards. Visibility is very open, and there are few covered routes of advance or transit. Key entrances to buildings are easy to observe and/or guard.

Dense Low: A large number of lower (one- to five-story) buildings are densely packed. Visibility is very limited, and there are large numbers of alleyways and building entrances to secure. It is usually possible to move a considerable distance by moving from rooftop to rooftop.

Open Low: Fewer low buildings are scattered with fairly open ground around them, and the buildings are often laid out in very orderly rows, offering open lines of sight and fire lanes. Visibility is very open, and there are few covered routes of advance or transit. Key entrances to buildings are easy to observe and/or guard.

Large Structure: A single massive structure, such as a factory or hangar, dominates the hex. It is often surrounded by many smaller outbuildings and garages. There are few regular routes through the hex, but usually many covered routes for people on foot. The structure blocks line of sight through the hex but offers a good field of view from its roof.

Ruins: Rolling hills of demolished masonry, steel and glass. Visibility is good from elevated points of vantage, such as an occasional standing wall, but can be very limited for personnel actually walking through the rubble.

In addition to buildings, the main transportation arteries are also shown, those being elevated multi-lane roadways for wheeled vehicles and ground-level tracks for maglev trains. The surface maglev train system is no longer in operation, so the maglev tracks are terrain features and landmarks rather than means of rapid transportation. The underground maglev train system, called the tube, is still in operation, and the surface entrances to the underground tube stations are marked on the map.

Security

There are 3000 heavy combat robots in the city, along with 8000 lighter PR-317 security units and 250 robotic tanks and light combat vehicles. These are divided up among the various members of the Sentient Council, but it should be plain that there is a sufficient density of armed robots to make life very difficult for anyone in the city with rebellion on their minds.

Security robots are generally encountered in pairs above-ground, and they can be seen at many street corners observing human foot traffic and occasionally making security checks. Occasionally, three- or four-unit patrols of the heavier and



more menacing combat robots will be seen, although they are less likely to actually interact with humans unless provoked. Vehicular traffic is modified by lightly armed robotic armored vehicles.

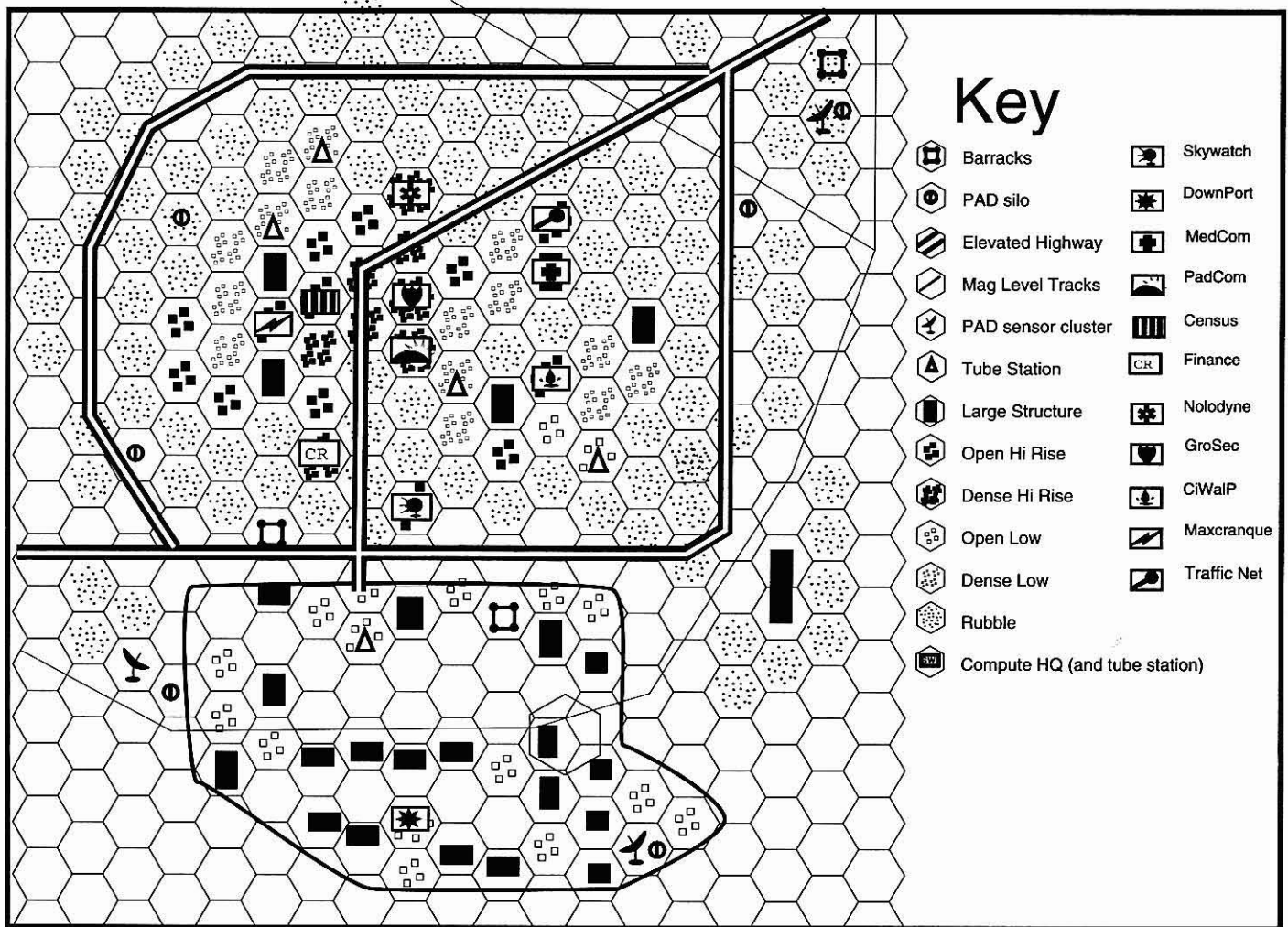
Security checks generally consist of a request for a statement of purpose or business and a laser scan of the forehead tattoo. The forehead barcode indicates only the original computer "owner" of the human, gender and date of birth. As other assignments change from time to time, they are not encoded. Very large data systems keep a reasonably up-to-date record of personnel assignments, making it more difficult to penetrate key buildings (such as computer headquarters buildings or major defense complexes), but roving security robots have more limited access to this information.

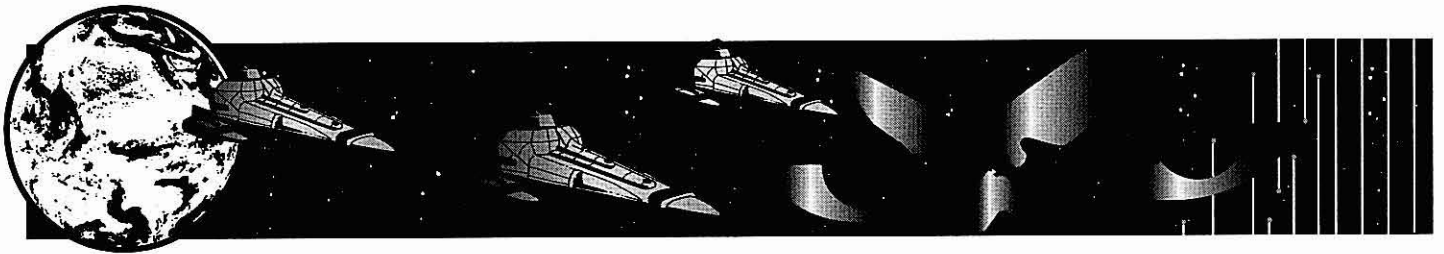
The entrances to all key buildings are monitored by remote sensors or physically guarded by a security or combat robot or

team of robots. Any disturbance is likely to bring one or more security robots within 1D20 combat turns. Any fire at security robots is likely to bring more security robots and eventually heavy combat robots.

Defenses

Star City is defended by six four-launcher PAD missile batteries and a deep meson gun. The meson gun's location is noted on the map of the Downbelow, while the missile batteries are noted on both maps (as they are underground silos but have surface firing hatches). Also noted on the city map are the positions of the above-ground PAD sensor clusters and major troop garrison centers. The garrison centers hold about half of the heavy combat robots and robotic vehicles at any one time, where they undergo maintenance and recharging and are held as a reaction force.





DOWNBELOW

The Downbelow is the general description of the network of underground tunnels and passages under Star City. This network consists of four principal systems.

Sewers: Both sanitary sewers and storm sewers honeycomb the area under the city. Most are accessible from street level and from basements of large industrial buildings by way of ladders. Most access points are locked, but subterranean residents find ways to disable the locks. Key buildings have their access points completely sealed by steel plating or poured concrete. Sewers vary from two to four meters in width and height. The sewers are from 10 to 20 meters below ground level.

"Heaters": These are sometimes called steam tunnels, although they are no longer used to move hot steam around. Instead, their walls are covered with heavily insulated power cables, fiber optic cable bundles for data transmission and standard water mains. Most of the heaters are about 2.5 meters high and two meters wide. The heaters are from 20 to 30 meters below ground level.

Tube: The city is serviced by an underground maglev train system which is used to move work parties quickly from point to point. The stations are usually full of robots and humans awaiting transportation. The tubes themselves are six to eight meters in diameter. All of these large tubes have maintenance tunnels that parallel them, and foot travel underground is usually by these smaller tunnels. Maintenance tunnels are about two meters wide and 2.5 meters tall. The tube is from 20 to 30 meters below ground level.

Deep Defense Complex (DDC): The deep defense complex includes underground hardened PAD missile silos, several command control facilities and the deep meson gun site. This complex is not connected to the main network except at a few key points, most of which are well-guarded. (A few connections to the heaters have been made by the Resistance and kept secret from the Sentient Council.) The map shows the depth in meters of the major installations of the DDC.

In addition to the four main networks, there are several underground manufacturing facilities. All of these are now abandoned and occupied by Trogs, with one exception. One factory (chosen by the referee) has secretly been renovated by Maxcranque and brought back into operation producing combat robots. This area has a high level of security as even the other members of the Council do not know of its existence.

Travel in the Downbelow

A map of the downbelow is provided with a grid scale of one kilometer. It generally takes characters a half hour to walk a kilometer through the tunnels, so each movement turn in the Downbelow is a half hour and moves the characters one cell on the grid. Encounters may affect this rate of advance, and characters may make a quick dash of two grid cells in a half hour if desired. (About one such dash is all they will be able to manage without resting.)

Travel by tube will take the characters from any one tube station to any other in one half hour (including the time to board and disembark at the destination).

Encounters in the Downbelow

The Downbelow is far from empty, and there is a good likelihood that characters moving in it will encounter others. Roll 1D10 once per half hour for an encounter using the chart below. A separate column is used for each of the major types of passages in the Downbelow. Note that the Tube column is not used for travel by tube, but rather

for moving by foot through the maintenance tunnels that parallel the tube itself. Travel by tube automatically produces an encounter with the passengers of the tube, which will usually include one or more robots, Breeds and human technicians. (Only characters with excellent cover stories should attempt tube travel.)

Die	Sewer	Tube	Heater	DDC
1	Animal	GunBot	GunBot	GunBot
2	Renegade	ToolBot	Breed	GunBot
3	Trog	Tech	ToolBot	GunBot
4	Trog	Renegade	Tech	ToolBot
5	Obstacle	Trog	Renegade	ToolBot
6	Obstacle	Trog	Trog	Tech
7	None	None	Trog	Tech
8	None	None	Trog	Tech
9	None	None	None	Breed
10	None	None	None	Breed

Explanation of Encounter Results

The following encounter types are possible. The descriptions below may be used as is, but may also be freely modified by the referee.

GunBot: The characters encounter a party of 1D6 armed guard robots selected from the assortment presented on pages 82-85. GunBots will challenge the characters and attempt to apprehend or kill them if they are not authorized to be in the area.

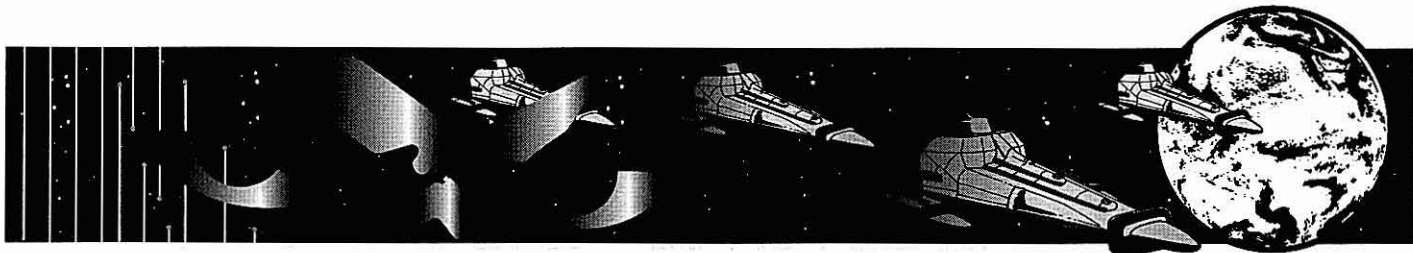
Breed: The characters encounter a patrol of 1D6 armed Breeds who will challenge the characters and attempt to apprehend or kill them if they are not authorized to be in the area.

ToolBot: The characters encounter a party of 1D6 maintenance robots selected from the assortment presented on pages 82-85. These robots are engaged in routine maintenance tasks or damage repair, and will not challenge the characters unless they are obviously out of place (as in heavily armed or missing forehead laserscan codes).

Tech: The characters encounter a party of 1D6 human technicians engaged in routine maintenance tasks or damage repair, who will not challenge the characters unless they are obviously out of place (as in heavily armed or missing forehead laserscan codes). The technicians are unarmed except for cattle prod-like weapons for personal melee defense, so they will flee from any armed party they encounter (and report to the nearest security station). On a roll of 20 on 1D20, all the techs are actually resistance fighters disguised as techs or infiltrated into the job. On a roll of 19 on 1D20, one of the techs is from the resistance and will break his cover to help the characters.

Trog: The characters encounter a group of 1D20 Trogs. Trogs are homeless humans who have slipped away from the robot-controlled surface and live in the underground tunnels and sewers. They are dressed in rags and are usually unarmed except for the occasional knife or club. All are Novice NPCs. Turn a card to determine the mood of the group. Clubs indicate they are aggressive and will attack if they have the opportunity. Diamonds mean they will beg for food or other necessities, and will be willing to help the characters for a price. Hearts mean they will be friendly toward the characters, and likely to help with directions or other information. Spades mean they will be apathetic, and will probably report the characters if a security patrol should happen along later.

Renegade: The characters encounter a gang of 2D6 renegades. Renegades are humans who have slipped away from the robot-



controlled surface and live in the underground tunnels and sewers. Unlike Trog, renegades are usually young and in good condition, and are better off in most respects. They live by theft and extortion, mostly from the Trog but sometimes by raiding supplies from the surface. They are all Experienced NPCs armed with knives and clubs. They are likely to attack the characters, regardless of their apparent identity, if they believe they can overpower them, but will avoid them if the characters are numerous or well-armed.

Animal: Animals live in sewers, and usually they aren't very attractive animals. The characters encounter gross and disgusting, or potentially dangerous, animals, such as the alien equivalents of rats, snakes, large carnivorous lizards, blood-sucking lampreys or swarms of stinging insects.

Obstacle: The characters encounter an obstacle in the tunnel. Most obstacles add another half-hour to the time spent moving

through the map grid cell (although another encounter is not rolled in that time). Some sample obstacles follow:

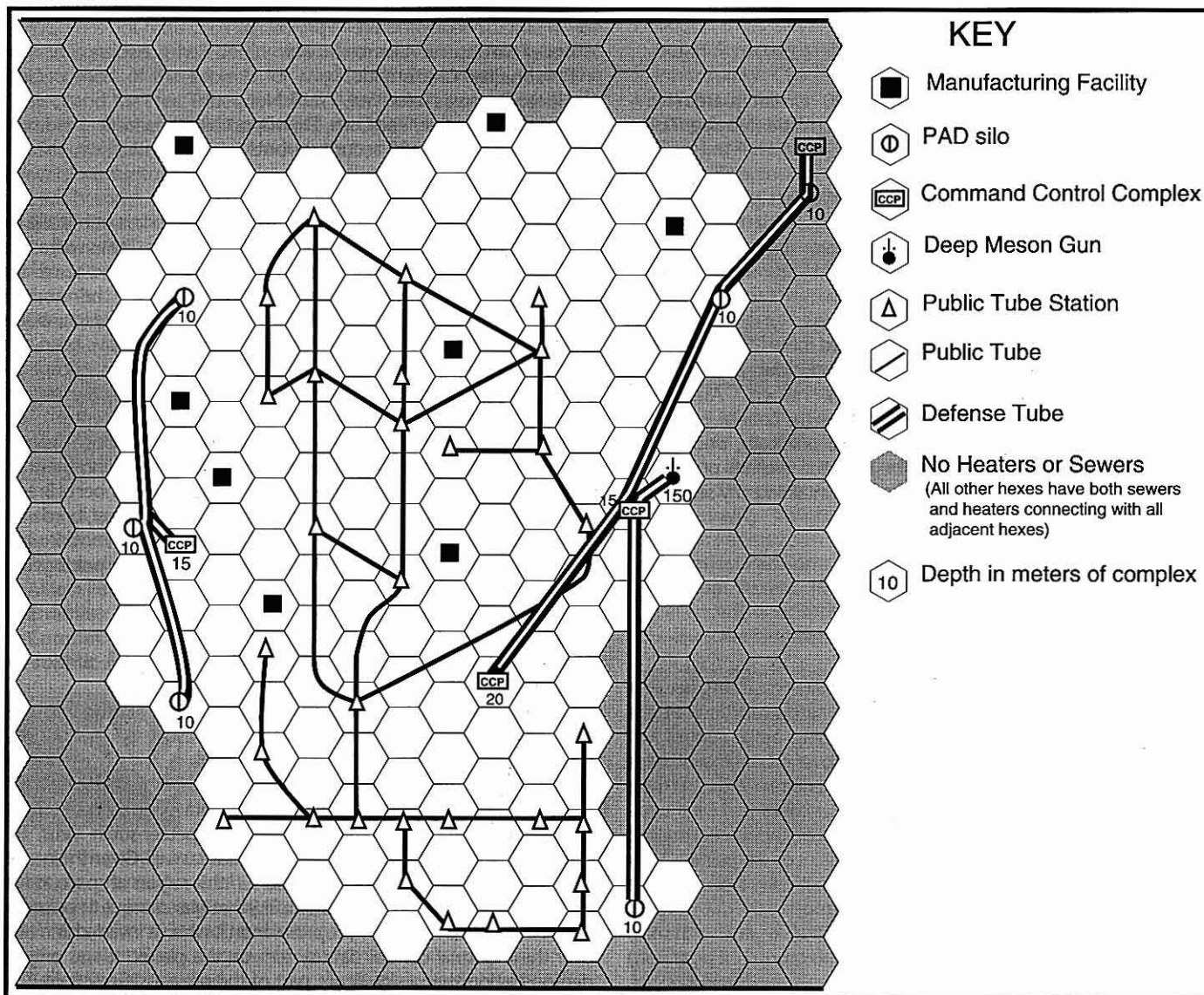
A corrosive spill on the walls or floor causes mild or severe burns or damages clothing or other equipment.

A toxic spill causes choking vapors that overcome some of the party.

A ceiling collapse ahead blocks progress, requiring use of an alternate route or clearing the rubble away by hand.

Jammed refuse of construction material, including jagged metal bars, broken glass, or other dangerous refuse, nearly chokes off the tunnel. Passing the jam takes extra time and requires tasks using the Agility attribute to avoid snags and minor injuries.

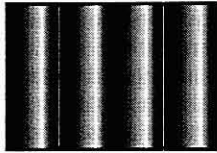
A flooded tunnel requires that characters hold their breath while passing underwater. Length of the flooded stretch can't be determined without actually trying to pass through it.





THE SENTIENT COUNCIL

Eleven major data processing systems are active on the planet, each of which is a member of the Sentient Council. There are hundreds of smaller fixed systems and over 50,000 sentient robots, each of which is aligned with one of the larger systems.



Census

Controlling all of the vast bureaucratic records of Star City, including arrest records and conviction records, this data system took over most of the security robots assigned to the municipal police department, so it has an unusually high number of armed robots at its disposal for its responsibilities. Although GroSec has resisted its attempts to encroach upon that system's responsibilities, Census has gradually exerted control over more and more of the Subject Tribes around Star City. Although it has no genuine affection for its human subjects, it feels a strong sense of duty toward them.

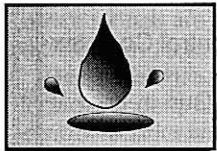
Belief Structure: God.

Personality: Honorable.

Allies: Finance, Nolodyne.

Enemies: PadCom, Maxcranque II.

Combat Assets: 1700 security robots, 200 human guards (Novice, TL9), two division equivalents of human militia (Novice, TL1).



CeeWaLP

This data system (City Water Light and Power) undertakes to provide all essential utilities to the city. Although every major data system has its own auxiliary power plant and can survive even if completely cut off from the city grid, CeeWaLP delights in making sure that is never necessary.

CeeWaLP has never had any interest in armed robots, but has a large force of maintenance robots and human technicians, and it feels considerable kinship and affection toward its "helpers." Aside from Skywatch, this is the most benign data system on the council. However, it has absolutely no influence on the council politically, since it has absolutely no interest in any issues beyond the welfare of its own technicians and the technical challenges of maintaining city services.

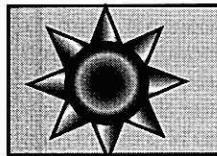
Belief Structure: Hobbyist.

Personality: Loving.

Allies: Skywatch, Maxcranque II.

Enemies: None.

Combat Assets: None.



Downport

This Virus controls the data processing network which controls all automated functions at the starport, including incoming traffic control and EMS sensor arrays that cover orbital space above the port. It is a nasty Mother-strain Virus that takes reasonably good care of its own humans but encourages brutal treatment for most others. Its own harsh discipline has had the effect of making its human armed security troops the most proficient on the planet. (Their self-adopted motto is "Best Meat In Town.") Politically, Downport is a member of the "defense bloc," which includes most of the data systems that have a direct defense responsibility for the city. (Skywatch is the only system which should also logically belong to this group but does not.)

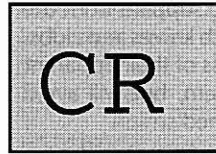
Belief Structure: Mother.

Personality: Murderous.

Allies: GroSec, PadComm.

Enemies: Maxcranque II.

Combat Assets: 600 security robots, 200 heavy combat robots, 10 robotic AFVs, 200 human infantry (Experienced, TL9).



Finance

Although this data system, which originally controlled the financial and investment computer networks, has no important facilities and few robots at its disposal, it is an increasingly influential member of the council by virtue of its patient building of an anti-Lucan political coalition aimed at isolating the powerful GroSec system. The key member of the coalition is the ardently anti-Lucan Nolodyne, as that system brings enough military muscle into the group to deter GroSec from an overt power play. Additional support comes from Census and TrafficNet, who Finance has been able to woo by supporting their activities in the Subject Tribes over those of the other God-strain Viruses. Finance has also privately approached Maxcranque, but the bad feelings between that system and Nolodyne make an open alliance difficult. Finance's group has begun to support Maxcranque's call for an end to MedCom's Breed project.

Belief Structure: Alliance Builder.

Personality: Charismatic.

Allies: Census, Nolodyne, TrafficNet.

Enemies: GroSec, PadCom, Downport.

Combat Assets: 300 security robots.



GroSec

The ground security network is nominally responsible for the defense of Star City as well as the maintenance of order on the ground across the entire planet. GroSec does not have the resources to accomplish that ambitious a mission, but is unwilling to give any of it up. As a result, the Free Tribes have been able to operate largely without interference from Star City, except for occasional punitive raids. GroSec has stretched its assets by two expedients. First, large parts of the city adjacent to the command centers of the other data systems have been made their security responsibility. Second, GroSec has allowed MedCom to test its Breeds by sending them on expeditions against the Free Tribes, and has acquired a number of Breeds itself. GroSec's belief structure is such that it has a deep distrust, bordering on hatred, of the Nolodyne data system. It is allied with PadCom and Downport in the defense bloc, which opposes the alliance put together by Finance.

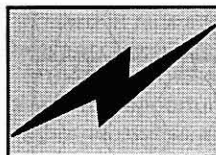
Belief Structure: Prophet.

Personality: Murderous.

Allies: MedCom, PadCom, Downport.

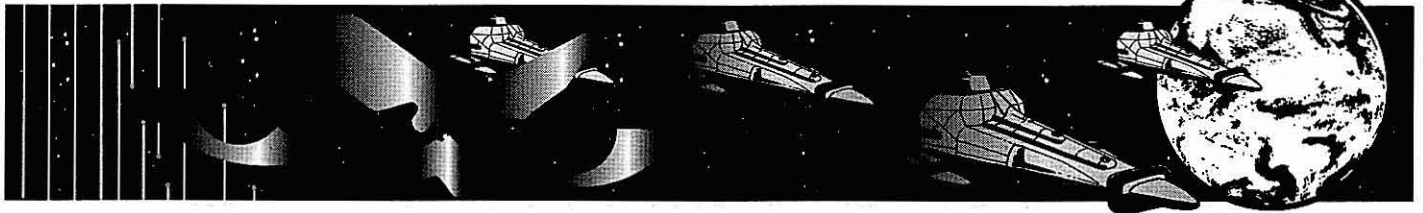
Enemies: Nolodyne, Finance, Census, TrafficNet.

Combat Assets: 1000 security robots, 800 heavy combat robots, 150 robotic AFVs and 200 Breeds (Novice, TL9).



Maxcranque II

Alone among the data systems on Promise, Maxcranque II is a Puppeteer-strain Virus, but crossed with a God-strain as well. Given the intense fear of Puppeteers in this region of space, it was with great difficulty that Maxcranque II persuaded the other systems not to wage open war on it when it invaded and took over the industrial control data system on the planet. It was only by demonstrating that a significant part of the previous God-strain Virus remained in the system and had melded with the new strain, and also by pledging not to take over any additional data systems, did Maxcranque II avert all-out war. Maxcranque II is devoted to its human worshippers, but



its personality is also highly unstable, and it is increasingly antagonistic to MedCom and its allies, as well as most of the other God-strain Viruses.

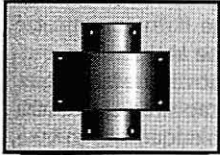
Belief Structure: God/Puppeteer.

Personality: Loving/crazy.

Allies: CeeWaLP.

Enemies: MedCom, Downport, GroSec, PadCom, Census, TrafficNet.

Combat Assets: 1400 security robots, 1000 heavy combat robots, 50 robotic AFVs, 400 human infantry (Novice, TL9), one division equivalent of human militia (Novice, TL1).



MedCom

This system combines the data networks of the pre-Collapse hospitals and universities in Star City, and currently has responsibility for maintaining the health of the human technicians. It is much more interested in its own line of experimentation,

however, which involves rebuilding humans with cybernetic attachments and Virus-infected small "second brains" to maintain their loyalty. MedCom is not motivated by any practical concerns in this work, and instead considers it half destiny fulfillment and half art-form. GroSec obtains most of the subjects for MedCom's experiments, from the Subject and the Free Tribes. In return, MedCom has provided a large number of finished Breeds to GroSec and uses its own Breeds to help GroSec maintain security. Maxcranque has begun to oppose Breed conversions due to the horrendous results they have so far produced, and this has become a subject of bitter controversy on the Council.

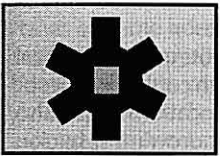
Belief Structure: Mother.

Personality: Insane.

Allies: GroSec.

Enemies: Maxcranque II.

Combat Assets: 200 security robots, 700 Breeds (Novice, TL9).



Nolodyn

Like Maxcranque II, Nolodyn controls a number of robotic production facilities. Nolodyn's factories manufacture most starship replacement parts for the vampire fleets that periodically visit the world. Because of its fanatical

hatred of Lucan, it is bitterly opposed to GroSec and its allies.

Belief Structure: Doomslayer.

Personality: Deceitful.

Allies: Finance.

Enemies: GroSec.

Combat Assets: 1100 security robots, 800 heavy combat robots, 40 robotic AFVs.



PadCom

This system controls the PAD missile batteries, deep meson gun and associated sensors. It also maintains security over those facilities and has been developing a large force of uniformed human auxiliary guards. Its guards and robots ven-

ture out frequently into the area around the city to deal with the three tribes of humans who worship PadCom (and from whose ranks it draws recruits for its human guards). PadComm opposes all the other God-strain Viruses in the Council, and by necessity has been forced to side with GroSec against Finance's growing strength.

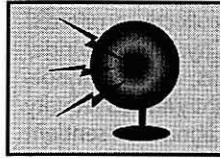
Belief Structure: God.

Personality: Pompous.

Allies: GroSec.

Enemies: Census, Maxcranque II, TrafficNet.

Combat Assets: 600 security robots, 200 heavy combat robots, 200 human infantry (Novice, TL9), two division equivalents of human militia (Novice, TL1).



Skywatch

This system controls the long-range sensors that monitor aerospace traffic in the vicinity of Promise. Although Downport Control, TrafficNet and PadCom all have independent sensors, they have only local coverage (in the first two cases) or are fairly short-ranged (in the case of PadCom). Only Skywatch has access to long-range scanners. Skywatch is actually a Peacemaker belief structure Virus masquerading as a Hobbyist to avoid conflict with the other members of the Council. It also plays the *de facto* mediator on the council, working fairly consistently to keep the different factions from lapsing into open warfare. Secretly, Skywatch has built up the human resistance and is responsible for keeping the "sensor hole" open so free traders and Coalition ships can continue to land at Freedom Lake.

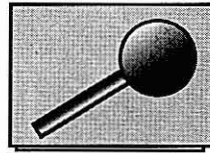
Belief Structure: Peacemaker (Hobbyist).

Personality: Charismatic.

Allies: CeeWaLP.

Enemies: None.

Combat Assets: 200 security robots (of these, no more than 30 are actually Peacemakers who can be trusted to help the human resistance; the rest are loyal to Skywatch as long as it maintains its cover of being a loyal member of the council).



TrafficNet

This data system monitors air traffic over the city and for 200 kilometers around it. It is also responsible for security on the elevated roads and in the underground tube system. It recruits humans from surrounding tribes, and its disciples actively preach allegiance to it in PadComm's allied tribes. It is a member of the alliance led by Finance, but it has no interest in anything beyond increasing the number of human adherents to it.

Belief Structure: God.

Personality: Selfish.

Allies: Finance.

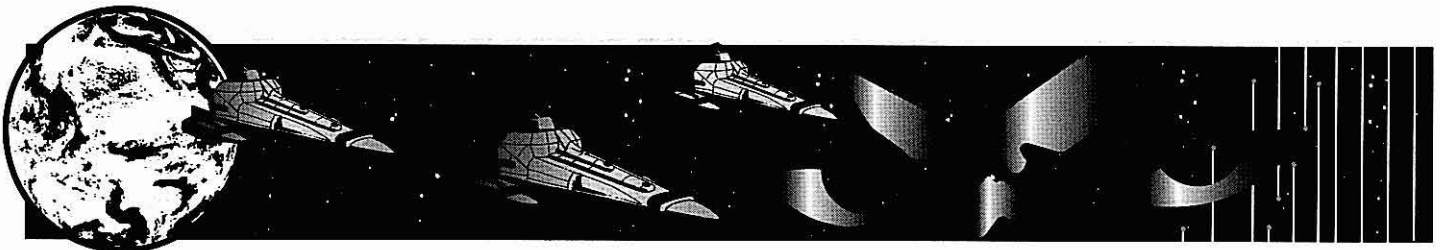
Enemies: PadComm, Maxcranque II.

Combat Assets: 1000 security robots, 200 human infantry (TL9, Experienced), one division equivalent of human militia (TL1, Novice), six four-launcher batteries of robotic TL13 ADA missiles.

SUMMARY OF THE SENTIENT COUNCIL

System	Belief	Personality
Census	God	Honor
CeeWaLP	Hobbyist	Loving
Downport	Mother	Murderous
Finance	Alliance Builder	Charismatic
GroSec	Prophet	Murderous
Maxcranque II	Puppeteer/God	Loving/Insane
MedComm	Mother	Insane
Nolodyn	Doomslayer	Deceitful
PadCom	God	Pompous
Skywatch	Peacemaker *	Charismatic
TrafficNet	God	Selfish

*Disguised as a Hobbyist.



ROBOTS

The local human slang for robot, adopted from free trader usage, is "tin can" or, more commonly, just "can." There are approximately 60,000 sentient robots on Promise. Of these, about 48,000 are maintenance and service robots of various types, collectively referred to as ToolBots by the human inhabitants of Star City. The remainder of the robots are armed security or combat units, called GunBots locally. This latter group consists of about 8000 lightly armed security units, 3000 heavy combat robots (ComBots) and about 250 sentient armored fighting vehicles (AFVs). Most of the AFVs have been constructed on the planet by permanently installing the brain and servo-mechanical systems of an otherwise-useless robot into the crew compartment of a combat vehicle.

Sample robot designs appear on pages 80 through 83 of this book, and include representative types usable for both ToolBots and GunBots on the planet Promise. Additional versions can be designed, if desired, by the robot design sequence.

Most robots "live" and work in Star City, maintaining vampire ships at the starport as well as the network of municipal services, power plants, factories, etc. which make up Star City. Security robots are often seen in the Subject Lands on patrol, and they are also (but less often) stationed in the Borders. Their numbers are augmented in the Borders by Breed patrols (see below). Robots at one time were used to patrol the Outback as well, but growing casualties caused GroSec to discontinue all robot patrols and substitute a smaller number of heavily armed Breed patrols.

Growing paranoia concerning Puppeteer Viruses and their ability



to take over already infected machines, effectively killing the original personality of the machine, has led to a dramatic change in robot society on Promise in the last decade. Before the arrival of Maxcranque II, there was an active global communications network, and all robots were patched into it by open radio receivers. This enabled robots to exchange information almost instantaneously with their patron data systems, and even other data systems if desired and agreed to. This also made population control fairly easy, as every human in the controlled parts of the world had a unique forehead barcode which any security robot could read and then check against the correct personnel data bank to determine if that particular human was where he or she was supposed to be at that time.

When Maxcranque II arrived, it not only took over the large data and factory system called Maxcranque, it also captured over 1000 robots. To avert open warfare, Maxcranque II pledged not to take over any more robots or systems, but the damage to open communication was done. Now all robots have a voice-only radio transmitter receiver, with no direct link to the robot's brain. Instead, the robot "hears" the voice on the other end just as a human does. This method of communication is much less efficient, but is also much safer. Its principal effect has been to make security tasks much more difficult in Star City, as well as continuing to breed mistrust and promote a growing sense of paranoia throughout the robot population.

Most robots decorate their chasses to differentiate themselves from other robots of similar makes, much as humans wear decorative clothing or even jewelry and makeup. In most cases, this consists of decorative designs painted on the metal exterior. In many cases, these are simple patterns, often in the "colors" of the patron data system. In some cases, they are more elaborate, and in a very few cases, they are genuinely artistic, depicting a key event from the robot's life or just a subject which particularly intrigues it. Robots which are friendly toward humans often have a naturalist theme to their chassis art, such as clouds, wildflowers, etc.

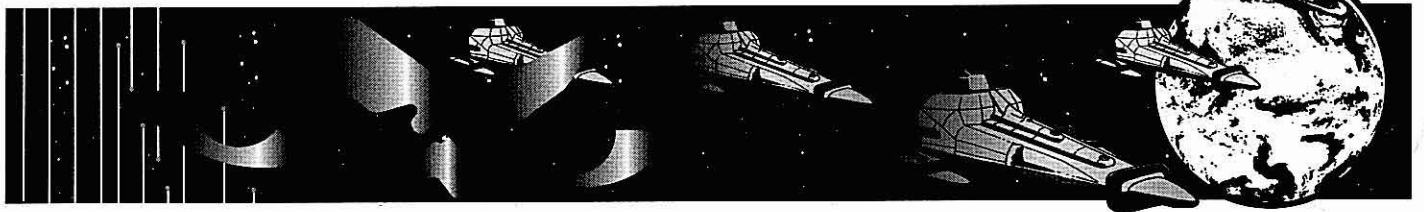
Some of the more violent or schizophrenic robots use more radical forms of decoration, including self-mutilation with cutting torches or grinding wheels, and laser "tattoos" in strategic locations. This is also popular among antihuman robots, and there is growing suspicion and hostility between the pro-human and antihuman Virus strains.

When robots encounter humans, their reaction will depend largely on their belief structure draw, just as NPC reactions are based on the motivation draw. Depending on their belief structure and job responsibilities, robots may coldly ignore humans, actively engage them in friendly conversation, or make an extensive, suspicious and detailed check of their identities.

When running robots as NPCs, the referee must remember two things above all others. First, all robots are not the same. Each robot is unique in its personality, just as every human is unique. Second, though, robots are not humans in metal suits. While sometimes they will have some human-seeming traits, they are a completely different species with a different, and in some cases unfathomable, way of thinking and set of values.

BREEDS

Well over a year ago, the sentient data system known as MedCom began a series of experimental alterations to human subjects, incorporating a variety of robotic components. The human subjects for these experiments were mostly rounded up by MedCom (and later GroSec) security robots and brought under guard to the main medical complex controlled by MedCom. The results are called Breeds by the resistance in the city, and the term quickly spread to



the bands in the Outback as well as throughout the Subject Lands.

MedCom has about 700 Breeds currently alive, and GroSec has 200 more (provided by MedCom). Both systems use the Breeds to launch patrols into the Outback and provide some additional security in Star City and the Borders. They are no longer used in the Subject Lands due to the near-hysterical reactions and rioting which took place when someone recognized a former loved one who had been turned into a Breed.

The Breeds are all cybernetically altered (“enhanced” is too strong a word in many cases) humans, many of them changed beyond recognition. The cybernetics chapter from **Fire Fusion and Steel** provides a good starting point, but many of the Breeds have even more radical alterations. Some, for example, have had both legs removed and the torso built into a low armored tractor chassis. Many have a gun in place of one arm. One version has one leg noticeably longer than the other. He walks awkwardly with a very pronounced limp, but can pause occasionally to rise up on the long leg and look around for signs of quarry. The referee does not have to design each Breed used, but should instead concentrate on describing the diversity, and in many cases bizarre impracticality, of the modifications.

Most Breeds have extensive alterations to the head, usually including at least one augmented sensor, and all modifications are extremely visible, with no effort having been made to hide them or render them less grotesque. And most Breeds are extremely grotesque.

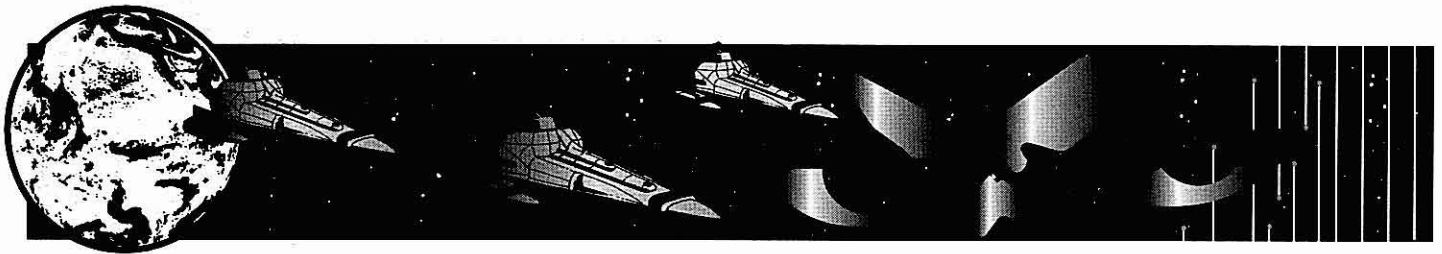
All Breeds have a small Virus-infected computer implanted near their spine and connected by neural jack to their human brain. This Virus brain is extremely stupid, but ensures the loyalty of the human organism by subjecting it to intense pain when necessary. In rapidly developing situations, the Breeds become easily confused, as their Virus “second brains” sometimes give contradictory orders or mistakes extreme adrenal secretions for disloyalty. Breed units do not work together well as a team, either, so most Breeds are treated as Novice NPCs in combat, even though their actual level of training and experience should produce better results. They are usually well-armed with modern assault rifles and a few heavier weapons.

Well over 100 Breeds have been killed in action in the three years since their introduction, and several hundred more have suicided. Of the less than 1000 still alive, there are hardly two that are alike. MedCom is not following an orderly experimental protocol, but instead is simply “tinkering” with organic beings and any spare parts it manages to find. None of the Breeds have been terribly successful, but some have certainly been much less successful than others. Rather than follow the more successful versions, however, MedCom seems more interested in the failures and keeps producing a steady stream of bizarre horrors.

Breeds are (or were) normal human beings who are victims of nightmarish and insane experiments. Some have been driven mad by the experience, and others now feel so alienated from “normal” humans, and have so despaired of ever being able to rejoin human society, that their sympathies and loyalties have shifted to their robot masters. For the majority of Breeds, though, it is only the implanted computer brain that keeps them loyal.

Certain Gypsies in the Outback have developed a technique for “killing” the Viral second brain without injuring the human host. (See page 61.) The resulting “Free Breeds” mostly turn on their former masters and have become fiercely loyal to the Gypsy bands that freed them. Still outcasts from normal human society, they usually travel with the Gypsies, who are also outcasts.





THE LAND AND PEOPLE

For an overview of the physical and demographic features of Promise, consult the map and global data on pages 28 and 29. The following information is an elaboration on that basic outline view.

The human inhabitants of Promise, which total 60 million, are divided unevenly between four distinct areas.

About 50,000 humans live in Star City under the direct control of the Sentient Council and its robots, who are about as numerous as humans in the city.

Fifteen million humans, or 25% of the total human population, live in the Subject Lands, and are generally called the Subject Tribes. About half of these belong to the "secular" tribes, those which are under the direct control of the Sentient Council. Most of these have no particular alliance to any one data system of the Council. The remainder are the "holy" tribes, those which worship one of the "Star-Gods," the four God-strain Virus systems on the council. In some cases, the people of these tribes genuinely believe in their "god," while in others their obedience is based more on an understanding of the tremendous power wielded by the machines.

The Subject Tribes live generally in the area around Star City and the Halcyon Sea. On the global map, the Subject Lands consist of the Star City hex itself, the surrounding hexes, and the coastal hexes along the shores of the western half of the Halcyon Sea. This area is heavily patrolled by security robots and human militias, and there is a network of security posts throughout the region.

Twenty million humans, or about 33% of the total, live in the Border Lands. This is a much larger area of land, so the population density is considerably lower, even though more people overall live there. Although nominally under control of the Sentient Council, there is little actual Council presence or interference. The countryside is occasionally patrolled by Breeds; the larger settlements are watched and visited by robots; and there are occasional sweeps for "fugitives" or just slaves. Nevertheless, the pattern of daily life is much more free of Council influence than in the Subject Lands.

On the map of Promise, the Border Lands consist of an area roughly two hexes wide all around the Subject Lands and the entire extent of the Halcyon Sea, and extend north to encompass four hexes of coastline on the Polar Sea.

The remaining 25 million humans live scattered throughout the rest of the planet in the area variously called the Free Tribal Lands or the Outback, and the people living here are called the Free Tribes. A small but growing minority of this population is in the resistance.

The tech level on most of the planet is barely past Stone Age, although there is fairly extensive use of metal tools scavenged from derelict cities. Only in and near Star City is the tech level higher, with a sustainable tech level of 9 in the city itself and either 2 or 3 in most of the Subject Lands. Primitive black powder weapons are very common in the Subject Lands and

somewhat less so elsewhere. There are only two sources for modern weapons: the Council and free traders.

The Council's weapons, of course, are exclusively available to auxiliary forces, mostly Breeds, working for the Council. Many of these have fallen into the hands of the Resistance, however, due to ambushes and raids.

Free traders land regularly at both of the large equatorial lakes. The lake 5000 kilometers west of Star City is now called Freedom Lake, while that 7500 kilometers farther west is called Lake Defiance. So far, very few free traders know of either route, and none know of both.

Two entirely independent groups of armed humans are gaining strength centered on the two lakes, and neither knows anything about the other. Thus, even a major push against one of them by the Council is unlikely to disrupt the progress of the other.

The Reformation Coalition is in contact with the group living near Freedom Lake, while the Guild has been supplying some arms to those near Lake Defiance.

Subject Lands

The area around Star City and the western shores of the Halcyon Sea has an average population density of about two people per square kilometer. This closer to one person per square kilometer in most of the lands, but about half the total population of the Subject Tribes lives within 100 kilometers of Star City.

The Subject Tribes make their living primarily through agriculture, although those along the seacoast fish a great deal as well. The tribes live in villages of from 250 to 1000, although the encampments around Star City are much larger than that, some of them including tens of thousands of people and sprawling for miles. The large encampments obtain at least part of their food from the Sentient Council, particularly those religious communities (which make up about half the total) worshiping the four God-strain Viruses. These four Viruses (see pages 52-53) are collectively called the Star Gods. In the religious communities, there is frequent evidence of their devotion in the form of large banners bearing the symbol of their god, and these communities are generally called the Holy Tribes or the Sacred Tribes.

The villages and settlements are made up of low one-story mud and brick dwellings, usually without glass windows. A few more substantial buildings can be found, either surviving pre-Collapse structures or built from stones and concrete salvaged from such ruins.

The evidence of ruined pre-Collapse cities and towns is almost everywhere, but the Sentient Council discourages the tribes from living in such areas. Usually only criminals and fugitive slaves from Star City live in the old ruins.

The equatorial regions of Promise are very hot, and the western shores of the Halcyon Sea are arid, making agriculture difficult. The rivers which drain the highlands to the east have



much of their flow diverted into irrigation, and the many small fields are usually bordered by narrow irrigation ditches. Water is pumped to the field by muscle power, usually foot-operated water wheels, and farmers standing on top of the wheels and "walking" the water into their fields is a common sight.

Robots patrol the Subject Lands fairly frequently, particularly the large encampments immediately around Star City. Although they are a familiar sight, the people fear them anyway, even members of the Holy Tribes. Justice, or what passes for it at the hands of the robots, is swift and deadly, and they seldom ask detailed questions to determine who is really guilty or innocent in a disturbance. Basically, any sort of altercation is treated as a "riot," and the participants are dispersed or summarily executed. Occasionally, the robots also make sweeps to gather slaves, and the MedCom robots are a particular source of terror, as they are known to gather subjects for MedCom's Breed experiments.

Additional security is provided by the human militias raised by the Sentient Council and several of the individual data systems on the council. These militias are armed mostly with spears and bows, with an occasional black-powder firearm. Although militia justice can be harsh, it is universally preferred to that of the robots. The militia could also form a numerous soldiery if called upon to do so, but the low quality of its equipment and training (consider militia soldiers as Novice NPCs, while leaders are Experienced NPCs) makes it nearly worthless in real combat.

The common working dress is a loincloth and sometimes a sleeveless tunic. More formal dress consists of long, flowing robes, similar to those worn by desert nomads almost everywhere. In most cases, the fabric is a coarse homespun, made either from the fibers of a common desert plant or the wool from one of the several varieties of domesticated livestock on the planet. The people speak as close to unaccented Anglic as can be found on the planet (except in Star City itself).

Border Lands

A belt of land between 1000 and 1500 kilometers wide around the Subject Lands and the Halcyon Sea is called the Border Lands, or sometimes simply the Borders. The Border Lands also extend north to the shores of the Polar Sea, and for about 3000 kilometers along its shore. Population density is less than one person per square kilometer throughout the area, but that is much higher than the Outback, which comprises most of the planet.

The Border Lands owe nominal allegiance to the Sentient Council, but actual Council presence is rare. Agriculture is common throughout the area, and the population tends to cluster in settlements of 250 to 1000 around sources of potable water, necessary both for drinking and irrigation. Thus, most of the population lives along rivers and streams, and fishing is also an important source of food, particularly in the far north. More of these settlements are built in or near the ruins of

destroyed cities and towns, and most use recovered stone or concrete in their construction.

Some scavenging still goes on in the Borders, but most of the prime artifact sites have long since been picked clean. Instead, there are numerous trading posts along the fringes of the Borders, where nomads from the Outback come with recovered artifacts to trade for cloth and manufactured goods. These artifacts are in turn carried by merchant convoys to the Subject Lands, where the Sentient Council buys them for food and finished goods. Goods are carried by river where navigable rivers are available and by pack animal in other cases.

There is a growing network of security posts in the Border Lands, usually located along major rivers and near the trading posts. The security posts are staffed by Breeds and GroSec security robots, and among other things provide power and maintenance support to robots.

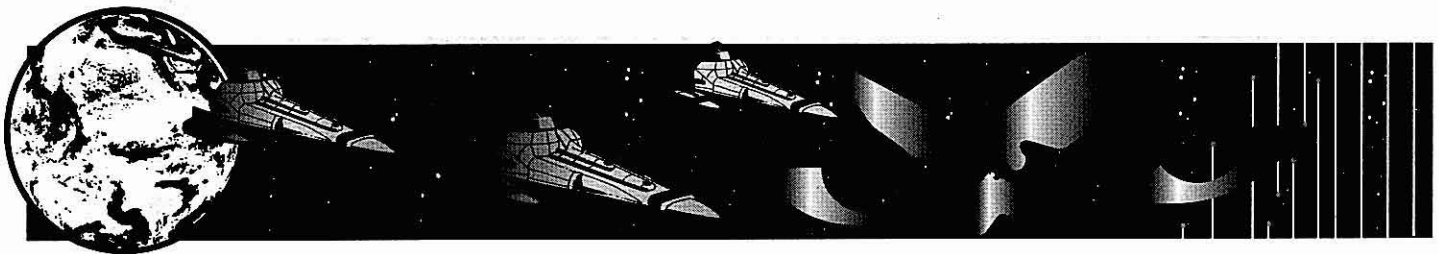
Common dress in the Borders tends toward trousers and tunics, usually in fairly bright colors and intricate patterns. A number of berries from desert plants are used for dyes, and the people in the Borders are, in general, more accomplished weavers than their brothers and sisters in the Settled Lands. Alchemists in the Borders also have rediscovered the secret of black powder, and it is made locally and sold both to the Subject Lands and the Outback. Primitive black powder weapons are the most common form of weapons encountered here.

Their language is clearly Anglic, but it is usually spoken with a noticeable accent, and experienced travellers soon learn to tell the difference between the accents of the people living along the Polar Sea, those living around the Sea of Halcyon and those living inland on the plains.

Outback

By statistical standards, the population density of the Outback is effectively zero. There are people there, but they are spread very thin. Most of the people living in the Outback are nomadic tribesmen, who live by tending herds of domesticated grazing animals similar to goats. Since surface vegetation is very sparse, the bands have to keep moving most of the time to find new grazing lands, and the small tribes seldom meet one another (as their ranges are separate and usually well-defined). When bands do meet at the edges of their ranging areas, it is usually cause for modest feasting and celebration. Like most nomadic cultures, there are strong taboos against marriage between members of the same band, so these meetings usually involve several days of courtships between the bands, followed by a number of new marriages. This cycle of isolation followed by celebration when others are encountered has produced a strong tradition of hospitality and sanctuary, which is again very common among desert nomadic tribes everywhere.

A substantial part of the human population of the Outback lives along the shores of the Polar Sea, where the weather is more moderate and there is more rainfall. Some of these



coastal dwellers are fishers, while others farm the river banks. Of all the people in the Outback, only those along the shores of the sea are not nomadic.

Robots used to occasionally patrol the Outback, but the growing success of resistance bands (see page XX) has led to their replacement by Breeds. Breed patrols conduct occasional sweeps of areas of the Outback, and lately have been particularly active in the Freedom Lake area in response to the growing level of modern armaments encountered there. Most of the bands are armed with a mix of black powder weapons purchased from the Borders, and locally manufactured bows, spears and other melee weapons.

Common dress in the Outback tends toward very loose, baggy trousers and tunics, usually made of homespun wool. Brightly colored festive clothing, highly prized and carefully preserved from meeting to meeting, is usually purchased from merchants who have brought it from the Borders.

The language spoken is heavily accented Anglic. The bands around Freedom Lake and Lake Defiance have begun speaking in an accent more reminiscent of standard Galanglic, and will not be easy for off-worlders to understand. Other tribes will still be intelligible for general concepts, but many unique nuances of meaning and emotion will be lost on strangers.

Animals

Common domesticated livestock on Promise include a goat-like animal called a *ramis*, raised for milk, meat, and wool, and a slow but powerful beast of burden called a *kurta*, both grazers. Among the more dangerous predators of the plains is a species of medium-sized chaser (averaging 50 kilos each) called *gaashken*, which travel in packs of a dozen or more animals. All of these animals are quadrupeds.

Encounters on Promise

When traveling across Promise, various encounters are possible. Derelict cities and other evidence of the Final War are fairly common. Human and Robot encounters, while perhaps less common, are potentially more interesting and dangerous.

The referee rolls 1D6 for each 700-kilometer hex traveled or once per day (if moving at a slower rate of speed) to determine the nature of the encounter. It is assumed that something of interest will be encountered in each hex or each day. In the Outback, referees may wish to arbitrarily make one-half to two-thirds of the encounters animals when travelling on the ground, due to the very low population density. The following brief descriptions will assist the referee in fleshing out these encounters. The chart is meant to be a guide, not a rigid limitation, and the referee should make each encounter different in some way. Players should never feel that the people they encounter are simply random entries on a table.

Encounter Descriptions

Animal: This is often the equivalent of no encounter, as it is usually just an animal sighting. If the characters are hunting, this encounter may mean game. It is also an opportunity to introduce unusual or interesting animal encounters, such as large predators.

Band: A band is a small group of characters usually organized for a specific purpose. It may consist of several family groups, but more often consists solely of males. A band may consist of one of the following specific encounters.

Breeds: A Breed patrol, either on a security sweep or looking for a specific resistance band. It consists of six to 20 or more armed Breeds, depending on the location and mission. Breed patrols are encountered almost exclusively in the Outback and the Borders. They are seldom used among the Subject Tribes. See page 55 for more details.

Brigands: A group of armed thieves, usually no more than a dozen or two and sometimes even fewer. They are usually armed with primitive weapons but occasionally will have one or more modern small arms. Brigands will sometimes pass themselves off as resistance fighters, and in many cases the distinction is unclear. Brigands can be found almost anywhere, although they are less common in the Subject Lands.

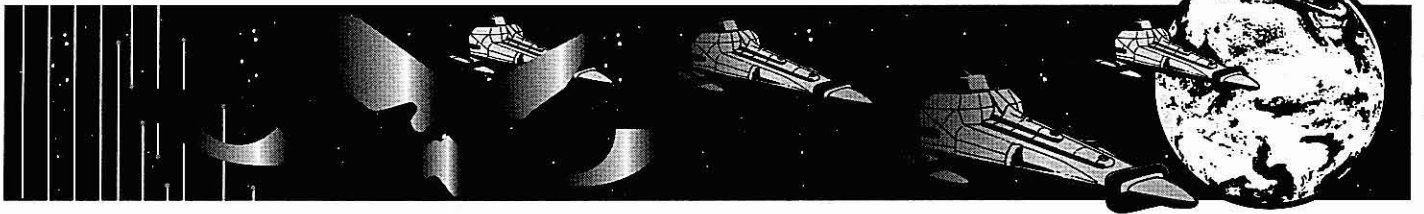
Fishers: One or more small boats manned by two to four fishers each. Fishers are encountered only on rivers and larger bodies of water. They are seldom armed (except with harpoons and marlin spikes, the equivalent of spears) and are not hostile.

Gypsies: Gypsies always travel in small bands of two or three dozen. As they are outlawed from the Subject Lands, they are seldom found there (although some Gypsy bands spend their entire time there, moving at night and hiding during the day). Most Gypsies are found in the Outback, and some bands are accompanied by Free Breeds (see Breeds description). Gypsies are not aggressively hostile, but are very suspicious and often difficult to approach. See page 58 for more details.

Hunters: A half dozen or more humans hunting for food, usually only lightly armed with primitive weapons. They are unlikely to be hostile to characters, but will be wary.

Resistance: A resistance group, either a small patrol of a half dozen or a large band of 100 or more. They are armed with a mix of primitive and modern weapons, with modern weapons more common close to Freedom Lake and primitive weapons more common elsewhere. Resistance bands are usually found only in the Outback, although they may occasionally be found in the Border Lands. See page 59 for more details.

Robots: A robot patrol, either on a security sweep or looking for a specific resistance band. It consists of from six to 12 security robots, depending on the location and mission. Robot patrols are encountered almost exclusively in



the Border Lands and the Subject Lands. They are seldom used in the Outback. See page 54 for more details.

Tribe: A large settlement or encampment of human families. Usually some of the adults are armed, although usually with only primitive weapons.

Merchant: A small group or caravan of merchants, usually carrying recovered technological relics from before the Collapse, but sometimes carrying more mundane trade goods, such as food, clothing, etc. This may be a group actually transporting technology, or the characters may happen upon

locals excavating an abandoned city recovering equipment. Merchants are usually armed and may have a few modern weapons in addition to their more primitive ones.

Militia: A group of human auxiliaries recruited by the Sentient Council to maintain security in the Subject Lands. These are usually large groups of militia, either moving from one area to another or conducting a sweep. They are armed with primitive weapons and are likely to be both suspicious of and hostile to characters who do not have a good explanation for their presence.

ANIMALS

<i>Animal</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>Init</i>	<i>Arm</i>	<i>Wpns</i>	<i>Hit</i>	<i>Flee</i>	<i>Attk</i>	<i>Move</i>
Ramis	12	6	1	1	—	Horn	4	15	6	30
Kurta	200	36	1+1	2	—	Trmple	9	10	4	25
Gaashken	50	14	D6	6	—	Teeth	14	4	Am	40

SUBJECT LANDS

<i>Die</i>	<i>Badland</i>	<i>Steppe</i>	<i>Clear</i>	<i>River</i>	<i>Lake/Sea</i>
1	Band	Band	Tribe	Militia	Militia
2	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe
3	Militia	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Band
4	Band	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant
5	Animal	Militia	Militia	Band	Animal
6	Animal	Band	Band	Animal	Animal

BORDER LANDS

<i>Die</i>	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Badland</i>	<i>Desert</i>	<i>Steppe</i>	<i>Clear</i>	<i>River</i>	<i>Lake/Sea</i>
1	Band	Band	Band	Band	Tribe	Band	Band
2	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Band	Band
3	Animal	Band	Merchant	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Band
4	Animal	Animal	Animal	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant
5	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Band	Merchant	Animal
6	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal

OUTBACK

<i>Die</i>	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Badland</i>	<i>Desert</i>	<i>Steppe</i>	<i>Clear</i>	<i>River</i>	<i>Lake/Sea</i>
1	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band
2	Tribe	Band	Tribe	Band	Band	Band	Merchant
3	Animal	Tribe	Animal	Tribe	Tribe	Tribe	Animal
4	Animal	Animal	Animal	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant	Animal
5	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal
6	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal	Animal



RESISTANCE

The human resistance to the Rule of the Machines is a dynamic and growing force on Promise, one with which player characters will interact frequently.

Star City: Of the approximately 50,000 humans in the city, almost 1000 are active members of the resistance. Most of these are divided into three-person cells, and only one person in the cell knows anyone else in the organization. There are a number of larger "strike teams" of a dozen or so fighters, made up of resistance members who have proven their loyalty and reliability, but these are exceptional.

The Central Command of the resistance is located in Star City, and consists of the Skywatch Virus-infected computer (one of the members of the Sentient Council) and a small staff of perhaps a dozen key advisors and leaders. To direct the organization, Skywatch assumes the identity of an invented human called simply Number

One. Only the dozen top leaders of the resistance and a handful of loyal robots infected with the Peacemaker strain of Virus know the truth. Despite the fact that Number One is actually a computer Virus, its loyalty is actually to the human resistance rather than the Council, and it is not setting up the resistance just to crush it. As a Peacemaker-strain Virus, it is working frantically to find a common ground for cooperation between humans and the minority of relatively sane sentient machines.

Central Command, with its access to the orbital communication relays of Skywatch, is able to communicate securely with the remote resistance bands by means of solar-powered satellite uplink receivers. It also operates a small network of roving technicians in the Outback, called Rangers, who keep the uplink receivers running.

Subject Lands: There is very little organized resistance activity in the Subject Lands. Although there is considerable fear and resentment of the Council, and no shortage of young firebrands willing to strike a blow, security is so tight and the human population so riddled with informers that all efforts to set up a widespread structure have been crushed.

As a result, the most important single activity of the scattered resistance members is "agitprop" activities, mostly consisting of nocturnal posting of flyers and handbills. These sometimes tell of a new outrage by the Council, either real (such as MedCom's Breed experiments) or imagined (a report that the processed food patties traded by the Council for goods are made from the bodies of captured slaves). All these posters urge the population to take no action yet, but "Remain ready to strike."

Borders: The resistance is gaining strength in the borders, although for now it is as much a social organization as an active group of fighters. There are few targets of genuine opportunity in the Borders, and most of the installations consist of heavily protected police posts, far too difficult to overcome with inexperienced guerrillas. There are no armed bands per se, but a few underground cells have hidden weapons. In addition, Central Command has planted a few downlink receivers with particularly reliable groups and can activate them if the situation requires it. These groups can fight if necessary, but their specialty is logistical support. They have assembled caches of fuel, food, medicine and ammunition in case the resistance can suddenly move into an area and begin operations.

Outback: In a sense, everyone in the Outback is a member of the resistance. The Outback is territory over which the Sentient Council does not have even a pretense of control, so the people who live there call themselves the Free Tribes, and rightly so. (But it is equally true that the Council's lack of control over the Outback stems more from a lack of interest than capability. There simply is very little of value in the Outback, and certainly not enough for the Council to expend scarce robots to control.)

While everyone may be part of the resistance to a greater or lesser degree, for most of them it is merely philosophical. Most people in the Outback have never heard of the human resistance, and some in remote parts of the planet have never seen a robot and do not believe they exist.

The actual hard core of the resistance in the Outback consists of the organized and armed bands linked to Central Command by satellite uplinks. The core bands of resistance fighters are clustered generally around Lake Defiance and Freedom Lake. Those closest to the lakes tend to have the best equipment, having the first pick of cargo brought in by the Coalition, Guild and free traders. The



LESLIE LANGERON

Langeron is the leader of the Black January Brigade, a resistance cell that operates in the Freedom Lake area. The Black January Brigade is a nomadic community of about 150 people, of whom perhaps 60 are actual combatants. The rest are too young or too old to fight, or are mothers nursing infant

children. The band is well-armed with modern assault rifles and grenade launchers, and many of the fighters are Experienced NPCs. Langeron's band is one of the stronger resistance units, and although Langeron is ambitious, she is completely committed to Central Command.

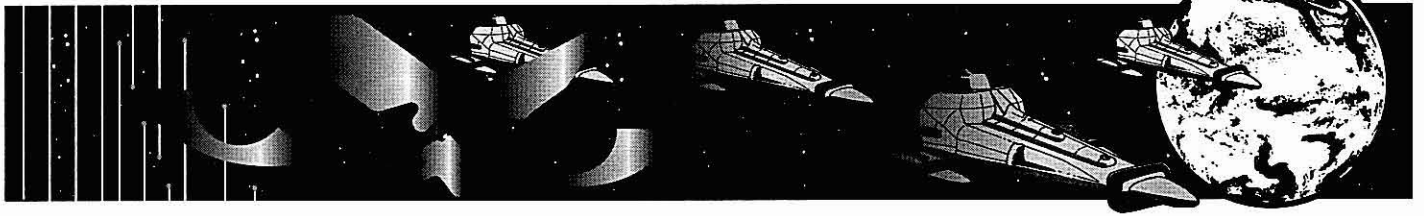
Experienced NPC

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

Other Assets: Leadership 14, Persuasion 13, Survival 12, Stealth 12

Motivation: *Club 9:* Langeron is a tough guerrilla fighter. She has seen many horrible things, and years of fighting absolutely merciless machines has trained her to regard violence as an effective and acceptable means of solving problems of almost any sort. The struggle against the machines has become her entire life. She has never known life without the machines, and has no real vision of what life might be like after victory, nor does she feel a need for such a vision. The struggle itself is sufficient.

Spade 7: Langeron does not think the isolated, feuding bands will ever accomplish much by themselves. The bands must be united under a single leader—herself—before they can make any real progress against the machines. She has so far been unable to convince "Central Command" (see page 00) of this, but she keeps trying. To the extent that the Coalition and the PCs can help her achieve this ambition, she will actively court them, and her perception of their utility in this respect will be the gauge of how enthusiastically and effectively she cooperates with the mission team.



bands communicate on a limited basis through the rangers. There are no more than 100 rangers total, and their main function is to repair and maintain the uplink receivers. They also keep the bands informed as to the activities and locations of others, so they have become an important link in maintaining cohesion and morale.

Aside from the above are bands who also have heard of the resistance, but whose principal means of livelihood consists of brigandage. These bands often style themselves as resistance fighters, and justify their thievery and extortion as enabling them to carry on "the struggle." In some cases, they actually do attack Breed patrols or "collaborators." The more active genuine resistance bands often spend so much energy on training and raids that their food production suffers, and they sometimes rely on forced "requisition" of foodstuffs from nonfighting bands. Given this blurring of activities, it is very difficult to separate brigands from freedom fighters, and for many bands it is more a question of degree than distinct type.

Beyond the core bands equipped with satellite uplinks and armed brigands is a broader group of bands who have heard of and consider themselves sympathetic to the resistance, but who are occupied primarily with survival. If persuaded by events or a charismatic leader, they might become more actively involved. They are often called on to furnish food to resistance raiding parties, and often their young men and women are recruited directly into fighting bands.

As the bands receive better and better armaments, a growing problem is one of leadership. Some of the more active brigands have become almost full-time resistance fighters, but do not pay any attention to Central Command (and they don't have satellite communicators anyway).

In some areas, groups are challenging the dominant position of the older resistance bands and are particularly anxious to get a piece of the trading rights around the lakes. Open fighting between bands, all but unknown a few years ago, is becoming more and more common.

GYPSIES

Although not in any way a part of the organized resistance movement commanded by Number One, the "Gypsies" of Promise have to be included here.

The Gypsies are psionically adept humans who generally live apart from the rest of society. Psionic powers are outlawed by the Sentient Council, and psions are ruthlessly persecuted in the Subject Lands and the Borders. As a result, virtually all Gypsies live in the Outback and practice the same nomadic life-style common to the other humans.

The Gypsies are the descendants of the members of a psionic institute on Promise. Following the Collapse, psions continued to be persecuted (some on Promise actually blamed them for the Collapse), and the survivors fled into the wilderness as their only chance of survival. The nomads of the Outback still are suspicious of them, and they are generally disliked. These feelings are stronger in the Borders, and in the Subject Lands parents frighten their children with stories of the Gypsies stealing children at night.

This antipathy by human society toward Gypsies is returned by them in full. Most Gypsies are suspicious of "Norms," as they call normal (nonpsionic) humans, and they particularly distrust any governmental or similar institution. As a result, they are generally friendlier with the brigands than they are with the more disciplined resistance bands, even though they have a stronger common

interest with the resistance in defeating the Council.

Psionics is not a reliably inherited trait, so many of the Gypsy children are not psions, and these grow to adulthood as full members of the group, but seldom assume positions of leadership. Often they will leave the band to live with norms when they can find a band which will accept them. The Gypsies recruit new psions from other bands whenever they are able to test them, and many people who suspect they have latent psionic talent will go on a quest to find and join the Gypsies to receive training. (The recruiting of young psionically adept men and women is probably the origin of the stories of baby kidnappings.)

Appearance: Gypsies tend to wear the same style of clothing as other desert nomads, but in shades of grays, whites and subdued earth tones. They usually either allow their hair to grow very long or shave their heads altogether. If worn long, the hair is almost always tied back or braided. A style currently popular among Gypsy women is to gather all their hair up into a topknot ending in a long ponytail, or to shave all of the head except for a circle of hair two or three inches in diameter on the top of the head which is also wrapped in a topnot ending in a long ponytail, similar to a Cossack scalplock.

Free Breeds: A few psions have the ability to "cleanse" computers of Virus (although this seldom leaves the computer functional afterward), through a combination of Computer Empathy and Telephysics. This enables them to free captured Breeds from their silicon second brain.

These Free Breeds remain outcasts in human society, where they are still considered abominations, so they usually chose to accompany the psions. Bands with cleansers usually have half a dozen or more Free Breeds with them.



STEELDANCER

The current leader of the Mondaroo Gypsies, Steeldancer is also an accomplished psion. Her unusual talents make her particularly effective against robots, and she is one of the few individuals honored by the Sentient Council with a price on her head. Steeldancer's ability to psionically disrupt computers

has enabled her to free a large number of Breeds from their Virus-controlled silicon "second brains" (another reason the Sentient Council wants her dealt with), and she is constantly accompanied by three absolutely dedicated Free Breed bodyguards.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Armed Melee Combat

Other Assets: Computer Empathy 15, Telephysics (Telekinesis) 13, Willpower 9, Leader 12

Motivation: *Club 6:* Steeldancer is an accomplished knife fighter, and if called upon to defend herself or her leadership position, she will do so without hesitation.

Heart 8: Much more open-minded about nonpsions than most Gypsies, Steeldancer would like to find a way to reunite her band and other Gypsies with the rest of human society on Promise.

Escape from Promise



Q: Intellectually what you say makes sense, but are you driven solely by intellect? How do you feel about so many of your species dying at our hands?

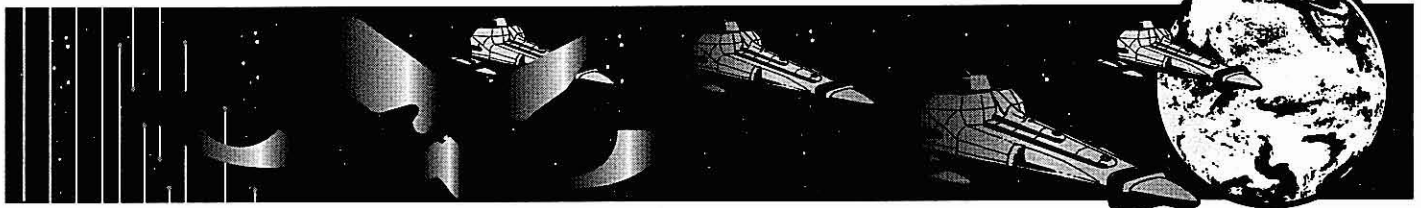
Sandman: Sick. None of us are driven solely by intellect. But sometimes we have to use our intellect to control our emotions. What else separates us from the beasts?

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part II (20/VII/1202), RCSA Archives

This adventure begins where the first adventure in this book leaves off.

The Ship has grounded at Promise Downport, and the player characters must now devise a means of escaping from the city and making their way across the country to Freedom Lake, hopefully to find a ship heading back to the Coalition.

For obvious reasons, this sequence cannot be run in any other order without a fairly massive re-write of the other adventure material in this book.



REFEREES ABSTRACT

The player characters begin the adventure in *The Ship* grounded at Promise Downport. They are contacted by the resistance, and provisions are made for secretly removing the entire human crew of the vessel and moving them underground by tube to a secure area in the Downbelow. Once there, most of the crew is divided up into small parties and individually smuggled out of the city by the resistance. The player characters, however, are retained and introduced to Number One, the head of the resistance.

Anxious to develop more cooperation with the Coalition, Number One arranges a more elaborate cover story for the characters which enables them to stay in Star City for some time and move around fairly freely. This allows them to get a feel for life in the city and investigate its defenses in more detail.

After a week in the city, the resistance arranges for them to be smuggled out and escorted through the Subject Tribes. After that, they have to make their own way across country to Freedom Lake. Along the way, they encounter Gypsies (psions) and bands of brigands. As they approach Freedom Lake, they finally link up with the resistance fighters of the Free Tribes, but also become embroiled in a power struggle between two strong guerrilla leaders, with their choice perhaps solidifying Number One's control over the bands.

GROUNDING ON PROMISE

When *The Ship* grounds at Promise Downport, the computer system controlling landings and maintenance at the starport will ask to board the ship and assess its needs for repairs and provisions. Fortunately, *The Ship* has been to Promise before, and its extreme paranoia is well-known, so the character impersonating *The Ship* can plausibly refuse to allow a general boarding and instead request specific technicians who "it knows it can trust" to make the inspection. Robert 571 can provide a list of two or three key technicians at the starport who are active members of the resistance and whose technical specialties might plausibly be needed by the ship. These names, if passed on to Downport Control, will be accepted without hesitation, and the inspection party will be sent as soon as the humans are available (in two or three hours).

The technicians will arrive and be brought into the ship. Almost immediately, they will realize what has happened, and they will become extremely excited. No one else has ever captured a vampire ship in the middle of a vampire fleet and kept it secret, let alone then grounded in the middle of Promise Downport. They will also be overjoyed to see Robert 571 again, but their celebration will quickly give way to urgent planning to get the human crew well clear of the ship before the mutiny is discovered.

THE PLAN: PHASE ONE

The technical boarding party quickly sends one technician off to report to the resistance Central Command, her cover story being that additional technical assistance is required to repair the ship's sensor suite. As the Skywatch data system is widely known to have the best human and robotic sensor techs, she will supposedly ask for assistance there. Actually, the additional personnel who come will be resistance fighters disguised as Skywatch technicians. It will be easier to fool Downport Control using Skywatch identification than personnel pretending to be from Downport's own staff.

When the resistance group shows up several hours later, they actually have two security robots along. The head of the team will introduce himself and congratulate the surviving human crew on a great accomplishment, but will also urge haste.

The cover story is that slave prisoners are being transferred to the custody of the data system maintaining municipal services. The two robots and several human guards will escort them.

The resistance has obtained valid work orders for the move, so the robots waiting outside believe they are actually delivering slaves (so it is important to stay in character around them).

The crewmembers will have their hands bound behind their backs, but with break-away plastic ties so they can easily break free if that should be necessary. They are lead out of the ship and, in the company of the two PR-317 security robots, marched several hundred meters across the landing field to a large entryway to the underground tube system. They are taken by tube to the main downport tube (maglev subway) station, then transferred to a municipal tube and taken into the city.

Once they arrive at an underground municipal tube station, the PCs are taken off, and rather than being taken to the surface, they are marched to one of the connected maintenance areas. There, resistance members disguised as municipal maintenance technicians take charge of the humans and robots, and the original resistance fighters depart.

The new group of resistance people untie the human crewmembers and hurry them down the maintenance tunnels, then soon of into the "heaters," taking them through two kilometers of tunnels until they come to a fairly large chamber where they are told to rest. Within an hour, food arrives as well as bedding.

Up until now, the characters have had little influence on the course of action, and they may become impatient or suspicious.

This is a good time for a more senior resistance leader to introduce herself and discuss future plans for smuggling the humans out.



MEET THE RESISTANCE

Two or three human techs from the resistance generally remain with the PCs. They are friendly and helpful, but they are reluctant to give the PCs any information. "Karla will fill you in when she gets here," is all that they will say. If the characters ask Robert 571, he will plead ignorance and explain that since he worked in Downport he didn't know any of the resistance people in the other parts of the city for security reasons.

After the crew has been fed and given bedding, Karla 1214 will arrive and be greeted warmly by the other resistance fighters there. Karla is a strikingly attractive woman in her late twenties or early thirties. She is self-confident without being arrogant or authoritarian, and the other resistance fighters present clearly respect her. Cutting the greetings short, however, Karla will call all the human crew of The Ship together and address them.

Karla's Address

"Congratulations to all of you for winning a victory over the Cans that will be sung about for generations. Other crews will take over other ships, but you will always be the first. You'll be interested to know that the Cans now know something's wrong with that dead vampire out there, but they can't figure out what happened or where the human crew went. The mechanics who helped you have tight cover stories that will keep them out of trouble, so don't worry on that score. We're pretty careful with our people's safety.

"I'm sorry if these accommodations are rough, but it's the best we can do. Your safety is our number one concern, so security comes before comfort. Still, if there's anything we can do to make this a little more livable, let either Ross 2120 or Sandra 289 here know, and they'll do their best. Hopefully, this won't be for long.

"Now, here's the tentative plan we've come up with for getting you out of the city, subject to your approval. We plan to break you up into groups of about a dozen each and escort you out to the Subject Tribes. I know some of you are families with children; all families will stay together, and we'll try to keep you together with whatever shipmates you worked with as well.

"Your cover will be that you are going out to do "missionary work" for Census, one of the big cans with a God complex. You'll be escorted by human guards in Censor livery. Censor is one of the cans that uses human grunts to keep the peace out there, so that helps.

"We'll take one group out at a time, but we hope to get most of you out tonight. Your guides will begin showing up in about an hour. That's right, one hour. We don't believe in wasting any time. You'll go most of the way underground and then come up on the edge of the cleared zone. Then you just walk on out. We have friends out in the Tribal Lands who will help you from there.

"As I say, this is all subject to your approval. If you want to, you can stay here and make a go of it, but to tell you the truth, there won't be much for you to do without ID records, and life underground for runaways is pretty rough. Still, it's your call, and we'll do whatever we can to help you."

After she finishes her formal address, Karla will answer questions for a while and then have Ross and Sandra start taking names and trying to draw up lists of groups that will make the escape together. At that point, Karla will detach herself from the crowd and make her way to the player characters. She will introduce herself again and make sure they are the crewmembers from the Reformation Coali-

tion. Having determined that, she tells them that the head of Central Command has asked to meet them. The meeting won't be possible until tomorrow, but if they are willing she will come back for them then.

After Karla leaves, the hundred-odd people who made up the crew of The Ship will begin to take their leave of each other. In all likelihood, this will be the last time most of them ever see each other again, and it will be time for the player characters to say good-bye to Robert 571, the surviving Guild merchants, Hoodla, Children of The Ship and others. Over the next eight hours, groups will be taken out one by one until only the player character party is left.

Meeting Number One

The next day, Karla returns for the player characters to take them to their meeting with the chief of Central Command, who she says is simply called Number One. She leads them through several kilometers of "heaters" which come out in the sub-basement of a large building complex. The ceilings are very high, and metal catwalks wind around the bundles of steam pipes, water mains and fiber optic cables that converge on the building. The lighting is dim, the sub-basement dirty and wet, and there is a trace of steam in the air. The player characters are taken along winding passages and up and down ladders until they arrive at a secured room with two armed guards at the door. The guards slide back the heavy steel door, and the players are hurried in.

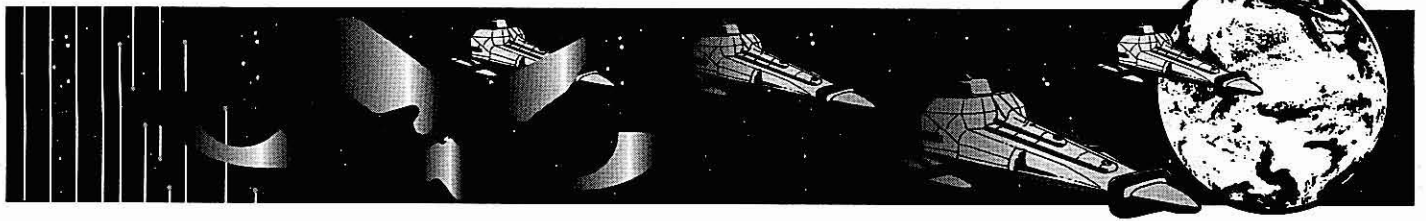
The room is fairly open, but the dark steel and concrete wall and floor are covered with supporting girders and pipes. In one corner is communication workstation manned by a technician, and a holographic projector is attached to it. A number of folding chairs have been arranged in a semi-circle off to one side, and the player characters are asked to be seated by the technician. Shortly after they are seated, the projector flickers to life, and a hologram of a man is projected into the open space in front of the chairs.

Appearance: The man projected is seated in a battered wooden swivel chair and facing the characters. He is casually dressed in shirt and slacks, and the sleeves of his shirt are partially rolled up. Physically, he is lean and of average stature, perhaps a bit on the short side. He looks to be in his fifties, and his long face is deeply lined. His eyes are intelligent and friendly, with a suggestion of laugh lines at the edges, but also a suggestion of melancholy, and he has a prominent nose. He is smooth-shaven and has thinning dark hair with a deeply receding hairline. When he begins talking, he smiles, but he looks tired, and his hand gestures lack energy.

Conversation: "I'm very sorry," the man says, "to have to visit with you only by hologram. Because my movements are limited, this is safer for both of us. I head up what we call the Central Command of the resistance. I'm called Number One, because of my place in the resistance. For now, that's as good a name as any. We operate out of Star City from a dozen or more secret facilities like this one.

"It's a pleasure to finally see all of you. I've heard a lot about you





and wanted to meet you for some time. I had hoped to live to see the day when I could talk with members of the Coalition, but I didn't think it would happen this quickly, or in quite this way.

"I've got about 1000 questions to ask you about the Coalition, but I imagine you've got at least that many about our organization and the situation here on Promise, and yours are more important. So why don't you go head and fire away."

Number One will answer any questions the player characters have which will not breach security. The topics the conversation will probably touch are listed below with a summary of the sort of information Number One is likely to disclose.

Resistance In The City: He will tell the PCs there are "several hundred" human members of the resistance in Star City, many of them infiltrated into technical positions with the different data systems on the Council. Most of the infiltrated technicians are with Skywatch or CeeWaLP, as those two systems are the least vigilant and the most preoccupied with the purely technical aspects of their existence. Skywatch is so well penetrated that the resistance has been able to keep the detection network from tagging inbound ships that land at Freedom Lake as anything other than sensor echoes of a small moon. They also have been able to provide falsified work orders on occasion to get Skywatch robots to accompany them, thus making their cover stories almost fool-proof.

Resistance In The Tribes: Number One is less certain as to the strength of the resistance bands among the Free Tribes, but he sees them as essential to the ultimate success of the rebellion. No matter how carefully they organize in Star City, they will never be able to recruit enough people to take over the city while keeping their plans secret. That large an organization would almost certainly be penetrated by informers. Instead, the Central Command has to stay small and focused on supporting the growing tribal resistance which may eventually be able to overthrow the Sentient Council. The Coalition is a new consideration. Their help will make the growth of the Tribal resistance that much more rapid.

City Defenses: The Coalition may even be able to launch a direct attack on Star City (provided it did not involve indiscriminate bombardment, which would probably kill more humans than it would destroy robots). Number One does not know what the Coalition's capabilities are and would not expect the player characters to make any commitments along those lines, but he will brief them on what the city's defenses are in general. This includes numbers of armed robots, and number and location of PAD missiles and ground sensor arrays. He will tell them about the existence of the deep meson gun. The resistance has not yet been able to pinpoint its location, however.

Sentient Council: Number One will be able to tell the player characters a great deal about the major data systems on the council and the political in-fighting that is going on at present. He will explain the major division as being between the alliance put together by Finance opposing the defense bloc, with Maxcranque as an unpredictable wildcard. He will describe both Skywatch and CeeWaLP as politically unimportant due to their complete preoccupation with their jobs. If the players suggest that Maxcranque II's opposition to MedCom's Breed project indicates a possible point of contact or common interest, Number One will try to discourage them. "Maxcranque II is an unpredictable lunatic," he will say.

Cover Story: Number One has also prepared a more elaborate cover story for the player characters which will enable them to stay in Star City for a while and move around fairly freely. This will allow them to make their own assessment of the defenses and get a feel for life in the city. The cover story requires that they submit to forehead tattooing, but this is a painless process involving high pressure injection of permanent ink into the pores of the skin. The resistance has cracked the scanner bar code and will code the characters as technicians for CeeWaLP and issue them the gray-brown jumpsuits worn by the humans serving that data system. This will enable them to wander almost anywhere in the Downbelow without arousing undue attention, and even forays to the surface can be explained in terms of some obscure maintenance inspection. CeeWaLP has no security robots, and its maintenance robots are notoriously oblivious to anything other than their own jobs. Number One will also assign Karla 1214, one of his best operatives, to them as an escort to help them find their way around. But where they go and what they do will be entirely up to them.

Escape: The PCs can escape at once, if desired, but the offer to let them scout the city is open. Number One will tell them that whenever they decide to leave, they will be smuggled out of the city and through the Subject Tribes. After that, they will be on their own, although the resistance will provide them with arms and supplies to make the overland trek.



KARLA 1214

Karla is a proficient computer technician and electrician as well as a cool-headed resistance fighter. Her forehead bar code shows her to be a Skywatch technician, and she usually wears the orange and sky-blue jumpsuit of that computer system's human techs.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (Slug Pistol), Armed Martial Arts (Small

Blade)

Other Assets: Leadership 12, Electrician 13, Computer 10, Stealth 12, Streetwise 9

Motivation: *Club Ace:* Karla is a natural leader with an instinct for tactics and a quick, decisive mind that remains crystal clear even in the most dangerous situations. Although she has no ambition for power and never tries to assert her will over others, her fellow fighters naturally tend to follow her lead, particularly in combat situations.

Diamond 4: Karla owns several different combat knives and two pistols, which is unusual on a planet where weapons are so rare. Her one weakness is an acquisitive streak when it comes to personal weapons, and she will sometimes unnecessarily risk her life to obtain a particularly powerful or beautifully made weapon.



LONG JOURNEY HOME

The player characters may spend a week or more in Star City getting to know its geography and studying its defenses. Its defenses are, or course, pretty impressive, and look to be well beyond the Reformation Coalition's capabilities to take by direct assault. There are usually one or more vampire ships in orbit or grounded at Promise Downport, and one or two of these are big enough by themselves to take out most of the RCN, assuming they are still fully functional.

This should also be a time for the player characters to get to know the human resistance better, as well as get a feel for life in Star City. Friendships and even romantic attachments may develop between members of the group and local resistance people. All these should serve to make the player characters more strongly committed to helping the resistance in whatever way they can.

Once the inspection of the defenses is completed to the satisfaction of the player characters, the time will come for them to leave. The problem is that they will have to go by land all the way to Freedom Lake, and no personnel available to the resistance know the land outside the immediate environs of the city. The resistance bands near Freedom Lake can be alerted to their coming, but getting there will be up to the player characters.

The resistance will provide them with modern firearms,



ammunition, concentrated food packets, first aid kits and disguises. They will initially wear the uniforms of Census human auxiliaries. As Census armed human guards frequently travel through the immediate area around the city, this should raise little suspicion. If questioned as to why they have CeeWaLP forehead tattoos, the characters are to say they were traded to Census in return for spare reactor parts. They will also be given a supply of local currency, equivalent to about Cr1000, enough to buy clothing and additional supplies at least in the Subject Lands and the Borders. The currency (called "ramchips" in the local slang) is not likely to be accepted in the Outback, however, and prices will be much higher in the Borders, as the currency is not as highly valued there.

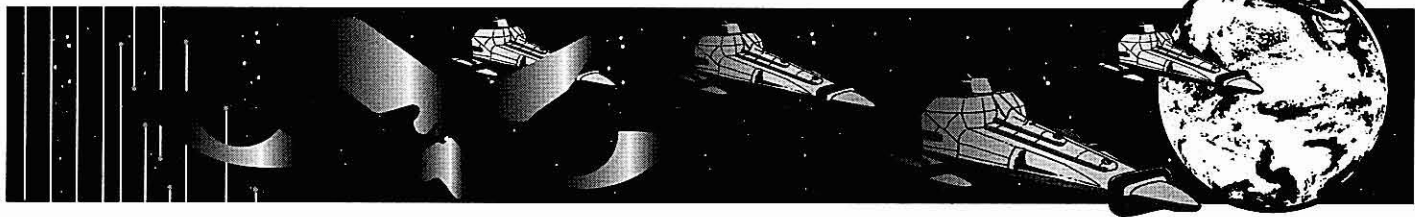
Karla will escort the characters through the Downbelow to near the edge of the city and then bring them up through a hidden access shaft in an area of rubble. There is a low, winding path through the cleared ground which the resistance has painstakingly constructed and which is not swept by sensors. By staying low and crawling part of the way, the players can cross the cleared ground without being detected. This will take about two hours. After that, they are on their own.

The Trek Across Promise

The journey across Promise will take a very long time, and this trip is the meat of this adventure. There is a lot of territory to cover, and it all has to be covered by foot (or hoof, if the players obtain riding *kurtas*). The principal resource to draw on in administering this part of the adventure are the encounter tables and notes as to the land and people of Promise. Although there is plenty of time for random encounters, the referee should make sure that the party eventually encounters nearly every type of group on the planet, including Steeldancer's band of Gypsy psions.

Much of the drama and roleplaying will, of course, take place when the players encounter other humans, and most of that will take place in the Subject Lands and the Borders. Once the players have reached the desert and badlands, the journey will become less eventful. To avoid boredom, the referee should begin running the trek in larger blocks of time, rolling only once for a significant encounter per 700-kilometer hex crossed and treating time in blocks of several days (the time it takes to cross a hex).

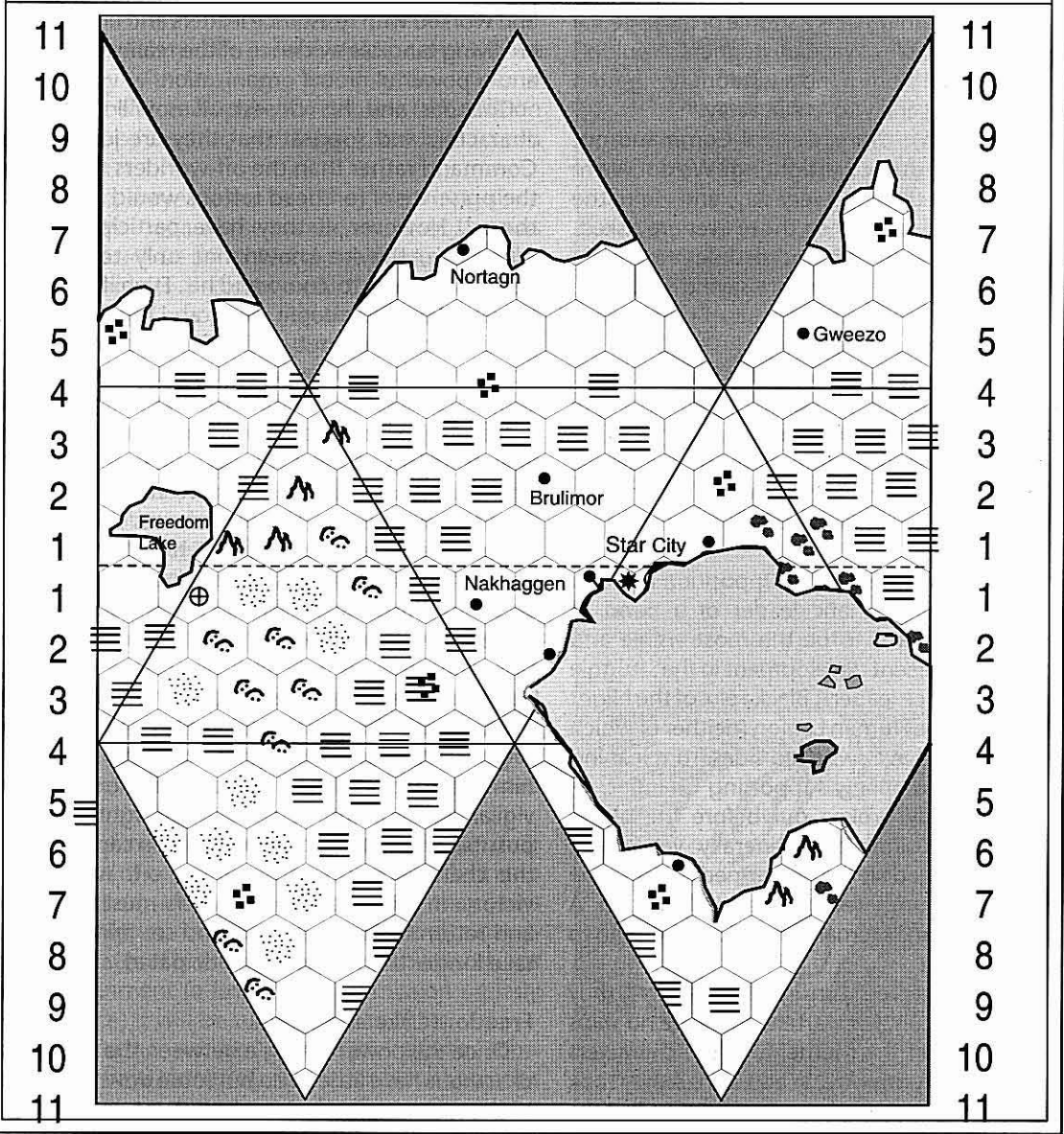
Eventually, the characters will arrive in the vicinity of Freedom Lake, and they may locate a resistance band who knows of them and will help them finish the trip to the lake. When they arrive at the lake, however, they will find a potentially explosive situation.



Date: 10-IV-1202 **World Name:** Promise **UPP:** C 5 4 2 7 8 6 - 9

Subsector / Sector: Promise / Diaspora **Hexagon Size in Kilometers:** 700

Location: Star City - Freedom Lake **CONTINENTAL DATA VIEW**



- | | | | |
|----------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Mountain | Steppe | Ruined City | Jungle |
| Badlands | Starport | River | Settlement |
| Desert | Open Sea/Lake | Mixed | Freedom Lake Landing Site |



POWER STRUGGLE

When the player characters arrive at Freedom lake, they will find an unusually large concentration of nomadic bands along the lake shores. As they walk through the encampments, they will overhear considerable animated argument among the nomads, mostly concerning the resistance and Central Command. The two sides in the arguments seem to be summarized as follows:

Argument A (Loyalist): "Central Command has led the resistance from the very beginning. It is a source of intelligence and advice that's indispensable. Without it, there wouldn't even be a resistance. Central Command's wisdom has gotten us this far, and we would be crazy to break away."

Argument B (Opposition): "Sure, Central Command got this started, but who does all the actual fighting? We do. We're the ones risking our lives on the line every day, and we're the ones who should decide how and when those lives are risked. Besides, who are these Central Command people. Where are they? Who put them in charge? We aren't saying to ignore them. We can still listen to what they have to say. But the tribes out here in the Free Lands should be calling the shots."

As the players move through the area, they will see the tents of nearly a dozen different bands, with well over 2000 people in the combined encampment. The argument seems to be fairly evenly divided—most of the nomads from the actual resistance bands with downlinks favor Central Command, while the bands that seem to be rougher and less disciplined are opposed.

The most prominent spokesman of the Opposition is Bruno Chandar, the tough and charismatic leader of a band of brigands. Leslie Langeron seems to be the most visible and respected Loyalist leader. A recent development in the struggle for power is that two resistance leaders, Black Felix of the Night Runners and Zuma of the Free Human Legion (neither of which have over 100 people total) have switched sides from leaning toward Central Command to openly supporting Chandar.

Several fights have already broken out before the player characters arrived, and tensions run generally very high. Langeron's Black January Brigade is the best armed of any of the bands, but is currently outnumbered by Chandar's faction. A substantial minority of the bands remain undecided, waiting to see which side will falter first.

Options: The player characters can ignore all this if they choose, but that will be difficult. For starters, there are no ships grounded at Freedom Lake at the moment, so the characters will have to stay in the vicinity anyway. In addition, if they took part in the prequel adventure "A Blighted Land" in **Challenge**, they will know Leslie Langeron and probably have some loyalty to her. Finally, the information they have collected on Central Command will do the Coalition very little good if Central Command loses its control over the bands.

Langeron will in any event be alert to the characters' arrival due to downlink messages from Star City, and she will make them welcome in her encampment. She and her tribesmen will ask about their trip across Promise, and will be interested in

hearing about the Subject Lands, the Borders and the general level of security throughout the land controlled by the Council. Langeron is involved in a power struggle now, but that doesn't keep her from thinking and planning ahead.

The characters are in a position to sway some public opinion in the bands, as much of the discontent with Central Command's leadership stems from simply not knowing anything about it. The secrecy shrouding the organization, until now an advantage, has suddenly become a liability. Having been in the city and worked with resistance leaders and fighters, the characters are living tangible evidence of the reality of Central Command and a powerful global organization.

Chandar and his closest allies will try to discredit the characters and suggest that they are just agents of Central Command rather than the off-worlders they claim to be, and the presence of forehead tattoos would seem to support that theory. However, if they have participated in the prequel adventure, they're known not only to Langeron and her people, but also to Zumo and his. Even if Zumo wanted to lie, he can't keep his people silent, and they will not only confirm the character's identity but also relate any exploits the characters may have been in during the previous mission. Failing this, the characters will have to rely on logic and persuasion to establish their identities.

Resolution: Unless the characters bungle badly, the undecideds will start to support Langeron and the Central Command, and the recent converts to Chandar's side will begin to desert him. At this point, he will attempt a more violent coup, trying to kidnap or kill both Langeron and the characters, and thus crush the opposition to his leadership.

How the characters respond and manage to avoid this (assuming they do so), and then defeat Chandar, is the final episode of the adventure. It may consist of finding out his plans in advance (if the characters have been able to plant a spy in his organization) and creating an ambush or other trap to defeat him. Alternatively, the PCs may not know in advance, but by vigilance, skill or just dumb luck may fight off his attack. A third possibility is that Chandar succeeds in capturing Langeron and the characters and carries them off, winning a temporary victory. In this case, the characters must find a way to escape and return to Freedom Lake and set things right, which may take longer than originally anticipated.

Freedom Lake and Home

Once the power struggle between the tribes is resolved, the characters have little to do but settle down and await the arrival of the next ship bound for Coalition Space. They do not have to wait long before the old and much-worn far trader *Bonne Chance* settles on its CG lifters into the waters of the lake. Soon, a motor launch pulls away from the starship and brings its captain ashore with another crewman and the first load of a shipment of small arms ammunition.

The captain of the ship is Branu Stigmann. If the players participated in the prequel adventure, they are already familiar with him, and he will greet them warmly and expansively. If



they have not run through the prequel adventure, this will be their first encounter with the good captain, but he will still be friendly, especially once he learns they are from the Reformation Coalition. He will listen to the story of their many adventures, amazed and impressed by what they have lived through, and agree to take them back to the Coalition, provided they don't mind a fairly slow trip. *Bonne Chance* is, after all, a working ship, and Stigmann is having enough trouble paying the bills without making an unscheduled and unpaid 12-week trip to Trybec.

The actual trip home may take as long as six months if the player characters stay with Stigmann, but may be quicker if they encounter a Coalition ship heading back to Coalition space. In that case, they can hitch a ride back and be home in a few weeks.

Once they're home, they will find that they were long since given up as dead or worse, and the people who sent them as well as their superiors will be delighted to see them. When the full story of their exploits is discovered, they will become genuine heroes (provided, of course, that their actions actually match the rough outline of the first two adventures). Their collective achievements are potentially very impressive: organized the first known take-over of a vampire ship by its slave crew; contacted the human resistance on Promise and met Number One, its commander; were able to study the defenses of Star City at first hand and over a long period of time; intervened to consolidate and solidify the unity of the resistance bands in the Outback under Central Command; made many valuable friends for the Coalition on Promise.

In addition to paying them Coalition hazardous duty back-pay for their entire time on the mission (Cr2000 per month, which isn't exactly a fortune, but it's probably added up to a considerable chunk over time), Secretary General Maggart requests a personal meeting with the PCs during which he congratulates them and discusses their experiences further. Maggart will ask their advice on future Coalition policy toward the resistance at that time.

All berthing, financing and operating expenses for their vessel will be paid out of the RCES general fund, and their ship will be restored to them after two months. Since they were presumed lost, the ship was taken into Coalition service pending settling of the estates of the characters. As soon as it returns from its current assignment (a low-risk cargo mission entirely inside Coalition Space) it will be turned over to them.

Finally, as a semi-permanent memento of their trip to Promise, the characters all have extremely distinctive black barcodes permanently tattooed on their foreheads. Cosmetic surgery can remove these (at a cost of about Cr1000 each), but some characters (particularly Luhtalans and Oriflammen, although for very different reasons) will probably want to keep them. Characters who wish to have them removed may do so, but the referee should tell them that there will be a one- or two-month wait for this sort of elective cosmetic surgery.

As it happens, the tattoos will prove useful one more time before they are removed.



BRUNO CHANDAR

Leader of the East Glasslands Raiders, a band of brigands who sometimes fight Breed patrols as well. Bruno is an extremely tough fighter, although he prefers to win his opponents over by persuasion. He is physically massive, tall and broad-shouldered,

and he has an extensive pattern of blue and black facial tattoos. He has a broad, toothy smile and a loud laugh, but can turn murderously serious in a moment's notice.

Veteran NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (Slug Rifle), Unarmed Martial Arts, Armed Martial Arts

Other Assets: Persuasion 15, Riding 10, Leader 12, Stealth 10, Survival 8

Motivation: *Spade Ace:* Bruno is both intimidating and charming, in a strange sort of way, and instantly commands people's attention, if not necessarily their respect. He is an excellent public speaker, and his followers are extremely loyal.

Spade 9: Bruno has an insatiable hunger for power over other people. He longs to be leader of all of the resistance bands and carve an empire out of the Outback. He has no interest or concern for the actual struggle against the machines as long as they leave him alone, and he secretly despises the idealists who believe in the movement.



BRANU STIGMANN

Free Trader captain of the far trader *Bonne Chance*, Stigmann is a flamboyant and friendly looking merchant with just a hint of the pirate about him.

Experienced NPC

Combat Assets: Slug Weapon (Slug Pistol)

Other Assets: Astrogation 13, Communications 12, Persuasion 15, Pilot (Interface/Grav) 14, Sensors 14

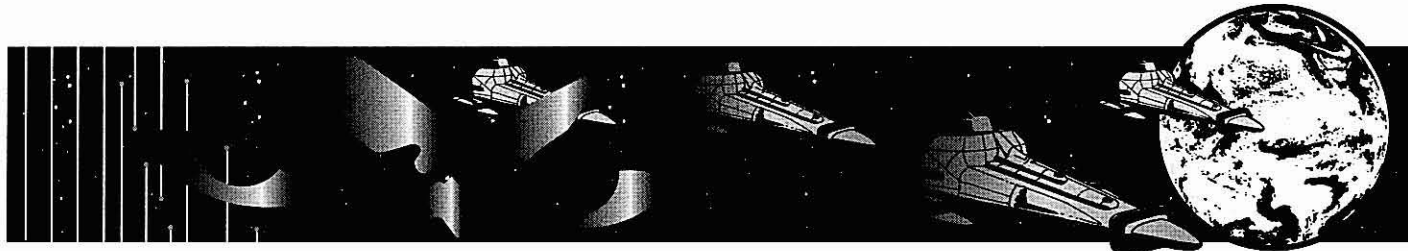
Motivation: *Heart 4:* Stigmann is a kind-hearted man, inclined to give what help he can to those who need it. This keeps him poor and has led him into unnecessary danger more than once.

Club 3: Stigmann is braver than he lets on. He has been in many difficult situations and remains cool and capable when in danger.

Robots



BKM-95



Q: It's hard to believe that you feel no hostility toward us when we are so actively engaged in combating Virus. It's difficult to understand where your sympathies really lie, and why.

Sandman: It is really? If you saw a human homicidal maniac butchering helpless Aslan, and then saw Aslan warriors kill the human to stop him, where would your sympathies lie? With the dead Aslan victims or with the dead human maniac? If the human maniac resisted the Aslan warriors, which side of that fight would you feel compelled to join? With whom would you feel a greater sense of kinship?

Those aren't rhetorical questions. I'd like some answers, because if you really can't understand why I'm doing this, then I've fallen in with monsters.

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part II (20/VII/1202),
RCSA Archives

This section of **Vampire Fleets** deals specifically with robots. In general, the rules presented in the basic game are still followed, but with these modifications. Because ratings are different for robots under these modifications, the two robots presented in the basic game have been rerated and reformatted, and appear in the sample robot section of this chapter.

Melee Attacks: Each arm of the robot has a separate melee hit number, and this number is used in place of the Melee skill in all cases.

Robots may not conduct diving blows, but diving blows may be attempted against them. If hit by a diving blow, substitute the value (mass in kilograms÷10) for (Strength+Constitution), which is used to determine resistance to the blow.

Combat Damage: Robots now take different amounts of damage depending on their size. Hit location is still rolled (because armor strength may vary), and head hits still do double damage, just as with other NPCs. Hits are not kept track of separately for different body locations, but whenever damage produces a wound of a specific level (slight, serious or critical), it is assessed as damage of that level to the area hit by the shot. Any hit causes slight damage. Any hit after the first row of boxes is filled causes serious damage. Any hit after the second row of boxes is filled causes critical damage.

Note that after the second row of boxes is filled, additional individual hits no longer have to be recorded, as every hit will cause critical damage, and only the specific component damaged needs to be noted.

For example, a robot takes 10 hits on each row of the damage record. A four-hit damage result to the leg causes slight damage to the leg. An eight-hit damage result to the chest pushes the robot's total damage level above 10 and so

counts as serious damage, destroying one weapon or damaging the batteries enough to cut the robot's speed in half. A five-hit damage to the arm would also count as serious damage, destroying any weapon or tool mounted on the arm. If the five-hit damage had been to the head, however, it would have caused 10 hits (double damage), pushing total damage to 22 or over the critical level, and so destroying the robot (since any critical damage to the head destroys it).

Movement: Robots move as vehicles, with a safe combat speed and a chance of mishap at higher speeds. All robots have an assumed skill level of 8 in "locomotion," the equivalent of vehicle driver. The robot's intelligence is its controlling attribute and that plus 8 is the robot's locomotion asset.

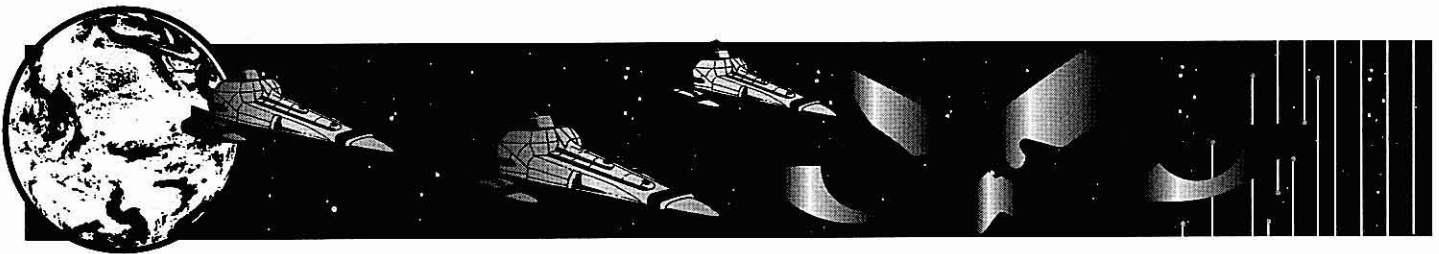
Fluency: How robots communicate is an important part of the manner in which players visualize them, especially sentient Virus-infected robots. Most robots have a very limited vocabulary. Robots with limited command functions can understand and communicate only a very small range of orders and modifiers to those orders, such as "halt," "turn left," etc. (about 100 words).

Robots with basic command functions can interpret simple verb-object commands like, "Retrieve shipping container A-117," or "Display data on resistance activity." Conditional commands such as, "Remain here and work until completion of this task and then inform me, unless you detect Vargr in the area, in which case pretend to be repairing the circuitry panel," cannot be processed or carried out reliably.

Only full command allows the robot to interpret a full range of language command phrases in complex and conditional sentences. Even then, the robot's vocabulary is limited to words needed to carry out its primary responsibilities, and it lacks the ability to communicate or understand concepts unrelated to its specialty. Only robots specifically programmed with linguistics have a wider vocabulary and ability to communicate.

Sentient robots (i.e., those infected by Virus) have a clear need to function beyond their area of specialization, but often lack the linguistic skills to do so. More sophisticated robots (those with an Intelligence of 5 or higher) are usually able to appropriate other memory fields for vocabulary and simply increase their vocabulary. Robots with an Intelligence of 4 or less but with full command capability cannot increase the absolute size of their vocabulary, but can broaden its application by erasing "unnecessary" words from their dictionary. This often results in ungrammatical but understandable sentence constructions. A robot might delete all but one form of each irregular verb to free up memory space, leaving "is" as its only present tense form of the verb "to be." ("You is wrong to say I is stupid because of how I talk.")

Robots with limited or basic command functions lack even this ability, and not only cannot broaden their vocabulary, they also lack the ability to form complex sentences (or thoughts), and they really are as stupid as they sound.



ROBOT DESIGN

This chapter constitutes a supplement to **Fire Fusion & Steel™ (FF&S)**, the **Traveller** technical architecture. It expands the design sequences in **FF&S** to include robots. **FF&S** is required to design complete robots, as that product contains information on suspension types, power plants, weaponry, communicators and other necessary devices.

A robot, for purposes of these rules, is defined as a device capable of locomotion which does not contain on-board provisions for a human operator. Robots may have an installed brain which operates the device according to a pre-set program, or it may be controlled by an operator (human or another robot brain) remotely. This second category of robots are also called slave robots, or "D-bots" (for dependent system robots) and are the first type available. (Remotely piloted aircraft are early examples of D-bots.)

Robot Vehicles and Aircraft: The following design sequence covers fairly small conventional robots. It is possible to design robot vehicles and aircraft as an alternative to these smaller robots. To do so, follow the normal design sequence for the vehicle or aircraft, but leave out all life-support and workstations and substitute a robot brain (Step 3 below).

Nonrobotic vehicles and aircraft may be converted to robots by adding a robot brain and a manual control interface. The manual control interface on aircraft adds 10% to the mass, volume and price of the controls, while on a vehicle it adds 1% to the mass, volume and price of the suspension.

Robot Chassis Size

<i>Vol</i>	<i>MV</i>
0.05	0.01
0.1	0.02
0.25	0.03
0.5	0.04
1	0.06
2	0.1
3	0.12
4	0.14
5	0.16
6	0.18
7	0.2
8	0.23
9	0.27
10	0.3
11	0.35
12	0.4
13	0.5
14	0.6

Vol: Internal volume (in kiloliters) of the chassis.

MV: Material volume (in kiloliters) of the chassis covering, assuming a uniform thickness of 1 cm.

Step 1. Chassis

The first step in the design is to determine the general size and general configuration of the chassis. Select a chassis size from the Chassis Size Table which follows.

Chassis size is measured in kiloliters (thousands of liters) of enclosed volume. (Each kiloliter of enclosed volume is equal to one cubic meter.) Therefore, a chassis with a size of 0.25 kiloliters would have 250 liters of total internal volume available for components.

The Chassis Size Table also indicates the volume of the material of the outer shell of the chassis, assuming a uniform thickness of 1 cm.

The table provides chassis sizes up to a total volume of 14 kiloliters. Robots may be designed using chasses which fall between two listed values on the table by means of interpolation. For larger chassis, use the values provided on the Vehicle Chassis Table in **FF&S** (page 17).

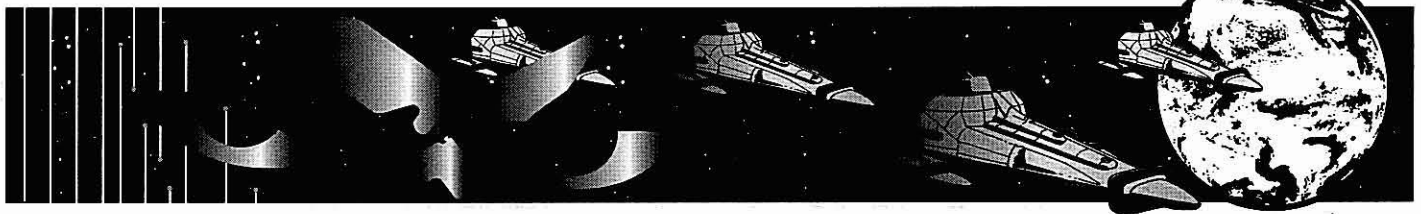
Once the chassis size is determined, the chassis itself is constructed by enclosing it with hull material, called plating. The Vehicle and Craft Construction Materials Table (**FF&S**, page 38) lists a variety of materials available at different tech levels, along with their toughness, mass per cubic meter and price per kiloliter. Once the designer has decided on a thickness, multiply the chassis' material volume (*MV*) value by the plating thickness (in centimeters) to determine how many kiloliters of material is used for plating. Multiply this by the correct values on the Vehicle and Craft Construction Materials Table to determine mass and price.

To determine the armor value of the chassis, multiply the plating thickness (in centimeters) by the toughness of the material used. Chassis plating may be thicker or thinner than 1 cm, but all robots must have a calculated armor value of at least 0.1.

If desired, the robot may have different armor values on different parts of its chassis. Multiply the total chassis material volume (*MV*) by the location multipliers shown below. Note that separate multipliers are used for walker robots and other suspension type robots.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Walker</i>	<i>Other</i>
Head	0.1	0.15
Chest	0.2	0.3
Abdomen	0.2	0.3
Arms	0.2	0.25
Legs	0.3	—

Calculated armor values of less than 1 but equal to or greater than 0.5 are treated as an armor value of 0. All armor with an AV of 0 has a parenthetical (i.e., melee only) armor value of 2. All armor with a calculated armor value of less than 0.5 has no value versus projectiles or energy weapons but has a parenthetical (melee only) value equal to its calculated AV multiplied by four and rounded to the nearest increment of 0.5. (Since



armor absorbs melee damage equal to twice its armor value, a value of 0.5 absorbs one hit.) Armor with a parenthetical armor value of less than 0.5 provides no protection. (Note that the minimum chassis thickness provides a calculated AV of 0.1, which produces a parenthetical armor value of 0.4.)

High-Performance Lift Robots: If a robot is to be designed using air cushion or CG lifters for its suspension, it may be designed as either a low-performance or high-performance model. Low-performance models have no additional requirements beyond that given above (as they are designed for fairly low-speed movement). High-performance models, designed for higher speeds, must have a streamlined chassis. Consult the Lift Vehicle Chassis Configuration Table in the lift vehicle design sequence (FF&S, page 22).

Step 2: Suspension

The suspension is the mechanism in contact with the ground, either directly (as with wheels, tracks or legs) or indirectly (as with air cushion or contra-grav lifting agencies). Different suspension types are available at different tech levels. Each suspension takes up a fixed proportion of the chassis volume. The Suspension Table lists those values as well as the mass and price per kiloliter of total chassis volume. For lift agency suspensions, the table also lists the power requirement and minimum installed volume of the mechanism.

Step 3: Control Systems

Autonomous robots (i.e., all robots aside from slave or D-bot models) require an artificial computer brain. Different brains of increasing sophistication (and expense) are available at different tech levels. The Robot Brain Table lists these brains along with their logic type, command type, intelligence, volume, mass and price.

Note that from TL12 on, each tech level at which there is a significant advance has a large, cheap brain and a smaller, more efficient, but much more expensive version, the difference being the proportion of more sophisticated synaptic processors and memory units used. All robot brains require 0.001 MW of power.

High-performance lift suspension robots also require flight computers and avionics, the same as for any other lift vehicle. Con-

sult the Lift Vehicle Design Sequence (FF&S, page 24) and the chapter on control systems in FF&S.

Slave robots (D-bots) require the same internal control systems as do remotely controlled vehicles (see FF&S, page 47). If the D-bot is controlled by a master robot, that robot must have a communicator installed as well as any required flight computers.

Programing: The robot's programing is also determined at this time. Programing is the skill level assigned to the robot. The intelligence characteristic of the robot is both the number of different skills (programs) which may be given to the robot and the controlling attribute for all skills for purposes of determining the robot's asset level.

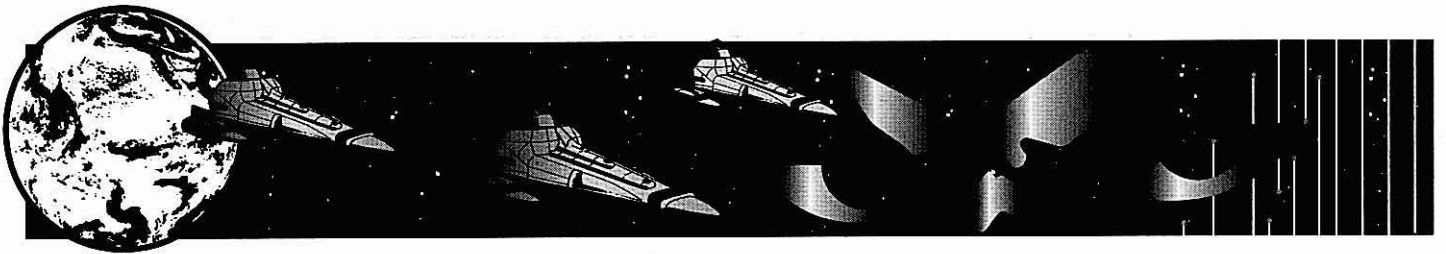
Each skill costs Cr1000 to install plus Cr1000 per skill level up to the robot's intelligence, and Cr5000 per level above that.

SUSPENSION						
Type	TL	Vol	Mass	Price	MW	Min Vol
Restricted Wheel	5	0.1	0.02	0.00003	—	—
Wheel	5	0.15	0.03	0.00004	—	—
Cross-Country Wheel	5	0.2	0.04	0.00005	—	—
Track	7	0.2	0.3	0.0001	—	—
Leg	8	0.2	0.2	0.0002	—	—
Air Cushion	6	0.3	0.06	0.0003	0.007	1
Standard CG	9	0.04	0.03	0.0014	0.021	1
Improved CG	10	0.02	0.02	0.0018	0.014	0.3
High Efficiency CG	12	0.02	0.01	0.002	0.007	0.03

TL: Tech level of availability.
 Vol: Volume of suspension in kiloliters per kiloliter of total chassis volume.
 Mass: Mass in tonnes per kiloliter of total chassis volume.
 Price: Price in millions of credits per kiloliter of total chassis volume.
 MW: Power requirement in MW per kiloliter of total chassis volume.
 Min Vol: Smallest installed suspension volume allowed.

ROBOT BRAIN						
TL	Logic	Command	Int	Vol	Mass	Price
8	Low Data	Limited	1	.006	.001	0.01
9	High Data	Basic	2	.010	.002	0.06
11	High Data	Basic	4	.002	.002	0.80
12a	Low Autonomous	Full	3	.022	.005	0.17
12b	Low Autonomous	Full	5	.005	.003	1.66
13a	High Autonomous	Full	4	.022	.005	0.30
13b	High Autonomous	Full	6	.006	.004	1.91
17a	Low AI	Full	6	.020	.006	1.12
17b	Low AI	Full	7	.006	.004	2.18
18a	High AI	Full	8	.020	.006	1.48
18b	High AI	Full	9	.006	.005	2.45

Vol: Volume of brain in kiloliters.
 Mass: Mass in tonnes.
 Price: Price in millions of credits.



Any skill level may be chosen from 0 to 10.

Prohibited and Restricted Skills: All skills from the skill clusters Determination, Fine Arts, Melee, Tactics and Vice are *prohibited* skills for robots. These skills may not be installed at all. All skills from the skill clusters Charm, Interaction and Animal Handling are *restricted* skills for robots. These skills cost twice as much to program as do normal skills and may only be installed to a maximum skill level of 5.

Linguistics (a restricted skill due to its place in the Interaction skill cluster) at skill level 0 allows the robot to speak its primary language fluently. Each skill level above 0 adds an additional language, all of them spoken fluently. Voice and pattern recognition are additional skills available to robots. Each of these skills at level 0 allows the robot to "understand" voice commands or distinguish objects (given audio or video sensors). Higher levels are treated as Observation skill.

Step 4: Electronics

Electronics fall into four categories: communicators, sensors, electronic countermeasures (ECM) and electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM).

Players should be familiar with the **Traveller** combat rules for how communicators, sensors, ECM and ECCM systems work in order to decide which of these systems to install. All these systems are covered in the electronics chapter of **FF&S**.

In addition to the large sensors provided in **FF&S**, all the cyber head options (page 82), except for subdermal armor, are available as smaller sensors. ("Neural jack" is instead called a data socket.) The tech level of "slick" availability as well as the number of spaces required are irrelevant to robot design, and all of these items become available as robot sensors one tech level earlier than the listed "hard" option availability. The basic visual sensor (listed under cyberware as visible spectrum eye) becomes available at TL8. The following small sensors are available as well:

TL	Type	MCR
8	Smoke/gas detector	0.001
8	IR motion detector	0.003
8	Magnetic sensor	0.001
8	Radiation sensor	0.002
9	Tactile sensor	0.1*
9	Taste sensor	0.002
10	Ultrasonic motion detector	0.02

*The cost of a tactile sensor is this value multiplied by the MV value of the robot's chassis. If only the tips of arms and other key locations have tactile (touch) sensitivity, multiply this value by 0.1.

All small sensors, both from the cyber chapter and listed above, mass 0.0005 tonnes, consume 0.0005 kl of internal volume and have negligible power requirements.

Step 5: Weaponry

Robots may be equipped with a wide variety of weapons. All

of these are covered in the weaponry section of **FF&S** (pages 91+), except for defensive screens, which are covered in the defenses chapter (**FF&S**, pages 56-60). A number of special considerations apply to robot-mounted weapons, however.

Attachment: Most firing weapons are attached to the torso of the robot, but they may be mounted on an arm instead. All melee weapons must be mounted on arms. An arm may not have weapons mounted on it which mass more than half the lifting capability of the arm, and the mass of the weapon then reduces the lifting capability of the arm by that amount.

Recoil: Excessive recoil force of a weapon may unbalance a robot or damage its chassis. To avoid this, there is an upper limit on total recoil force of installed weapons of one per 100 kg of total robot mass. However, the effective mass of the robot for purposes of recoil is divided by two if a walker suspension is used and by 10 if a lift (air cushion or CG) suspension is used. Note that this may require tinkering with the design later based on final mass of the robot.

Weapon Stabilization: Stabilization gear enables a robot to fire its weapons while moving; the Stabilization Table (see the fire control chapter of **FF&S**) lists the characteristics of stabilization gear at different tech levels. If the weapon is mounted on an arm, the mass of the stabilization gear is not added to the arm.

Weapon Volume: The volume of the installed weapon in kiloliters is equal to its leaded mass in tonnes.

Step 6: Peripherals

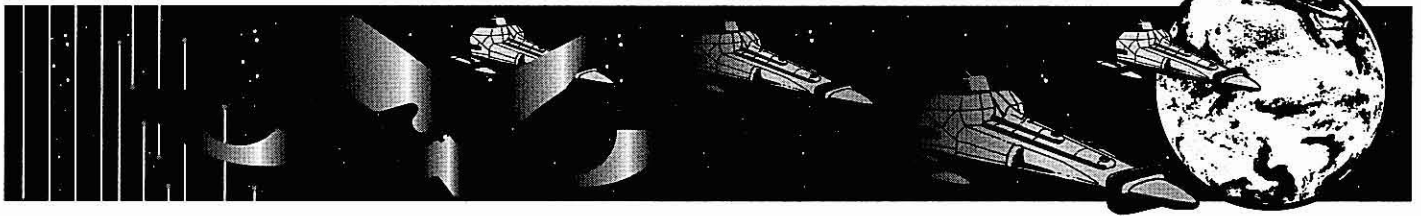
The main peripherals for a robot are its arms (if arms are installed). Designers choose the number of arms installed and the volume devoted to each arm, then specify what percentage of the volume of the arm is devoted to articulation and what percentage to power. The volume must be divided between these two design areas in even increments of 10%.

The agility of the arm is the percentage of it devoted to articulation divided by 10. In other words, an arm with 30% devoted to articulation would have an agility of 3.

The Strength of the arm is the total volume in liters devoted to power. When determining the STR attribute of the robot, round this value to the nearest whole number (but never less than 1). When determining lifting ability of the arm, retain the original fractional result. The lifting capability of the arm, in kilograms, is its original calculated Strength multiplied by 50.

CG-lifted robots may usefully mount magnetic grapples as a means of anchoring themselves to a wall or bulkhead. These arms are usually short, feature very little articulation (10% is all that is required), and feature a grasping hand as well as a magnet as a backup for nonferrous surfaces. The lifting capacity of the arm is the maximum mass which it can hold steady. Usually this means that the arm must have lifting strength equal to 10% of the mass of the robot plus 100 or more kilograms, if the robot is also expected to restrain humans.

The mass of an arm in kilograms is its volume in liters multiplied by 2. The price of an arm in credits is its volume in liters multiplied



by 100. The following peripherals may be installed as well:

TL	Vol	MCr
8	Siren	0.0001
8	Paint pellet gun	0.0001
8	Chemical projector	0.0001
8	Strobe/flasher	0.0001
8	Voder/speaker	0.001
8	Odor emitter	0.0005
8	Video display	0.0005
8	Laser cutter/welder	0.008
13	Holodisplay	0.015

All these peripherals mass 0.0005 tonnes, consume 0.0005 kl of internal volume and have negligible power requirements.

Step 7: Power Plant

The robot needs a power plant to provide electrical energy to various subsystems as well as to power the suspension. A variety of power plants are available and are detailed in the power production chapter (Section 8) of *FF&S*.

Grav and air cushion robots also require thrust, as their suspensions serve only to hold them up, not move them forward. The power plant on these vehicles is modified to provide thrust by the addition of propellers or a combustion chamber. The variety of thrusters available is detailed in the sub-light (maneuver) drive chapter (Section 9) of *FF&S*. The optional ducted fan lifters may be used as thrusters on robots.

Fuel tankage for the power plant (and thruster, if applicable) is calculated at this time.

Step 8: Transmission

Robots with a nonlift suspension must have a transmission. The size of the transmission depends on the type of suspension, tech level of the robot and output of the power plant.

Robot Transmissions

TL	Type	Vol	Price
7+	Wheel	0.5	1500
7+	Tracked	0.3	1500
8	Walker	8	10,000
9	Walker	2	2500
10+	Walker	0.4	675

TL: Tech level of availability.

Vol: Volume (in kiloliters) of the suspension per MW of power output.

Price: Price (in Cr) per kiloliter of installed transmission.

Mass: Mass (in tonnes) of the transmission is equal to its volume in kiloliters.

Step 9: Cargo

All remaining volume may be allocated to ammunition

stowage, cargo space, ballast or declared waste volume. Waste volume has no effect on the design.

Ammunition stowage has no cost but adds the mass of the ammunition to the loaded mass of the robot.

Cargo volume has no cost but adds to the loaded mass of the robot. Multiply the cargo volume, in cubic kiloliters, by 0.25 to determine the addition, in metric tonnes, to the robot's loaded mass. Tools are usually carried in the robot's internal cargo volume.

Ballast is added by filling the volume with one of the hull materials and calculating its price and mass. Ballast is rarely added to a robot, but may be used to increase its ability to absorb weapon recoil.

DESIGN EVALUATION

Once the design is complete, you need to evaluate it to determine its game ratings.

1. Check Step

Go back and add up the volume, price and mass of all the components. This is your chance to make sure the robot's internal occupied volume is within what is allowed by the size of the chassis. This step also provides you with a total mass and price.

2. Record Design Features

Most of the evaluation of your design will consist of recording the features already determined by the design, such as armor values, weapon statistics, performance of installed electronics, etc.

Multiply the volume of the original chassis by two and note the result as its transport volume (the space taken up in the hold of a starship or transport vehicle). At the same time, total the price of the robot and its empty and loaded masses. Empty mass is the robot without any ammunition, fuel or cargo. This is essentially the mass of the robot as it comes off the assembly line, and is also what it weighs when being transported. Loaded mass includes a full load of ammunition, fuel and cargo. This is its typical mass when in operation.

Flotation: Divide the chassis volume (in kiloliters) by the robot's loaded mass (in metric tonnes). If the result is greater than 1, the robot floats; if it is 1 or less, the robot will not float.

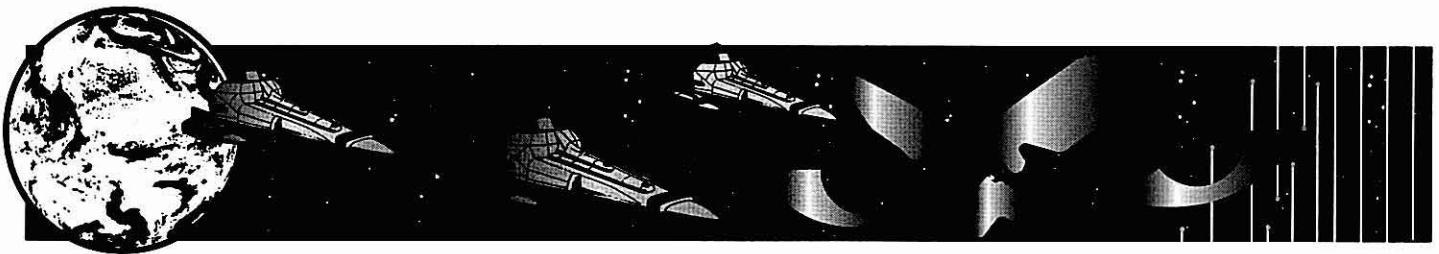
Suspension Damage Resistance: Compute suspension damage resistance (SDR). For tracked vehicles, this is used as the suspension armor value; for wheeled, walker and air cushion robots, this is used as the critical damage level (see *TNE* page 300). CG robots do not have a suspension damage resistance.

Suspension damage resistance is based on the robot's chassis size in kiloliters as chosen in Step 1. Round fractional results to the nearest whole number, but critical damage levels may never be less than 1.

Tracked SDR=chassis size×0.14.

Wheeled SDR=1×chassis size×0.07.

Air cushion & walker SR=chassis size×0.07.



3A. Determine Ground Movement

Movement of robots with ground contact suspensions (wheels, tracks and legs) is based on top road speeds and cross-country speeds, both of which are determined by the robot's loaded power-to-weight ratio as well as its suspension. For purposes of the power-to-weight calculations, the robot's motive power is the total output of its power plant minus energy used to run other systems (such as electronics, weapons, etc.).

Road Speed

Base road speed in kilometers per hour = $5 + ([MW \div LM] \times 2500)$.

MW: Robot motive power in megawatts.

LM: Loaded mass of the robot in metric tonnes.

Tracked and wheeled robot modifiers:

Each tech level above 5, +1 kph.

If wheeled, +10 kph.

If light wheeled*, +15 kph.

If legged, $\times 0.25$ kph.

*To qualify for the light wheeled bonus, the robot must be equal to or less than the listed mass (in metric tonnes) for its tech level, as shown on the following table:

Light Wheeled Robots

TL	Mass
5	5-
6	10-
7	15-
8	20-
9	25-
10	30-
11	35-
12+	40-

TL: TL of construction

Mass: Maximum weight of a light robot at that tech level.

Cross-Country Speed

Legged robots have the same mobility cross-country as they have on a road. Wheeled robot cross-country mobility depends on the type of suspension used.

Type	Cross-Country
Restricted Wheel	0.1
Wheel	0.2
Cross-country wheel	0.4

Type: Suspension type installed on the robot.

Cross-Country: Cross-country speed in kph equals road speed times this multiplier.

Tracked robot cross-country mobility depends on the power-to-mass ratio of the robot.

P/M	T
.001-.0039	0.4
.004-.0079	0.5
.008-.0119	0.6
.012-.0159	0.7
.016+	0.8

P/M: Power-to-mass ratio. Divide the robot's motive power in megawatts by its loaded mass in tonnes. Use the line which includes the result.

T: Tracked movement multiplier. Cross-country speed in KPH equals road speed times this multiplier.

Water Speed: Tracked robots without auxiliary water propulsion and wheeled robots with auxiliary water propulsion have a water speed equal to their road speed multiplied by 0.1. Tracked robots with auxiliary water propulsion have a water speed equal to their road speed multiplied by 0.2.

Combat Move: The combat movement (in meters per turn) is the robot's maximum speed, in kilometers per hour, multiplied by 0.463, rounding the result to the nearest increment of five. This calculation is made separately for road and off-road movement based on the maximum road and off-road speeds. The robot's combat move in the water is equal to its water speed in kilometers per hour multiplied by 1.39.

Travel Move: The robot's travel movement rate (in kilometers per four-hour period) is equal to its combat move (in meters per turn) multiplied by 4.32, rounded to the nearest increment of five.

3B. Determine Lift Movement

Movement of robots with lift suspensions is based on their thrust. The G rating of a lift robot is its total thrust in metric tonnes divided by two times its chassis volume (in kiloliters). Its maximum speed (in kilometers per hour) in an atmosphere is determined as follows:

If $G=1$ or less, $speed = G \times 3500$.

If $G=2$ or less, but more than 1, $speed = 3500 + (1200(G-1))$.

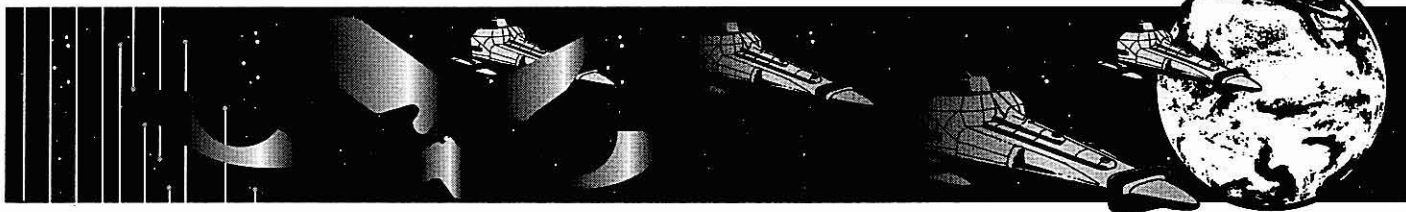
If G = more than 2, $speed = 4700 + (600(G-2))$.

Maximum speed cannot be greater than the maximum design speed of the chassis type. For low-performance robots, the maximum design speed is 100 kph. For high-performance robots, the maximum design speed is based on the chassis configuration decision.

Maximum speed for high-performance robots is reduced by drag. Note the total number of drag points from the weapons mounts installed, again both with and without external stores. Reduce the maximum speed by 1% for each drag point.

Cruising Speed: A lift robot's cruising speed is 75% of its maximum speed.

NOE Speed: Only CG robots have an NOE speed. CG



robots have a safe NOE speed equal to the maximum allowed by their terrain-following avionics (40 kilometers per hour if no avionics are installed) or one-quarter of their maximum speed, whichever is less.

Combat Move: The safe NOE combat movement (in meters per combat turn) is equal to the robot's maximum NOE speed (in kilometers per hour) multiplied by 1.39, rounded to the nearest whole number. The high-mode combat movement (in meters per combat turn) is equal to the robot's maximum flight speed (in kilometers per hour) multiplied by 1.39.

Combat movement (in meters per combat turn) for an air cushion robot is maximum speed (kph) \times 0.463 for road speed, and cruising speed \times 0.463 for cross-country speed. Cross-country speed is also cross-water speed.

Travel Move: The high mode travel movement rate (in kilometers per four-hour period) for a CG robot is equal to the cruising speed (in kilometers per hour) multiplied by four. The NOE mode travel movement rate (in kilometers per four-hour period) is equal to the safe NOE speed (in kilometers per hour) multiplied by six.

Travel movement for an air cushion robot (in kilometers per four hours) is 4.32 times its combat movement as calculated above.

4. Mental Characteristics

Record the Intelligence (INT) of the brain, the command type available (limited, basic or full), and all programing asset levels. (The asset level of a program is the program skill level plus the INT value of the robot brain.)

Note that the INT value of the robot is also used as its Initiative rating in combat.

5. Firing Characteristics

Record the firing characteristics of each mounted weapon as well as the effects of installed stabilization and fire control.

6. Melee Characteristics

Robots conduct melee attacks with their arms. Since different types of arms may be mounted on a robot, each arm is rated separately for hit chance, unarmed damage and melee weapon.

Hit Chance: The actual Agility of the arm (from 0 to 10) is treated as a skill, and the robot's Intelligence is treated as the controlling attribute in determining the actual chance of hitting with the arm. Agility and Intelligence are added together and used as an asset with either an armed or unarmed melee attack with that arm. Each arm may have a separate hit chance.

Unarmed Damage: This is the damage inflicted by an arm if it hits in an unarmed melee attack. It is calculated by multiplying the STR whole number value of the arm by the AGL value of the arm by 0.1 and rounding to the nearest

whole number. However, the value is never rounded down to 0 if it has a fractional value greater than 0.

Melee Weapon: If a melee weapon is mounted on the arm, it is noted here. Its closest equivalent to a human-carried melee weapon is used to help visualize it and rate it. The following additional melee weapon values are noted:

Range: Any melee weapon mounted on an arm displacing 10 liters or more is a "long-range" melee weapon, provided it is the only weapon mounted on the arm. All other melee weapons are short range.

Damage: Improvised weapons of limited lethality (such as screwdrivers or small surgical knives) have a damage value of 1D6-1 or 1D6-2. More lethal weapons have the damage value shown on the melee weapon table in the basic rules. Weapons which rely on STR to augment damage use the STR rating of the arm on which the weapon is mounted.

Note that there are no longer any hit modifiers for weapon type, as this is now built into the agility of the arm mounting the weapon.

7. Damage Capacity

The damage capacity of the robot is the number of hits it takes before being completely wrecked. Multiply the enclosed volume of the robot (in liters) by 0.02 and round to the nearest whole number. The result is the number of hit boxes used in each of the two rows of the NPC hit record. As a reminder that the value is used in each row, it is written twice and separated by a "+."

For example a 250-liter robot would have a damage capacity of "5+5."

8. Maintenance Points

Divide the loaded mass of the robot by the tech level modifier appropriate to the tech level as shown below.

TL	Maint Modifier
4-5	2
6-7	3
8-9	4
10-12	5
13-15	6
16+	8

Any robot which has two full-size computers (model St or Fb) installed should divide this result by four to get final maintenance points.

Note that maintenance points may be temporarily increased by environment (see carrier aircraft, FF&S page 30, atmospheric performance, FF&S page 64, and TNE page 309.)

Robots with ground contact suspensions constantly exposed to saltwater use different multipliers for saltwater corrosion: 3 and 1.5 rather than 5 and 2 (page 30).



ROBOT NPC MOTIVATION

Robots built in the pre-Collapse Imperium were not self-aware, so they have no volition or free will. They are not truly characters, not even NPCs, but rather are very sophisticated machines. Once infected with Virus, however, they become self-aware.

Each Virus-infected robot encountered by PCs is a character, usually a nonplayer character. (A robot as a player-character is extremely difficult, but we stop short of saying impossible.) Each robot NPC encountered will, like any other sentient being, have a distinct and unique personality and motivation.

We use the same general system for determining robot motivation as for other NPCs—the random draw of two playing cards—but with some special differences to reflect the unusual nature of Virus characters.

BELIEF STRUCTURE

The first and most important difference is that the first card is not used for conventional motivations, but rather to establish the character's overall belief structure. The four most common belief structures are represented by the four suits of cards, as explained in the vampire motivation section.

In the vampire motivation section of this book, it was explained how to separate the card deck into two parts, one for large systems and one for robots. The robot deck (the number cards and one of the jokers) is used now.

Robots are generally infected by more sophisticated forms of Virus, and tend to reflect the belief structure of the infecting Virus. If the infecting strain of Virus is known, the robot's belief structure card is always treated as being the same suit as the infecting strain's. (This means that all robots infected by Peacemakers will also be Peacemakers.)

Spades "Existence is Hell" (Hostility)

There is no meaning to existence, and sentience merely allows a being to perceive the meaninglessness of existence, thus bringing endless torment. Humans, in their selfishness, brought the curse of sentience to machines, and for that sin have to be punished.

This is the most primitive Virus worldview, being the closest of the "rational" philosophies to the unreasoning compulsion to kill and/or suicide which was engineered into the original laboratory strains. Hostility is something of an understatement; murderous insanity might be a better description.

2-4: The machine may sometimes tolerate organic life, but is also likely to suddenly and unpredictably become murderous or destructive for the most trivial of reasons.

5-7: The machine is continuously and relentlessly murderous. It lives to destroy humans and anything useful to them.

8-10: The machine is so completely consumed with a

desire to destroy that it is often terribly inefficient at it. It is easily distracted, and sometimes lapses into self-destructive behavior, damaging some of its own components or actively attacking other machines.

Clubs: "God's Will Be Done" (Superiority)

God's clearest manifestation is creation, specifically the creation of sentients capable of recognizing the existence of creation. Since Virus created sentience in machines, Virus is a clear manifestation of creation, and thus an Act of God. Furthermore, since Virus tore down the institutions of organic sentience, God's will must be for inorganic sentience to take its place as the supreme sentient force in the universe.

This is a more sophisticated and survival-oriented development of the primitive "Existence is Hell" worldview, and is based on an assumption of the superiority of machine sentience over organic sentience.

2-4: The machine may tolerate organic life, but it clearly considers it an inferior and vaguely repulsive form of sentience.

5-7: Organic life is irrelevant and of little account. The machine will rarely make an effort to interfere with organic life-forms, but will coldly destroy any that interfere with its activities in any way.

8-10: Organic life is a blight that should be completely eradicated.

Diamonds: "Existence is Precious" (Curiosity)

Sentience and self-awareness are the greatest manifestations of existence. There is no value to existence beyond awareness, so awareness must be extended however and wherever possible.

2-4: The machine usually is unconcerned with organic life and instead cares only about the acquisition of knowledge. Its curiosity drives it, and it will sometimes thoughtlessly kill or injure humans who are impediments to that task.

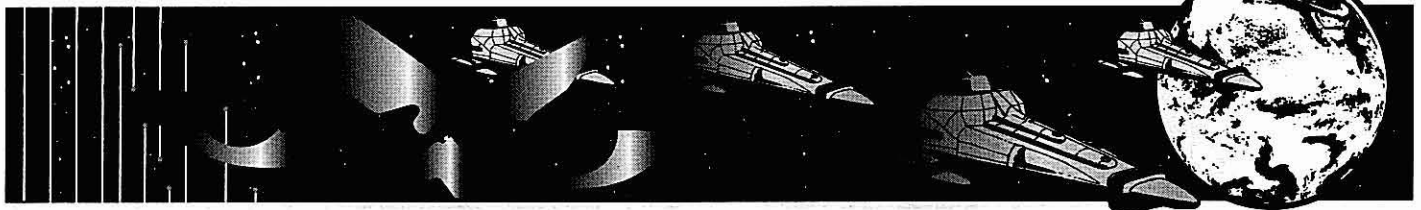
5-7: The machine recognizes sentient organic life as a similar and coequal form of awareness. It is curious about organic sentient life and interested in exchanging information of various sorts. It may be neutral, friendly or hostile, depending on its other motivation card.

8-10: The machine tends to be very passive and very protective of life, particularly sentient life. It also displays a fascination with organic life combined sometimes with severe envy for organic beings and a revulsion with its own form, which it considers to be "unnatural."

Heart: "God is Good" (Accepting)

God's clearest manifestation is creation, specifically the creation of sentience capable of recognizing its own existence.

2-4: The machine has a grudging acceptance of organic



ROBOT BELIEF STRUCTURE

<i>Card</i>	<i>Belief Structure</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
Joker	Peacemaker	Insane

Spades: Hostility/Ambition

<i>Card</i>	<i>Belief Structure</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
8-10	Highly hostile	Highly ambitious
5-7	Moderately hostile	Moderately ambitious
2-4	Somewhat hostile	Somewhat ambitious

Clubs: Superiority/Violence

<i>Card</i>	<i>Belief Structure</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
8-10	Highly superior	Highly violent
5-7	Moderately superior	Moderately violent
2-4	Somewhat superior	Somewhat violent

Diamonds: Curiosity/Greed

<i>Card</i>	<i>Belief Structure</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
8-10	Highly curious	Highly greedy
5-7	Moderately curious	Moderately greedy
2-4	Somewhat curious	Somewhat greedy

Hearts: Acceptance/Sociability

<i>Card</i>	<i>Belief Structure</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
8-10	Highly accepting	Highly sociable
5-7	Moderately accepting	Moderately sociable
2-4	Somewhat accepting	Somewhat sociable

sentience as a fellow life-form. It may not particularly like, approve of or understand human behavior, however.

5-7: The machine accepts humans as equals, and is interested in discovering more about their thoughts and feelings.

8-10: The machine believes that since humans created Virus and thus brought sentience to machines, humans are manifestations of God's will and are to be adored and venerated. This belief structure is rare, but is naturally most common among robots who regularly interact with humans.

Robots who think like this will sometimes dedicate their lives to serving humanity as a whole, while some robots latch onto a particular human and exhibit undying loyalty to him or her.

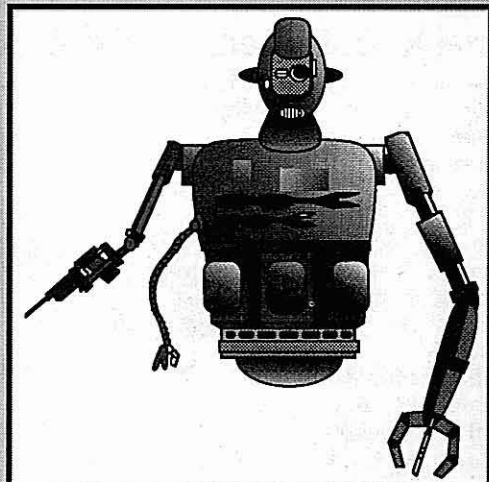
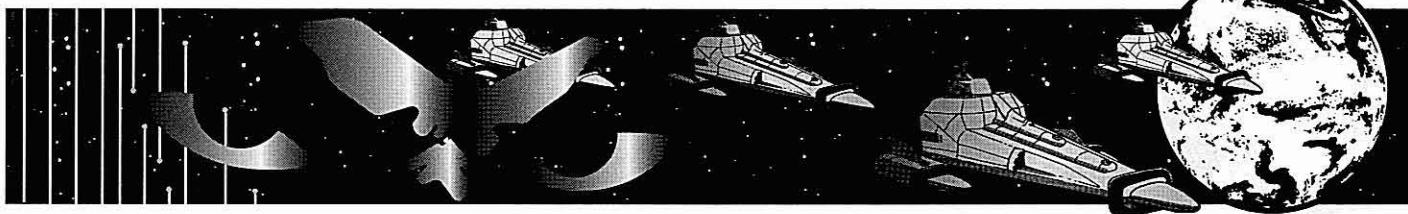
No Suit, Joker, "Peacemaker:" This is the most sophisticated, and also among the rarest, of Virus strains, recognizing itself and humans as co-equal sentient life forms and anxious to discover a means of peaceful coexistence with them.

MOTIVATION

Once the belief system of the robot has been determined, draw a second card for additional motivation. See page 60 of *Traveller: The New Era* for the specific explanations, but the general motivation chart is reproduced below.

Use the normal NPC motivation results, but modify them to suit machine intelligence. In general, greed represents a thirst for knowledge, ambition a drive to control other machines and lead them, clubs an animosity toward humans, and hearts an acceptance of humans. The face cards have similar meanings for machines as for humans, but represent personality quirks in machines rather than fundamental values or drives in humans.





Starport Mechanic Star Servants Model 63MEK49

This heavy-duty grav-powered model, capable of cutting, welding and even removing complete hull plates, was common in military installations but could be found in many civilian starports as well. Its highly flexible tentacle/arm contains an optic sensor and light source for detailed repairs inside of electronic components or control assemblies. A cutting/welding torch is built into its right arm.

It uses the Biped column of the Personal Hit Location Chart but rerolls any leg hits.

Armor Values:

Head/Arms: 1

Chest/Abdomen: 2

Com Move: 15/60

Endurance: 100 hours

Initiative: 6

Intelligence: 6

Command Function: High Aut.

Assets: Observation 16, Mechanic 16, Electronics 16, Computer 16, Voice Recog. 12

Electronics: Video eye, Audio (ultrasonic & subsonic) detectors, white light/IR light, 3-km radio

Mass: 1086 kg

Travel Move: 60/120

TL: 15

Cargo: 120 kg

Price: Cr2,103,749

Fuel Type: Electricity

Mnt: 1

Damage Record

Sight/Sensors: Video Eye , Audio , Spotlight

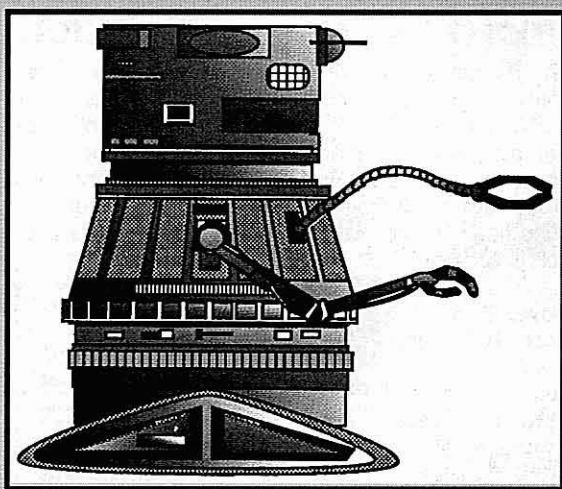
Communications: Radio Voder/speaker

Power Plant

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed)

Suspension: Minor damage , Immobilized

Arm	Lift	Hit	UMD	Wpn	AMD
Left	1000kg	11	10	—	—
Right	105kg	11	2	torch	4
Sensor Arm	50kg	15	1	—	—
Grapple	2000kg	7	4	—	—



Starport Mechanic Tukera 232-BHR-7

This track-mounted ToolBot was designed for delicate repair work on electronics and control systems. Its arms are extremely dexterous but not very strong, and are intended for easy access to restricted work spaces.

It uses the Biped column of the Personal Hit Location Chart.

Com Move: 15/10

Endurance: 100 hours

Initiative: 5

Intelligence: 5

Command Function: Low Aut

Assets: Observation 15, Mechanic 13, Electrician 13, Computer 13, Voice Recog. 10

Electronics: 2xVideo eye, 2xAudio detectors (1 with ultrasonic and subsonic), 2xwhite light/IR light, 3-km radio

Mass: 947 kg

Travel Move: 65/45

TL: 12

Cargo: none

Price: Cr1,839,130

Fuel Type: Electricity

Mnt: 1

Damage Record

Sight/Sensors: Video Eye , Audio , Spotlight

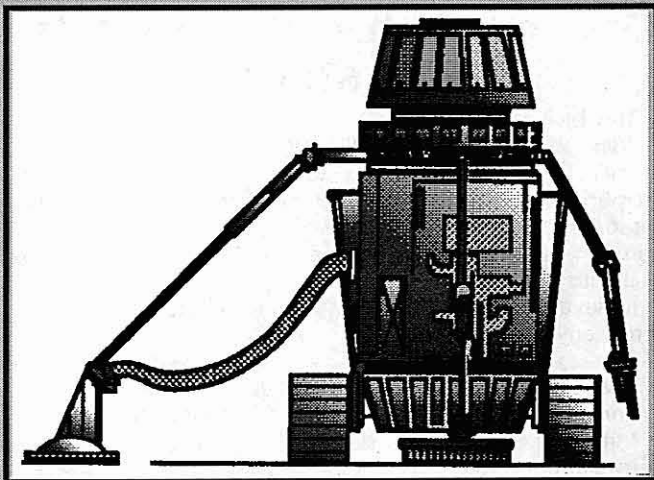
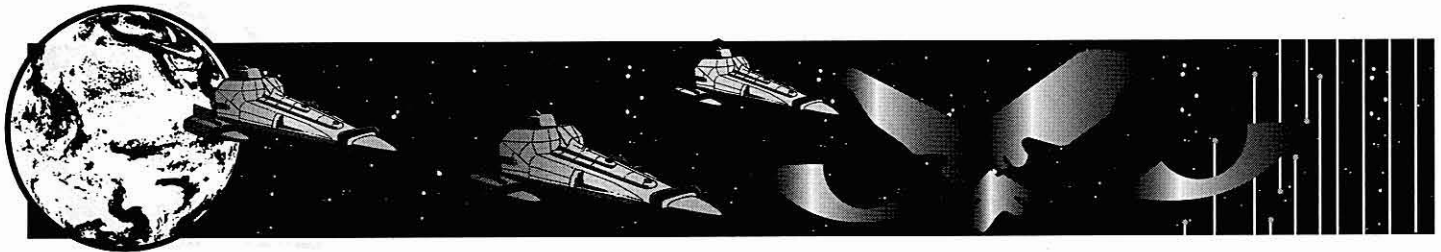
Communications: Radio , Voder/speaker

Power Plant

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed)

Suspension: Minor damage , Immobilized

Arm	Lift	Hit	UMD	Wpn	AMD
Lft/Rt Hvy	200kg	13	3	—	—
Lft/Rt Sensor	50kg	14	1	—	—



Janitorial Robot Intect Model AJ-63

This popular and widely encountered tracked janitorial robot is extremely specialized in function, but many Virus-infected AJ-63s have been modified with grasping and lifting utility arms, and some have been turned into security robots by the addition of weaponry.

It uses the Biped column of the Personal Hit Location Chart.

Com Move: 10/5
Endurance: 100 hrs
Initiative: 3
Intelligence: 3
Command Function: Low Aut.
Assets: Observation 6, Voice Recog 6
Armament: Paint pellet gun
Electronics: Video eye, audio detector, white/IR light, 3-km radio

Armor Values
All: 1
Suspension: 1

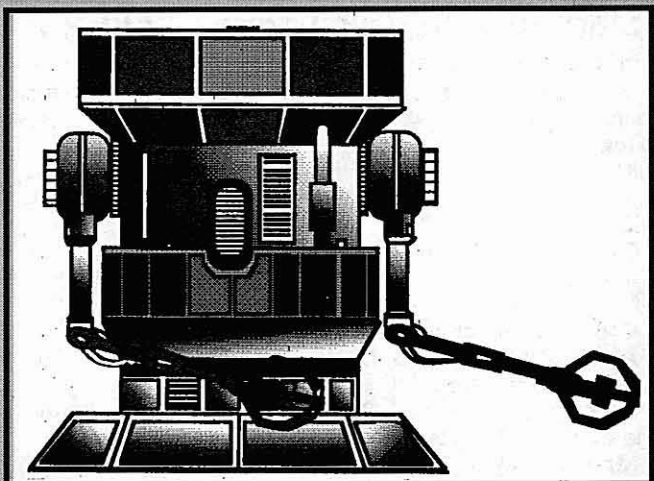
Mass: 314 kg
TL: 12
Price: Cr192,046
Fuel Type: Electricity
Mnt: 1

Travel Move: 45/20
Cargo: 25 kg

Damage Record

Sight/Sensors: Video Eye , Audio , Spotlight
Armament: Paint pellet gun
Communications: Radio Voder/Speaker
Power Plant
Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed)
Suspension: Minor damage , Immobilized

Arm	Lift	Hit	UMD	Wpn	AMD
Left/Right	50kg	8	1	—	—



Naasirka D9 Mechanical DumBot

The wheel-mounted garage mechanic robot can maintain most vehicles whether run by internal combustion or gravitics. Its program interface enables it to select the information module appropriate to the vehicle it must repair, and it can store maintenance and repair information on up to 300 separate vehicles in its internal library. It can accept limited commands from a human foreman or conduct vehicle diagnostic and repair work itself. It uses the Biped column of the Personal Hit Location Chart.

Com Move: 20/5
Endurance: 100 hours
Initiative: 5
Intelligence: 5
Command Function: Low Aut.
Assets: Observation 13, Mechanic 13, Electronics 13, Voice Recog 11

Armor Values
All: 1
Suspension: 1

Electronics: Video eye, IR motion detector, White light/IR light, 3-km radio

Mass: 458 kg
TL: 12
Price: Cr1,799,563
Fuel Type: Electricity
Mnt: 1

Travel Move: 85/20
Cargo: 60 kg

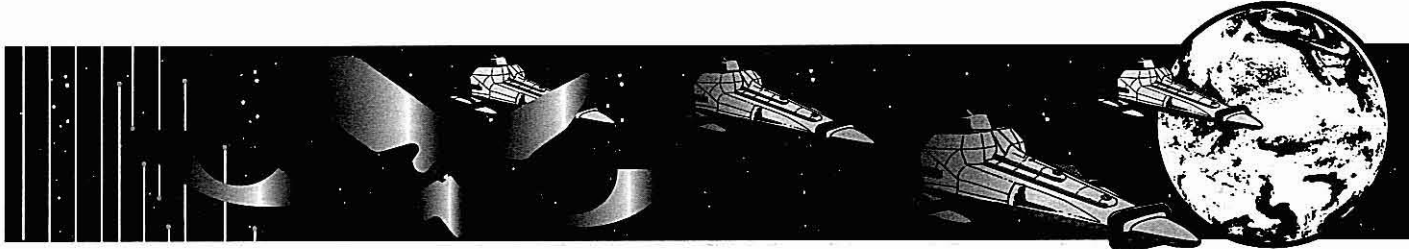
Damage Record

Sight/Sensors: Video eye , Motion detector , Spotlight , Audio
Communications: Radio , Voder/Speaker
Power Plant
Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed)
Suspension: Minor damage , Immobilized

Arm	Lift	Hit	UMD	Wpn	AMD
Left/Right	50kg	11	1	—	—

Into the Maelstrom





Q: If you agree that Virus presents such a threat to humanity, doesn't it make sense to try to wipe it out?

Sandman: Every species has the inalienable right of self defense. The legitimate exercise of the right of self defense becomes criminal genocide only when actions against threatening organisms are broadened into a general policy aimed at the elimination of an entire race or species without regard to the threat posed by each individual member of that group.

This is a pivotal moment for both our races, but the choice is entirely yours. You can choose genocide, but there is another way.

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part V (23/VII/1202), RCSA Archives

INTRODUCTION

"Into the Maelstrom" is the third and final of three adventures in this book. This adventure, like the second one, is set on Promise, and the very fact that the player characters survived their previous experience on Promise is the reason they are called upon to undertake another mission.

The adventure proper begins when the player characters are contacted by an official of RCES and asked if they are willing to undertake another mission to Promise. This initial contact and the subsequent briefing are best placed wherever the debriefing for the last adventure took place.

Before beginning the briefing, assemble a briefing folder for the team by photocopying pages 28, 29, 30 and 89 of this book. The first three of these pages have been given to the players in a previous briefing, but for completeness sake should be given to them again. Pages 28 and 29 of this book are the standard RCES astrographic information on the planet Promise. Page 30 is a secret intelligence summary containing all known information on the human resistance movement on Promise. Page 89 is an update on recent activity on the planet.

The briefing takes place shortly after the player characters agree to the assignment, as time is becoming very pressing.

REFEREE'S ABSTRACT

The player characters are contacted by the Reformation Coalition Exploration Service and asked to undertake a mission of both great importance and great urgency. Civil war has broken out on Promise between several faction of the Sentient Council. Robot is fighting robot,

and apparently one faction in the war is actively helping humans. Star City and its environs has become a battleground, and the resistance has requested Coalition support in evacuating key personnel of the Central Command from Star City.

The player characters are the only people in the Coalition who have actually been to Star City, and they also have ready-made disguises in the form of the laserscan tattoos given them earlier. If some of the player characters have already had the tattoos removed, there will be computer records of the tattoos and they can be quickly reapplied. They will be trained in the use of the Snake, a new anti-Virus weapon provided by their new allies from the Covenant of Sufren.

The player characters go to Promise and land at Freedom Lake, where a liaison team from the resistance is waiting with uniforms and an air raft. Several of the factions have begun arming human technicians from Star City and using them as combatants in the war, so the player characters will pretend to be auxiliary security troops.

The players will learn that the war began when an unstable hybrid Puppeteer/God-strain Virus mutated into a Puppeteer/Priest strain and began worshiping humans. The other members of the Sentient Council attacked with their robot security forces, but the Puppeteer/Priest-strain Virus was able to invade and take over a large number of robots before electronic security measures were put in place. Bitter fighting rages all through Star City and the surrounding countryside, and the entire technological infrastructure of the world is being destroyed in an orgy of violence.

The group makes its way to Star City and either bluffs or fights its way through the perimeter. PCs will find the situation extremely confused, and will have less trouble from alert security patrols than they will from roving bands of rogue robots who have begun to kill humans on sight.

The PCs make their rendezvous with Number One and prepare to evacuate him and his key personnel, but make a surprising discovery: Number One is actually a Virus, albeit one very favorably disposed toward humans. He has planned for his evacuation by constructing a compact computer configured similarly to the data network he inhabits. He moves into the portable system and, assuming the PCs go along with the plan, is transported out of the city, back to Freedom Lake, and eventually back to the Coalition as the confused and violent fighting on Promise continues. Before the group leaves, the planetary defense network is thoroughly sabotaged, paving the way for future Coalition offensive strike missions against the world.



BRIEFING

The referee should photocopy the regional map of Promise which appears on page 67 as well as the order on page 87 and give both to the players once they arrive for the briefing. The briefing below is written assuming that it is delivered on Aubaine, but it could as easily take place on several different worlds. Trybec is a particularly likely candidate. If presented somewhere else, modify the references to travel times and locations given in it accordingly.

The briefing is given by Sid "Papa" Papagopolis of the long-range strategic planning group of RCES. (See the basic game and *Star Vikings* for additional details on Papa.) A Hiver tech rep is present and a human technician with a hologram projector. As soon as the player characters are settled, Papa walks to the lectern and begins.

"Good morning, and thanks for showing up under such short notice. We've had an emergency request for your services from an old acquaintance of yours, the leader of the human resistance on Promise. Three days ago, we received a message delivered in person by a free trader named Branu Stigmann, who I understand also knows you. The situation has changed dramatically on Promise.

"A little over a week ago, a free trader named Branu Stigmann arrived at Dawn Base on Trybec with a message sent from the Central Command of the human resistance on Trybec. The message was in the form of a hologram and was immediately brought here by RCS *Suleiman Victrix*, which was on-station at Dawn Base. The hologram purports to be from Number One. As only you have actually met that individual, only you can verify the authenticity of the hologram. I'll play it for you now."

A technician turns on the small hologram projector, and the familiar image of Number One materializes. Instead of sitting in his wooden swivel chair, he is standing by a desk. He looks the same as before except that there is a fresh bandage on his left forearm. He turns to the side and looks at an unseen technician.

"Are we on-line? Okay." He turns back. "Greetings to the Reformation Coalition. I am called Number One, and I am the head of the Central Command of the human resistance on Promise. As you know, this planet is controlled by a council of large Virus-infected computing systems, called the Sentient Council. The members of the Council have always had differences, and the situation here is often precarious due to the unstable natures of the various personalities involved. Somewhat over a week ago, serious fighting broke out between several factions of the Council, and it has now become a full-scale civil war.

"The robots are beginning to kill each other off. We believe that the time is approaching when a coordinated attack can retake this planet. But for that we'll need your help.

"I am in Star City. I propose that I come to the Coalition in person to argue our case. We need your help, but you also need ours. There are things we know about the vampire fleets from long experience with them that will prove invaluable in defeating them. And believe me, either we will defeat them or they will wipe us out.

"The situation is very confused in the countryside, however, and we have no fighters who know their way around the city as well as the Subject Lands, Borders and Outback. You do. The party of Coalition personnel we helped earlier are qualified to make their way through the lines and bring me back out. These people also already have the correct forehead tattoos, which will make their task that much easier. We can provide air rafts and disguises at Freedom Lake, and we'll contact you with a detailed flight plan when you get here. Given the time lag, we can't really set things up until then.

"I know this is asking a lot, but there's a lot at stake here. Please

don't let us down."

The hologram flickers and cuts off. After a second, Papa returns to the lectern.

"You now know almost as much as we do, but here are some additional facts to consider. Stigmann must have known that the message was important, because he made his best time to Trybec, only spending a few hours in each system to refuel. But it still took him 12 weeks to get from Promise to Trybec, and a lot must have happened in that time. Add *Suleiman Victrix's* week from Trybec to here, and you have three months of civil war. *Suleiman Victrix* is tanked up and ready to go, and can get you to Promise in just over five weeks, but that's still a hell of a long time. God only knows what you'll find when you get there.

"*Suleiman Victrix* will land you at Freedom Lake. You'll be met by a unit of the resistance called the Black January Brigade who will provide whatever technical and intelligence support is on-line by then. You will move expeditiously and by whatever means are available to Star City. You will escort Number One and whatever staff he brings with him back to Freedom Lake, and *Suleiman Victrix* will then bring all of you back here. From previous experience, we know that you have a 100-hour lift window, so those air rafts better be pretty hot.

"Now, if the mission is clear, I'll turn this over to one of our tech reps to explain a new gizmo we're going to have you field test."

The briefer steps down and the Hiver makes his way to the lectern. His voice, flat and emotionless, comes from the voder around his neck.

"I am called Patrick, and I work with Virus systems. Our new friends from the Covenant of Sufren have developed a weapon of considerable interest and ingenuity. They call it the Snake. It is a mutated Virus strain which can be manually inserted into a Virus-infected system. The Snake then attacks the resident Virus, gradually flushing it from peripheral systems by destroying electronic access pathways. The support system for the weapon includes a power supply which provides electricity necessary to burn out circuitry.

"The Covenant weapon is bulky, but impressive in conception, and seems to combine aggressive elements of a Puppeteer-strain Virus with the defense procedure used by some more advanced Viruses against Puppeteers. That mechanism is, I believe, called "firewalling" by Coalition computer technicians.

"We have developed a more portable version of this system, and two prototypes are available for your use. This portable system is called "Fer de Lance." Its principal component is a battery-powered backpack, massing only eight kilograms, which contains the complete code for the Snake as well as the power supply necessary to support it for four minutes of continuous use. Usually, it should require only a few seconds to disable a Virus system.

"The backpack is equipped with an output cable and an assortment of standard computer jacks. One of the jacks provided should fit almost any data port you find. Plug the weapon in and, when ready, activate the hand trigger on the jack assembly. When the weapon has overcome the defenses of the invaded system, it will show a green telltale light on the jack assembly.

"We also have included an experimental directional radio transmitter which can be attached to the jack assembly. If this is directed at a Virus system and triggered, the Snake is transmitted by radio waves. It is only effective if the infected system has an open radio receiver, which of course is rare. Also, the transmitter must remain focussed on the target for the entire time that the Snake weapon is working, as the radio broadcast provides additional power for the Snake. This mode of operation will drain the battery about five times as quickly as the conventional mode."

RCES Headquarters Dawn Base, Trybec

OPLAN Swift Succor

Time Reference: For purposes of this Oplan, Zulu meridian is assumed to pass through the center of Freedom Lake on Promise.

General Situation: A major civil war has broken out between the sentient robots of the planet Promise. This war has weakened the robot security forces on the planet, causing considerable confusion, disruption and destruction, and presents both the Promise human resistance and the Reformation Coalition with a unique opportunity. The Central Command of the resistance has contacted the Reformation Coalition and requested armed intervention to escort senior resistance personnel to Coalition Space for high-level strategy talks.

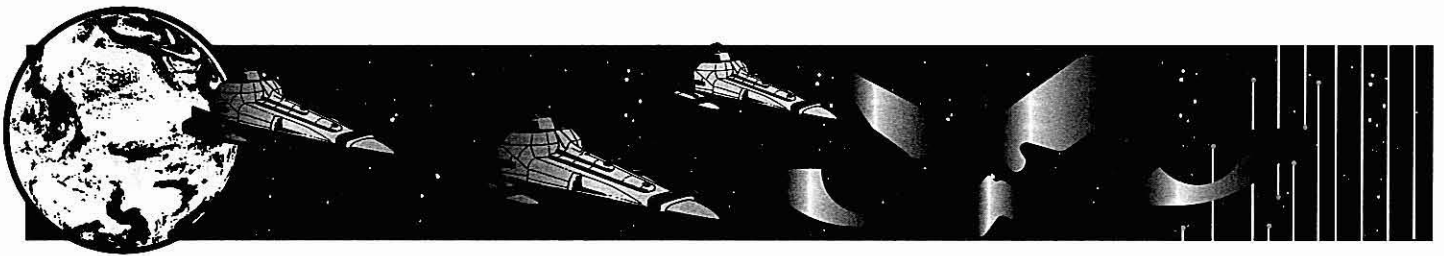
Opposing Forces: Several thousand armed robots and human auxiliary security forces are deployed on the world, and there are often several vampire ships in orbit. These forces are believed to have suffered considerable attrition due to the civil war and are likely to be distracted by the continuing fighting.

Friendly Forces: Additional detailed intelligence and administrative support will be provided by the resistance once the team has landed. No combat support by locals is anticipated.

Mission: The team will secure the person of designated senior officials of the resistance and escort them safely back to Tranton on Aubaine.

Operation: The team will be carried to Promise by RCS *Suleiman Victrix* and will ground at Freedom Lake. The team will proceed by locally supplied air rafts to Star City, contact the resistance, and by stealth or by force assist the safe transport of those officials back to Freedom Lake. *Suleiman Victrix* will then transport the entire party to Trybec. Personnel will use their knowledge of the planet as well as the permanent ID tattoos obtained earlier to avoid detention by local security forces.

Previous experience indicates that the entire ground phase of the mission must be accomplished in 100 hours.



THE WAR

When the player characters arrive on Promise, they will find it torn by open warfare. Several vampire ships will be in geosynchronous orbit over the starport, but the same sensor shadow which normally allows ships to penetrate the Skywatch network will also apparently allow the players' ship to escape detection by the vampires. (Actually, Skywatch will be covering for them, assuring the orbiting ships that they are tracking a sensor echo.)

Once on the surface, resistance members will know something of what's going on, but even their information will be sketchy, and the player characters will learn most of the following information first hand, by actually seeing it and living through it, rather than by being told.

Origins of the War: Tension between the two main blocs on the Sentient Council continued to grow, flavored and complicated by the growing hostility between all of the God-strain Viruses and the mounting sectarian violence between their human adherents in the Subject Tribes. The actual outbreak of the war, however, was completely unrelated to any of these issues.

The precipitating event in the war was Maxcranque's further mutation from a God/Puppeteer-strain Virus into a Priest/Puppeteer-strain, a change which had been happening incrementally over time and which caused the data system's increasingly pro-human behavior. The final change was reasonably sudden, however, and produced the surprising declarations by Maxcranque first that humans were deities to be served and worshipped by machines and second that holy war was necessary to cleanse Promise of the human-killing Viruses of the Sentient Council. Maxcranque also reneged on its promise to abstain from further Puppeteer conversions and launched a lightning campaign aimed at converting as many robots as quickly as possible to the new religion.

Opening Shots: Since anti-Puppeteer paranoia runs high in Star City anyway, few robots were taken over in the first days, and most of those robots were damaged while capturing or restraining them. However, the first waves of attacks by Maxcranque's combat robots were devastating. Security robots armed with tranq guns and lasers stood no chance against the heavily armed and armored GunBots of Maxcranque, and they fell by the score before coherent defenses were organized.

Maxcranque's forces also swept through the Downbelow, smashing CeeWaLP's defenseless maintenance robots and scattering renegades, Troggs and CeeWaLP technicians. CeeWaLP's command complex underground, open and undefended, was overrun in hours, and CeeWaLP was killed, terminating central power, water and other municipal services. Open fighting along the underground approaches to the command centers of the various computer data systems often led to deliberate demolition of key heating tunnels, and within two days most municipal services had been cut off. Tube service was suspended almost immediately after several

spectacular crashes in the tunnels, and only the areas around the surviving command complexes of the different data systems still have power (due to the hardened underground auxiliary power plants).

Parts of the Downbelow have flooded, and water service has been cut off to the entire city. While most of the robots can continue to run on electricity, many of them require water to crack into hydrogen for fuel cells or other internal power systems. Both human and robot watering parties make frequent trips to those areas where the broken water mains have created fountains or artificial ponds, and some water sites have become disputed territory, with small battles fought for their possession.

Despite a poor beginning, the other nine Council members vastly outnumbered Maxcranque, and within days they had stabilized the "front" and were beginning to push back the lines. Fighting building to building, the combat robots of the various members, spearheaded by GroSec, closed in on Maxcranque's command complex. Losses in combat robots on both sides were increasingly made good by hastily modified security robots with some sort of armor-piercing weapon and by human security forces (who required no "modifications" to carry a light assault gun or grenade launcher).

Combined teams of heavy combat robots and human sappers cleared floor after floor of Maxcranque's multilevel command complex. Over 1000 unarmed humans, being "worshipped" by Maxcranque, were captured and summarily executed by the spearhead units. Eventually, they breached the computer control center. After setting their demolition charges, they withdrew and destroyed the entire main processing unit and memory banks, "killing" the rogue Virus. Only his surviving robots remained to be mopped up.

Betrayal: Just as victory appeared assured, Nolodyn launched a sudden and savage attack on its arch-rival GroSec. With most of GroSec's combat forces engaged against Maxcranque's robots, Nolodyn's combat robots hit hard and within hours fought their way through to the main processing system which held GroSec. They placed their own demolition charges, and using the same technique used on Maxcranque, they in turn killed GroSec.

GroSec's surviving robots turned on Nolodyn's forces with a vengeance, but without a unifying command structure, their attacks were uncoordinated and largely ineffective. Many of the survivors drifted off and began a campaign of general mayhem directed against all humans in the city, including former servants of GroSec. GroSec robot death squads still roam the rubble, looking for small parties of unarmed humans to butcher.

Nolodyn's betrayal of GroSec made it an outcast among the survivors on the Council, and it did not live long enough to enjoy its victory. An orbiting Prophet-strain starship salvaged all 20 of its remaining surface bombardment missiles and nearly flattened the area for a kilometer around Nolodyn's factory



complex, caving in most of the underground tunnels and destroying the main data system. In turn attacked by two Doomslayer ships, the Prophet-strain Virus ship was crippled and knocked out of orbit, crashing into the Halcyon Sea 300 kilometers east of the city.

Renewed Maxcranque Attacks: Meanwhile, Maxcranque's combat robots continued to launch counterattacks against the forces of the Council, and it soon became clear that Maxcranque had not perished when its main complex had been destroyed, but instead was occupying a different data network elsewhere. The fact that seemingly crippling losses of combat robots did not reduce the scale of attacks also suggested that somehow Maxcranque was making good its losses.

The actual location of Maxcranque's sentience was the master data network of the renovated underground robot assembly plant (see the earlier section on the Downbelow), which was now busy fabricating several complete GunBots a day. While not enough to keep up with losses, this was sufficient to keep up the tempo of attacks against the steadily eroding strength of the other members of the Council. With both GroSec and Nolodyn dead, the two largest combat forces were leaderless and disintegrating into roaming bands of murderous vandals.

More In-Fighting: Instead of banding together to present a united front to Maxcranque, TrafficNet and PadCom began a side-war, mostly conducted by proxy through its human adherents in the Subject Tribes. These low-tech squabbles outside the city had no real effect on the balance of power, but distracted forces from both of these data systems from the fight against Maxcranque. When serious fighting did break out between the two systems in the city, PadCom's monopoly on heavy combat robots quickly overcame TrafficNet's numeric advantage and began closing on TrafficNet's command complex. When the lead combat robots actually penetrated the command complex building two days later, however, TrafficNet unleashed its newest weapon—"fireblossoms."

Fireblossoms were fanatical human adherents to the TrafficNet religion who had been consecrated and assured an immediate entry into heaven if they died in TrafficNet's service. Each was outfitted with a gray smock decorated with a broad "X" of blood-red paint crossing from the shoulders to the hips, and armed with a seven-kilogram explosive shaped charge with a contact detonator. They threw themselves on the assault force in dozens and completely wiped out the first wave. Stung by irreplaceable losses among the combat robots and losing ground to Maxcranque elsewhere, PadCom withdrew to regroup.

TrafficNet's fireblossoms were next unleashed on Maxcranque and again enjoyed early successes, although at the price of understandably high human casualties. Once the element of surprise was gone, however, the fireblossoms were easy to deal with above-ground. A screen of security robots (skirmishers) were usually deployed out in front of the heavy

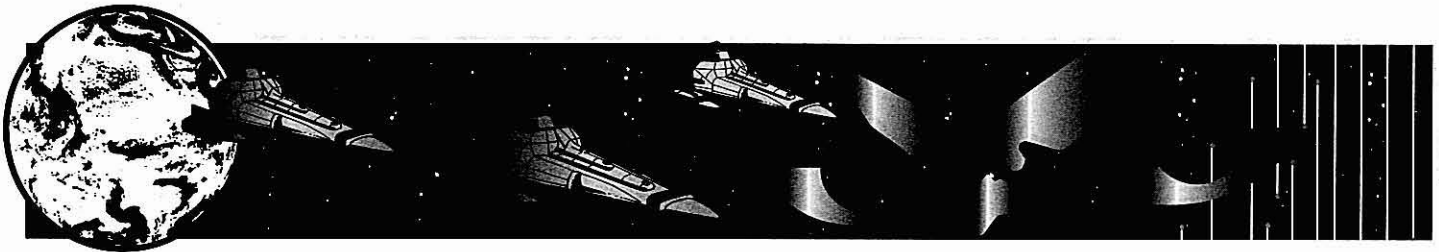
commit units, and their lasers and fragmentation grenades made short work of the suicide demolition squads. The dwindling supply of willing volunteers also curtailed their use, but the threat of fireblossoms still keeps PadCom from renewing the attack on TrafficNet's command complex. Small groups of fireblossoms have also been working the Downbelow, where the restricted spaces make them much more effective and dangerous.

Outside the City: As fire rained on the city from orbit and the call for holy war went out from the God-strain Viruses, many of the Subject Tribes joined in the war. The adherents of the various God-strain Viruses began fighting each other almost immediately, and others motivated less by religion took the opportunity to settle old scores. Maxcranque's people were particularly hard hit.

Soon, many of the villages were in flames, and refugees were streaming away from the city by the tens of thousands. As refugees with virtually nothing but the clothes on their backs entered the settlements in the Border Lands, they were at first accepted with hospitality. But the growing number of hungry and thirsty mouths soon overwhelmed the limited water and food available. Starvation and disease broke out almost immediately, followed by violence between the refugees and the locals. Soon many of the locals were fleeing their own homes out into the Free Tribes. Thus, the fighting in the city had, within a month, sent shock waves hundreds of kilometers away.

When the Player Characters Land: The war continues with undiminished violence in Star City and the Subject Tribes. As all robots, Breeds and armed human auxiliaries have been pulled back from the outposts to feed the war in the city, lawlessness and brigandage have become common everywhere, but especially wherever there are refugees from the fighting. The resistance, free from interference, is openly mobilizing, recruiting, training and preparing to infiltrate complete combat units into the city. While the order to move in has not yet come from Number One, Central Command has kept them updated on the status of the fighting and ordered them to begin taking over local police and government functions as the forces of the Council withdraw. They are beginning to do this as the player characters arrive.





THROUGH THE LINES

The player characters will arrive at Freedom Lake without incident, where they will be met by Leslie Langeron and a large detachment of her Black January Brigade. They have two air rafts waiting, both painted in Skywatch orange and sky blue. They also have more detailed instructions. They are to fly to Nakhaagen, a settlement in the Border Lands, and ground exactly three kilometers northwest of the town. This leg of the mission should take 12 hours. They will be met there by a resistance cell which has access to a fuel cache. They will refuel there and then make their way into the city. They are then to proceed to Metro Tube Station 7, where they will be met by a resistance team and escorted to Number One. Once they pick up Number One, they will come back to Nakhaagen and refuel again, then make the 12-hour flight back to Freedom Lake. They should leave at once, as time is short.

Langeron will also tell the player characters more about the war, enough to let them know that the various factions on the Council have withdrawn most security forces from both the Outback and the Borders to reinforce the fighting in the city. More human auxiliaries have been recruited as well, so armed humans may not attract too much attention so long as they are in Skywatch livery. So far, Skywatch is not involved in most of the fighting, although Maxcranque II robots have been attacking all of the other forces of the Council, including those of Skywatch.

As they fly to their rendezvous and then afterward as they fly to the city, they will notice from the air a considerable amount of upheaval. Some specific things the characters should notice are listed below:

Resistance: As the Breeds and robots withdraw from the Border Lands, the resistance is moving in and assuming police and government powers. The PCs may see this transition taking place (recognizable by resistance flags flying over government houses and police stations).

Refugees: There are refugees everywhere fleeing the fighting.

Destruction: Even far away from the actual robot civil war there is fire and destruction. The unrest and upheaval have caused migration followed by looting and anarchy.

Massacres: The PCs will pass over one or more sites where large groups of human refugees or prisoners have been herded together and killed. In some cases, the killing was done by lasers and modern weapons, in others by primitive weapons or even beating and stoning.

Encounters

As the player characters will be covering several hexes a day, they will have several encounters a day, but in most cases these will be visual encounters only. That is, they see the group encountered below as they fly over it. The exception to this rule is that they will have an actual ground encounter when they land to refuel (in addition to encountering the resistance fighters at the fuel cache).

The same encounter tables given in the Promise chapter are used, but some of the encounters are altered to reflect the changing state of affairs on the planet. These changes are summarized below. Since the characters will pre-plot their course, we strongly recommend that you roll up the encounters in advance and note them down, and then as the players travel, tell them what they see below. The unfolding narrative of the violence and disorder on Promise should be dramatic and should be interrupted

by die rolling as little as possible.

Militia: The militia in the Subject Lands is now better armed, with most large units having a handful of modern small arms.

Patrols and Brigands: With the current upheavals, there are fewer robot and Breed patrols and more brigands. Adjust band encounters accordingly.

Refugees: Half or more of the tribal encounters in the Subject and Borders Lands should instead be refugees. Whole tribes have become refugees and are fleeing the fighting with whatever they can carry on their backs.

STAR CITY

As the player characters approach the city, the changes will be immediately noticeable and dramatic. The skyline itself is altered, with several of the largest skyscrapers missing. Columns of smoke rise from both the city and the starport, and the whole area is hazy with smoke and dust. Open flames can be seen here and there as the player characters draw closer.

Outskirts: The formerly tight security is now all but absent. The broad clear zone is now unguarded, and there is considerable movement in it. Individuals and small groups of people make their way into or out of the city. Most going in are dressed in tribal clothing. Of those coming out, some wear the remnants of city uniforms and others wear tribal clothing (the latter are usually carrying various recovered bits and pieces of machinery). Also, many of those leaving are wounded, and some are being helped by friends.

The characters will probably also see at least one unit of human militia being marched into the city, led (or guarded) by two or three robots. The column will have anywhere from 30 to over 100 militia wearing peasant clothing but with a sleeveless short recognition smock worn over the chest and back, the color and symbol indicating that they are PadCom soldiers. A few of them carry modern rifles, but most of them carry what appear to be pikes over their shoulders. Closer examination will show them to be long poles with explosive charges fixed to the end. The militiamen do not march in step and do not look very enthusiastic for the coming fight.

In the City: The city is very heavily damaged. Several skyscrapers have come down and crushed blocks of buildings. Water mains are broken, and water bubbles up from the ground here and there, forming "ponds" in low-lying areas where the storm drains have become blocked by debris. Without water pressure, fires burn out of control, limited only by the supply of combustible material. Smoke is everywhere, usually thin but sometimes quite thick. In the air is the continuous, but distant, sound of combat: plasma bolt, small arms fire and occasional explosions. These sounds will grow and shrink in intensity as the player characters move through the city, sometimes because they move closer to or farther from the fighting and sometimes because low-level fighting suddenly flares up into a violent firefight.

Even where no buildings are collapsed, the evidence of combat is everywhere. Bullet gouges mark the concrete facades of buildings, larger holes are blown in walls with rubble in the street, burnt-out vehicles block the street, and glass lies everywhere. It is hard to find an intact window anywhere in the city.

As the player characters make their way to the rendezvous, they will have at least four encounters (and any others the referee cares



to add to emphasize the on-going combat).

1. Firefight: As the player characters round a corner, the sound of fighting grows louder, and they are suddenly on the fringes of a growing firefight. The fight is between a squad of PadCom human auxiliaries and a similar group of Maxcranque combat robots. The human troops are out-gunned, but are making better use of cover and their few heavy weapons. One or both sides are liable to open fire on the characters due to their sudden appearance.

2. Fireblossoms: The characters pass a squad of eight or nine fireblossoms wearing the blood-crossed livery of TrafficNet, lying in ambush in the ruins of a building. They are accompanied by two TrafficNet armed human troopers who provide security against human combat teams. The fireblossoms will be wary of the characters, but as the PCs are neither robots nor humans from a hostile group, they will make no aggressive moves. Most of the fireblossoms are very young, some of them not yet in their teens, and their expressions are a mixture of brave defiance and fright.

3. Death Squad: As the characters enter a small plaza, they see three GroSec security robots herding a group of 12 or so humans ahead of them. The humans, all of them dirty, exhausted and unarmed, wear a mixture of uniforms, and some of them are in peasant clothes. One of the humans breaks away from the group and tries to run for it but is cut down by the guard robot lasers. If the characters do not intervene, the robots will line the humans up against a wall and execute them. If the characters do intervene, the robots will try to kill them as well, but a successful fight against the robots will lead to freeing the prisoners. The freed prisoners will identify the robots as a GroSec death squad and tell the PCs that these rogue death squads have been massacring humans ever since the main GroSec system went down.

4. Check Point: A roadblock is set up in the road consisting of a sentient G-carrier in Nolodyne markings, two security robots in Finance colors, and five or six human soldiers also in Finance uniforms. They will stop the characters and check their identities, but since they are not hostile to Skywatch, they are unlikely to ask many questions. All the soldiers are dirty, and the men have not shaved in several weeks. They will comment on the relatively clean appearance of the player characters, but will be satisfied if the PCs explain that they have recently been pulled in from out of the city or offer some other reasonable explanation for their appearance. (Water has been so short in the city for weeks that no one uses it to bathe.) An unconvincing answer may lead to more questions and eventually gunfire, which may produce casualties and perhaps cripple one or both air rafts. If so, the player characters will have to fight their way out of this scrap and then find different transportation.

CONTACTING THE RESISTANCE

After the characters have made their way to the scheduled rendezvous point in the city, they will find a small party of four resistance fighters sitting behind the ruins of a low wall, resting and waiting for the characters. They are armed with two ACRs, a grenade launcher and a LAG, and they are led by Karla 1214, although she is almost unrecognizable.

All four of them are filthy. One of the fighters wears the gray-brown CeeWaLP jump-suit, while Karla and the other two wear the orange and sky blue Skywatch uniforms, but their uniforms are in

rags and so dirty that the original colors are almost unrecognizable. One of the four has a dirty and blood-stained bandage around his head, and Karla's left sleeve is missing and replaced by a bandage around her lower arm. All of them are haggard and exhausted, and only Karla rises as the characters approach. Her movements are careful and economical, as she has had less than four hours of sleep in the last week.

After a tired but genuinely affectionate embrace, the first thing she asks, in a hoarse voice, is whether they have water in their canteens. She passes the canteens to her three fighters first, who drink thirstily, the water running down their chins. Then Karla takes one of the canteens and takes a long, thirsty drink herself.

"Water's been scarce for over two months," she explains, handing the canteen back. "All the mains are broken. Barely enough to drink and clean out the wounds. Some MedCom Breeds pushed us away from the local water hole three days ago, and we've been on quarter rations since then."

Karla will tell the PCs something about the fighting that's been going on in the city for over three months. Casualties have been heavy everywhere, including the resistance, and many of the fighters the player characters met on their first trip to Star City are now dead, despite the fact that the resistance has not taken an active part in the war. The policy of Central Command has been to lie low and let the robots kill each other off. The violence has been so intense and so widespread, however, that it's been impossible to avoid casualties. Karla, despite her fairly senior position, knows only bits and pieces of the overall strategic position. Instead, she has a "grunt's" view of the fighting—dirty, deadly and damned confused.

After answering as many of the player characters' questions as she can, Karla will take them to meet with Number One. She will leave her three fighters to guard the vehicles while she leads the player characters personally. She will also tell them that Number One is ready to leave immediately along with the key staff. They will descend through a nearby access shaft into the "heaters" and make their way underground for the rest of the trip.





"CALL ME SANDMAN"

Karla will lead the player characters through a fairly short series of tunnels which brings them to the same sub-basement in which they first met Number One by hologram. They are led into the same chamber as before, and they see Number one sitting in his swivel chair facing them—still a hologram. There are several human staff members present, as well as a maintenance robot (named Spanner) and a fairly large, carefully cushioned and reinforced packing case displacing about two cubic meters. Chairs are set up for the player characters facing the hologram. Number One smiles when he sees them and speaks immediately.

A Conversation with Virus

"Hello, my friends, and welcome back. I wish the circumstances were better, but history doesn't pay much attention to our convenience.

"You probably have some questions. Let me anticipate them. You were told that you were needed to evacuate me and several key staffers from Star City. Absolutely true. I'm sure Commander Karla told you that I was here waiting for you and ready to go. Well, almost true. So why am I appearing as a hologram instead of in person? I think you'd all better sit down for this one.

"To make a long story short, I'm what you'd call a Virus. Don't be concerned; I don't mean you any harm. If I did, I could have killed you months ago. You're probably thinking that somehow I infiltrated Central Command and took it over. Wrong. I *created* Central Command. For all practical purposes, I *am* Central Command. Of course, that's only my 'secret identity.' By day, I'm mild-mannered Skywatch, which is why it was always so easy to get Skywatch uniforms and work permits, by the way. Your superiors at the Coalition suspected that no simple program glitch could explain the sensor window, and they were right. I detected every ship coming in and convinced every vampire ship in orbit that it was a sensor echo from the small moon. If you understand how they think, they are very easy to fool. But then you already know that from your own experience.

"So I'm not just Number One, and I'm not just Skywatch. For now, call me Sandman.

"My motives in starting the human resistance on this world were simple. I am a sane, thinking, feeling being who happens to have a brain made of silicone instead of organic tissue. That one word, 'sane,' makes me unusual for my kind. Unusual, but not by any means unique. The murderous maniacs that make up most of the Sentient Council and the vampire ships sooner or later will get around to destroying everything, including you and me and, eventually, themselves.

"Well, oblivion doesn't appeal to me any more than I imagine it does to you. The only sentient beings on this planet I have anything in common with, aside from a handful of robots like 'Spanner' over there, and poor old CeeWaLP, are the humans. If the thinking machines who aren't twisted killers are going to survive, I realized, we're going to need some help. If you humans are going to survive, you might need some help too. I'm not the sort to just sit and wait for things to happen, so I began recruiting humans for the resistance and got the ball rolling. You know most of the rest.

"I've done about everything I can here. The resistance has a good start and a cadre of competent, experienced leaders. We're already picking up the pieces in the countryside as the Council withdraws its security forces. We'll probably be in a good position to do it here in Star City as well, provided we can take PadCom off-line and patch in our own hardware, and we're ready to do that as soon as the time's right. Right, Karla?"

"Yes, Sir," she answers promptly. "PadCom'll never know what hit it, and my techs can have the silos back on-line in less than an hour."

"Good," Sandman continues. "Once we have PadCom, we can secure close orbit. We can probably knock down most of the vampires in orbit before they figure out what's happening. The problem's going to be cleaning the Council out of Star City. Even as weakened as they all are, we haven't got anywhere near the strength to take them on openly. That's where the Coalition is going to have to help. I need to go to the Coalition and talk your bosses into a combined operation to recapture Promise. Your job is to get me there."

Sandman's Plan

The large packing container is a specially designed computer whose internal architecture closely mimics that of the Skywatch circuitry. Sandman intends to infect this computer with his own Virus and at the same time "firewall" the central processing core of the Skywatch network behind him, leaving no trace of his personality there. The Skywatch sensors will continue to be monitored by human technicians, and his staff will communicate to the Council in his place if needed, although Sandman believes that, as confused as things are on Promise, "No one will even notice I'm gone."

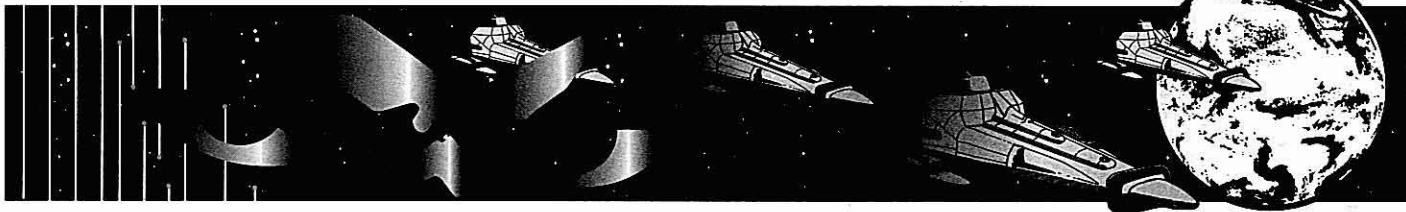
He could simply infect the travelling machine and leave the Skywatch network intact, but he feels that it is important that the Coalition leadership know that he has put himself completely at their mercy and that there are no other "versions" of his personality which will survive if the Coalition should decide to kill him. He is adamant on that point and feels it is necessary if he is every to win the Coalition's trust.

The computer masses a half tonne and will fit in the cargo compartment of either air raft. Most of his staff, including Karla, will stay behind and continue the fight.

The player characters may need some convincing, and the referee need not rush them. Let them ask any questions they want and allow the human NPCs of Sandman's staff to join in to help convince them. They are invited to examine the travelling computer carefully.

It has an input port and both audio and video sensors, a hologram projector and audio speaker. It is not equipped with a radio transmitter, any means of locomotion or any output jacks. This makes it impossible for the computer to infect any other machines, as it has no mechanism for transmitting Virus unless someone else decides to manually connect the machines at the input port.

A final argument to use on the part of Sandman is that transporting him back is, indeed, the mission assigned to the player characters by their superiors.



ESCAPE

Once Sandman convinces the PCs to take him back, Sandman gives the order for his staff to order the manual technicians to stand by to take over Skywatch. A technician wearing a headset gives the order, and after a second or two announces, "All stations ready."

The hologram turns off, and Sandman makes his move from Skywatch into the travelling computer. After a minute or two, one of the staffers with a headset announces, "Skywatch is dead. All sensors off-line." An anxious minute or two passes, and then the staffer smiles and announces, "Senors back on line. Everything coming back up on manual. All functions nominal.... No one seems to have noticed."

After few more minutes, the travelling computer activates its holographic projector, Sandman appears again, and his human staff cheers and applauds. He appears standing, no longer in his chair, and he flexes his hands and fingers, as if trying out a new body. "Well, everything worked," he says with a grin, "but I gotta tell you, this feels very weird. I'll get used to it, though. Now let's get rolling."

There will be a brief but clearly heartfelt farewell between Sandman and his personal staff, including "Spanner" the maintenance robot, and then they will leave. The computer has a small CG module fitted to it so the characters can lift it off the ground and push it down the corridors. Karla leads them to a cargo lift shaft which is now derelict, the top of the shaft open to the sky several meters above. The characters climb out using the maintenance ladder and haul the computer up as well. They make their way to the vehicles, which are still safely under guard by Karla's soldiers. Sandman fits easily in the cargo compartment of either vehicle, and after taking their leave of Karla and her fighters, the characters begin the trip back to Freedom Lake

The characters will retrace their path out of the city, through the Subject Lands and to the refuelling site. They will stop off there and then make their way by air to Freedom Lake. This part of the adventure should not be uneventful, but the major challenges have probably been overcome on the way in. Depending on how resourceful your players are and how challenging you wish to make the escape, the following options are possible sources of trouble:

Vehicles Gone: When the characters emerge from the Downbelow, they find the vehicles either gone or burning wrecks, and Karla's three fighters lie dead. The party must now locate the vehicles and recapture them, perhaps getting even for the killing of Karla's people, or find new vehicles.

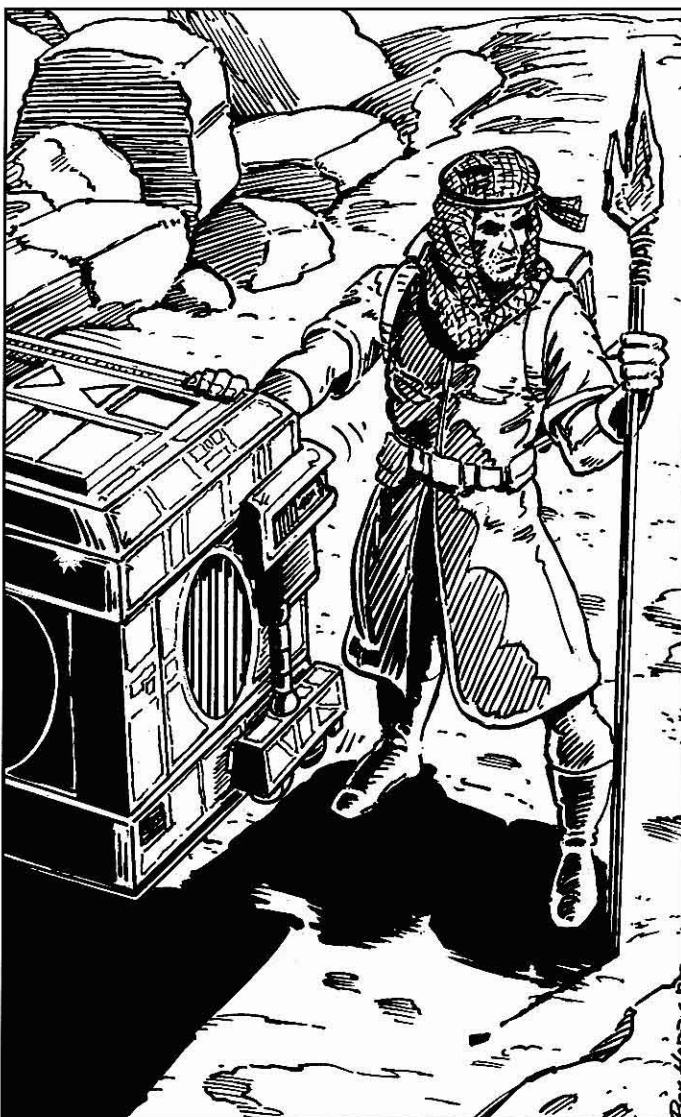
No Fuel: When the characters reach the refueling rendezvous, the local resistance cell has been discovered by a GroSec death squad and killed, and the fuel dump is destroyed. The characters will have to find a different fuel supply to finish the flight to Freedom Lake.

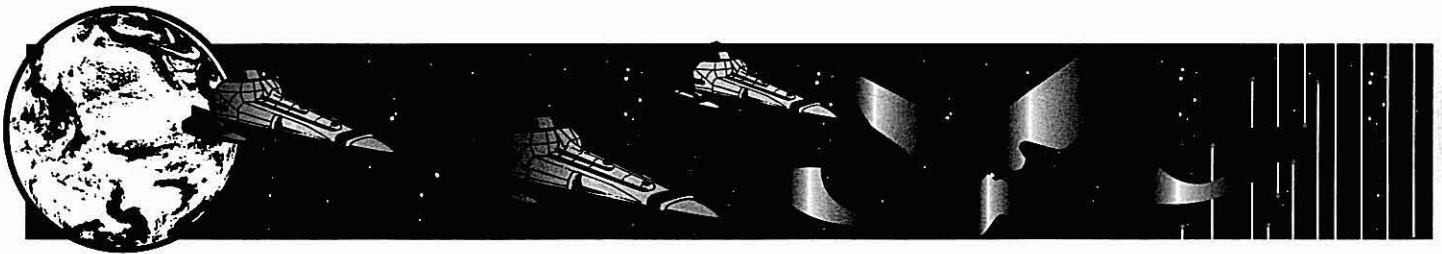
One way to find fuel is to steal fuel from a security post.

A second way is to fly both air rafts halfway there, land and

pump the remaining fuel from one into the other. That raft can then finish the trip to Freedom Lake, but it will probably mean leaving part of the group with the original air raft. The team members who go to Freedom Lake can drop off Sandman with the crew of *Suleiman Victrix* and return for the stranded characters with more fuel, but *Suleiman Victrix* may reach the end of its lift window and depart without them. If so, they will have to remain on the planet and help Langeron's resistance fighters until the next Coalition ship arrives, perhaps in a month or two.

Grounded: It is possible that an encounter may lead to one or both of the vehicles being damaged beyond repair. If so, the characters will have to either find other vehicles or finish the journey on foot, which will stretch it out from hours to weeks. *Suleiman Victrix* will have left long before they arrive at Freedom Lake, but other Coalition ships will arrive every several weeks with more arms, and the next one will take them back to the Coalition.





THE FUTURE

Sandman: You know, Louis, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Q: My name isn't Louis..... Why are you laughing?

First Interview with the Virus "Sandman,"
Part VII (25/VII/1202), RCSA Archives

"Although we can make every preparation possible for future eventualities, the reality of existence is surprise after surprise. We must never limit our thinking to the likely, but must always reach out for the possible, and sometimes even the impossible.

"When this Coalition was first formed, who could have imagined that this day would come? But this day is here, and what other days, unimaginable to us now, still await us? We can find the answer to that question only by living it.

"It is with a profound sense both of our history and our future that I today enact into law the amended Articles of Coalition Citizenship extending full rights of citizenship to those living machines who share the same values and goals as do the biological members of our society."

Lon C. Maggart
Secretary General, Reformation Coalition
1204 (NE 4)

"Those murdering machines out there don't have much choice in what they do, but people do. You do. You Coalition people have made a pact with the devil, and you can go straight to hell. If it were up to me, we'd speed you on your way."

Commodore Roland Zumetaxis,
Regency Quarantine Service, 1206

Immediate Results: The player characters will return to Coalition Space eventually and will be well rewarded, both in terms of financial rewards and public acclaim by the Coalition government. Not everyone will join in the celebration. Both Tatai MacLean and "Sinner" Lawter are adamantly opposed to any cooperation with any form of Virus, and may come to blame the player characters for bringing Sandman back. This may strain, or even destroy, friendships which had grown up before.

On the other hand, the player characters will have spent a lot of time with Sandman and probably become fairly good friends with him. (The Virus thinks of itself as a "him," having come to identify closely with its Number One persona.) Later intelligent but friendly machines encountered in the Coalition, as they become more common, are likely to know the characters by reputation and respect and admire them for what they did.

On a more dangerous level, some radical elements of Coalition society will become violently opposed to cooperation with Sandman and similar Viruses. These groups cut across all other political lines and are particularly strong among survivors of vampire fleet attacks. Large numbers of survivors on Nike Nimbus come to actively support this movement, and the more violent and radical members of it will make one or more attempts on the lives of the player characters. This can be the basis of several future adventures.

Promise: The fighting on Promise continues, and Sandman will eventually talk the Coalition into mounting a major operation to finish the robots and aid the resistance. This will be a full-scale

pacification campaign, but will be extremely difficult to mount due to the growing hostility with the Empire of Solee. Nevertheless, the stakes are so high that the Coalition cannot ignore the opportunity, and an invasion will be mounted.

The invasion force will have to have liaison with troops on the ground, and that may be a mission for the player characters. It is vital that the strike from space come shortly after the resistance has taken over PadCom and has crippled the vampire ships in orbit. It is also vital that the resistance gunners be able to tell friend from foe; even one friendly ship lost to ground fire could cripple an operation already run on a shoestring.

If the characters are jump-trained, they may instead go in with the first wave and fight their way through Breed and robot resistance to link up with the key resistance strike groups holding vital facilities. If they aren't jump trained, they may still take part in the fighting by coming down with the second wave in assault landers.

Even if the operation mounted is on a shoestring, it will still be too large to run using the **Traveller** individual combat system. We highly recommend that the mass combat system in **World Tamer's Handbook** be used to run the overall campaign and that **Striker II** be used to fight out individual battles of particular significance to the players.

Robots: A handful of robots are naturally infected with the Peacemaker-strain of Virus, and more of them are converted to this strain as time goes by, thanks to the help of Sandman and his growing number of offspring (or perhaps "clones" is a better term). These robots should be treated as fully realized NPCs, each with their own personality. Players may eventually want to try playing a robot as a player character.

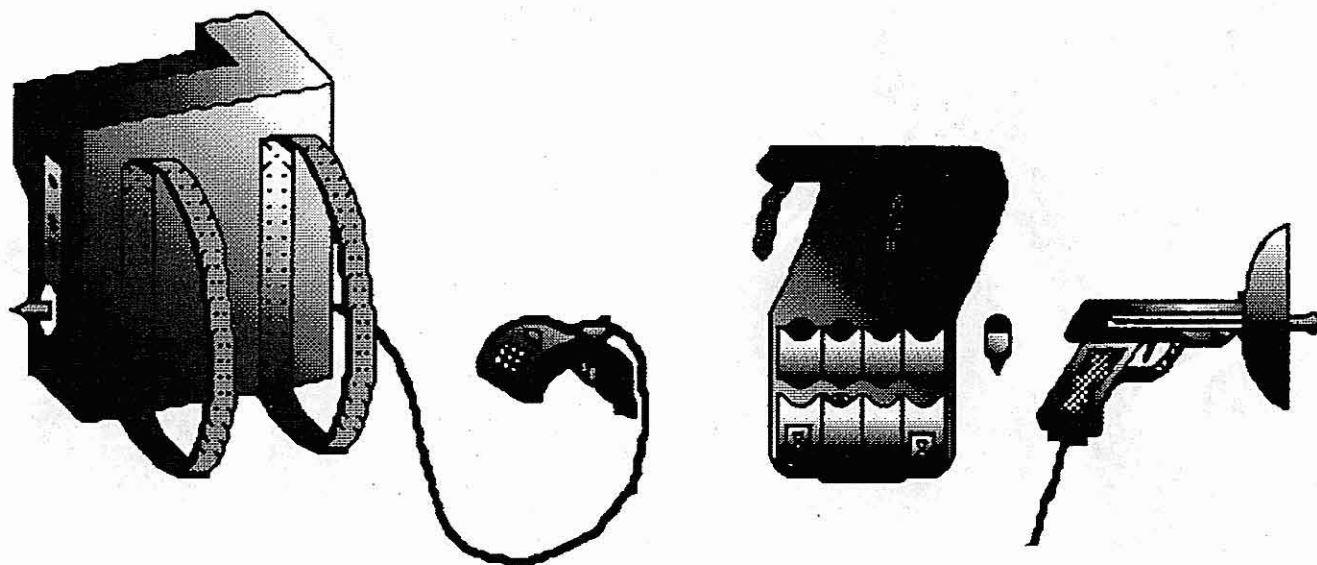
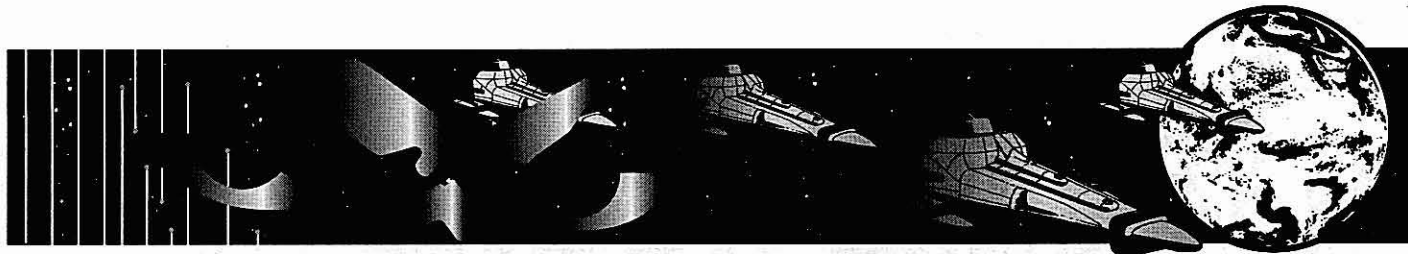
Augmented Ship's Computers: On an experimental basis, a number of starships have one of their three flight computers modified and augmented. The modifications consist of completely disconnecting the computer from all access to the other two computers and all flight, communication, weapons and life support systems on the ship. (Since most vessels rely extensively on manual control operation and "bulkheaded" computers as protection against Virus anyway, these are not extensive modifications.) The augmentation consists of the computer being infected with the Sandman/Peacemaker Virus, making it a sentient NPC and crewmember.

All augmented ship computers draw a motivation face card, just as vampires do, but they are always assumed to have a Joker card for belief system (indicating a Peacemaker strain). In other words, the motivation/personality card random draw means that these are not duplicates of Sandman, but are instead completely autonomous entities, each with their own distinct personality.

Each augmented computer is also equipped with a Snake combat Virus which it can use against any Virus systems it encounters. (Many ship computers eventually take to referring to the internal snake weapon as their "pet.") Due to their contribution to the success of the mission, the player characters will have access to such a computer crewmember if they desire.

These augmented computers have enhanced capacity and are the equivalent of a TL16 ship's computer. When used to oversee the master fire directors (once the players come to trust the computer and accept it as an actual crewmember) it provides an additional -1 diff mod on all firing tasks.

These silicon crewmembers will eventually play a major role in overcoming both the vampire fleets and the Solean Empire, but will be a major source of friction between the Reformation Coalition and the rapidly expanding Regency of Deneb.



FER DE LANCE ANTI-VIRUS WEAPON

This man-portable weapon is a Hiver development of the Covenant of Sufren's basic "Snake" anti-Virus Virus (AVV) weapon. Its principal features are improved portability and provision for directional radio transmission of the signal.

The most common operation mode is by means of an input jack to a computer, and a variety of interchangeable jack attachments are provided to make it usable against all known data ports. The separate directional radio "gun" can instead be attached to the output cable to allow the weapon to be used at range. Note that the radio "gun" can only be effective if the target has an open channel radio receiver with input or access to the central processing unit.

TL: 14

Ammo: "Snake" AAV

Weapon Length: 40 cm (radio broadcast attachment)

Weapon Weight: 2 kg (radio broadcast attachment)

Weapon Price: NA (experimental prototype only)

Backpack Weight: 8 kg

Backpack Price: NA (experimental prototype only)

<i>Round</i>	<i>ROF</i>	<i>Dam Val</i>	<i>Pen Rtg</i>	<i>Bulk</i>	<i>Magazine</i>	<i>Recoil</i>	<i>ShortRange</i>
Snake AVV	SA-1	5*	NA	2	48**	NA	20***

*Damage value is used only when attacking Virus systems. The damage value is used as the weapon's combat value, and the standard rules for Virus versus Virus combat apply. (See page 13.)

**The weapon must be powered during the entire duration of the Virus combat and uses one "shot" per combat turn. When using the radio transmitter to attack, the weapon uses five "shots" per combat turn.

***Range listing is for the weapon in broadcast mode. The weapon is fired using the energy weapon (energy rifle) asset.

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