

*Adventure 2*  
*Research Station Gamma*

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**TRAVELLER**<sup>®</sup>

*Science-Fiction Adventure*  
*in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop



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in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop

**Research Station Gamma** was designed by Marc W. Miller.  
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and 35).

**Research Station Gamma,  
TRAVELLER, Adventure 2**

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# Introduction

This booklet is *Research Station Gamma*, a comprehensive adventure for **Traveller**. Set in the Rhylanor subsector of the Spinward Marches, it chronicles an encounter within an Imperial scientific base.

It is assumed that this adventure will be administered by a referee who has read through this adventure, and who is familiar with both it and the rules for **Traveller**. This situation calls for only the basic **Traveller** booklets (Books 1, 2, and 3), and no additional supplements, books, or other information. As usual, paper, pencils, six-sided dice, and square-grid graph paper will prove helpful during the course of the adventure.

**Requires only  
Basic Traveller.**

## STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following standards and assumptions are used in the text of this adventure.

**Dates:** All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The initial date for this situation is 300-1106; 300 is the current day (the 300th day of the year) in the standard 365-day year, while 1106 is the current year in the Imperium. Once the adventure begins, time should flow normally. If necessary, change the date to match a local situation.

**Date: 300-1106**

**Place:** This adventure takes place on Vanejen (0709-C686854-5) in the Rhylanor subsector of the Spinward Marches. Vanejen is a rich world approximately 9600 kilometers diameter, with a dense breathable atmosphere and seas covering 60% of the world's surface. Icecaps constitute about a third of this percentage (20% of the total world surface). Population is currently 543 million, distributed over three of the four continents, with scattered settlements on the barren fourth continent.

**Place: Vanejen  
Rhylanor Subsector  
Spinward Marches  
the Imperium**

Vanejen lies in a cluster of worlds in a backwater of the Rhylanor subsector; a backwater that sprang to sudden prominence in the course of the Third Frontier War (976 to 986) as the Imperium struggled to resist its continuing adversary, the Outworld Coalition. The Navy found it necessary to establish a base at Vanejen, and, in the process, made the local inhabitants aware of their starfaring neighbors. The world was catapulted into the reaches of interstellar society in the course of only a few years.

## USING THIS ADVENTURE

The referee may use this adventure as an independent game situation with pre-generated characters (as written), or it may be used with continuing characters from an existing campaign. Changes necessary for an existing campaign should be obvious.

### REFeree'S CHECKLIST

1. Assign characters.
2. Allow equipment purchase.
3. State situation.
4. Guide characters through situation based on their actions.

**Referee's Checklist:** The steps shown in the referee's checklist should guide the referee through the elements of administering this

adventure. Characters are covered next in this section, then equipment purchase. The situation is stated on page 4, with additional materials contained in the remainder of the adventure.

## CHARACTERS

This adventure is intended for a band of adventurers numbering at least two and no more than eight. A group of pre-generated characters is supplied below, although the referee may allow other individuals instead.

1	<b>Retired Scout</b>	79A689	Age 38	5 terms	Cr3,000
	Pilot-1, Vacc-2, Navigation-2, Shotgun-2				Shotgun
2	<b>Ex-marine Trooper</b>	AB8B67	Age 34	4 terms	Cr2,000
	Cutlass-2, Vacc-1, Brawling-1, Autorifle-1, Mechanical-1				Cutlass
3	<b>Ex-navy Ensign</b>	756B88	Age 26	2 terms	Cr2,000
	Medical-2, Computer-2, Vacc-0, Carbine-0, Blade-1				Blade, Travellers'
4	<b>Ex-marine Force Commander</b>	8B5B88	Age 30	3 terms	Cr2,000
	Cutlass-1, Revolver-1, Vacc-3, Laser Rifle-2, ATV-1, Brawling-1				Cutlass
5	<b>Ex-merchant 2nd Officer</b>	8A6894	Age 26	2 terms	Cr1,000
	Streetwise-1, Vacc-1, Pilot-1, Revolver-2, Gunnery-1				Revolver
6	<b>Ex-army Captain</b>	7996A9	Age 30	3 terms	Cr2,000
	Rifle-1, SMG-1, Vacc-1, Air/Raft-1, Forward Observer-1, Brawling-3				SMG
7	<b>Ex-other</b>	856994	Age 26	2 terms	Cr1,000
	Electronic-1, Vacc-0, Computer-1, Bribery-1, Shotgun-0				Shotgun
8	<b>Ex-scout</b>	365BBA	Age 34	4 terms	Cr2,000
	Vacc-2, Jack of all trades-1, Automatic Pistol-1, Pilot-1, Electronic-1				

A skill level of 0 (for example, vacc-0) has been assigned to show some familiarity with a skill, sufficient to allow use, but no real expertise. A skill level of 0 with a gun (for example, carbine-0) shows the preferred, or best weapon for an individual otherwise without weapon skill.

## EQUIPMENT

Referees using an on-going campaign should ignore the remainder of this section.

The pre-generated characters listed above have congregated somewhere on Vanejen; each, for his or her own reasons, has come to (or been left on) Vanejen. As fellow travellers, they are naturally drawn to each other. Personal baggage or equipment is non-existent. Each has a change of clothes, some money, and little else. If desired, money can be spent on equipment, provided it is available and meets the following conditions.

1. It must be mentioned and described in Book 1 or Book 3 of **Traveller** (exception: the personal communicator listed below). It must be of tech level 8 or below. Imported items (tech level 6 to 8) are available at 140% of base price. Tech levels for most items are given in Book 3, in the descriptions, or on the tech level table.

2. The item must be paid for. Since the only assets available are the balances above, some items (battle dress, for example) are precluded because of expense. The referee should allow no more than ten minutes for the purchase of equipment before beginning the adventure.



**Personal Communicators:** Small, earpiece-type short range communicators with long-life batteries. Weight is negligible, and the communicators are undetectable to the casual observer. **Range:** 10 km across open areas; less than 1000 meters underwater. **Price:** Cr100 each.

## REFEREE'S NOTE

The information in this adventure is intended for the use of the referee. Only specific items of information should be made available to the players.

**Introductory Material:** The data on pages 1 through 3 should be made available to the players through the referee, rather than allowing them to read it directly.

**Late One Night, Vanejen, and Rhylanor Subsector:** The situation on pages 4 and 5, the world description on pages 6 and 7, and the subsector list and map on pages 12 and 13 should be shown to the players, and should be available for reference throughout the adventure.

**Submersibles:** If a submersible is encountered and boarded, then the submersible data on pages 9, 10 and 11 should be made available to the players.

**Rumors:** The rumor data should be divulged only slowly, and in response to encounters or situations. It should never be simply presented to the players.

**The Station, The Globes, and The Robots:** This data is intended for the referee alone, and should be kept secret until specific areas are actually discovered or encountered.

**Referee's Notes:** This material is intended to provide a background for the referee, and should be used to promote understanding of the situations.

**Library Data:** If characters seek out information sources such as computers or libraries, and browse or look up keywords, then the data in the library should be made available.

# Late One Night...

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Each one of the adventurers in the inn was thinking the same thought— someone had miscalculated. No one knew that the others had the same thoughts, and the details were certainly different. But the result was the same.

Each was stuck on Vanejen until he or she could raise the off-world fare, ideally as far as Rhylanor. That meant at least Cr16,000 apiece for mid passage to Gitosy Belt, then another mid passage to Rhylanor. Dozens of credits meant little at the moment, not when thousands were needed. Dozens of credits were spent on round after round of yeasty Vanejenian beer.

Very late that night, a small bird-like alien cautiously edged its way to the table and the adventurers. Afraid to speak, it stood in the shadows and watched. Finally, one of the band noticed it and beckoned it forward.

"What's up, little fellow?"

Slowly, needing lots of encouragement from the group, it told its story.

## THE ALIEN'S STORY

The creature was far older than anyone guessed, aged maybe sixteen or seventeen standard years. It lived with its nest of some forty or fifty adults and children in a small village on the savannah between jungle and desert. As a mere nestling, it was taken from its home (along with two siblings) by rough men wearing guns and uniforms with silver discs as insignia. It spent weeks in a cage in the hold of a ship, and was finally transferred to a terrible prison, where it had spent the last year. The prison was described as a lot of individual cells, each crowded with varieties of aliens, and manned by metal monsters.

Weeks ago, he managed to escape by sneaking out of his cell and leaping into the icy waters around his prison. Washed up on the beach, almost dead, he recovered and worked his way here, living off the fruits and berries of the land. Initially hiding, he sometimes tried to get aid from local humans, but they drove him away with rocks.

It ends its story with a plea, "They'll kill my nest-mates, I just know it. They're planning terrible experiments on them. Won't you help? Please."

The subject of money is sure to come up. At least one adventurer in every band always asks, "What's in it for me?" The little alien really doesn't know the value of money. His people don't use it, and he is unfamiliar with the concept. If pressed, however, he will draw out a single coin from a pouch on his stomach. A thick disc three centimeters across, it has engraved on it the sign of a burning flame. The alien says its people have many of these— perhaps they could be used as money? Perhaps the adventurer will agree; the coin is solid soft gold, always a valuable commodity.

About this time, the barkeep notices the group and their newfound friend. He scowls for a moment, then abruptly announces, "We're closing up now. Everyone drink up and get out. And take that chirper with you." His friendly attitude of earlier in the evening had disappeared. As the group leaves, someone notices him going to the phone.

## THE ALIEN

The little alien is a chirper, giving its name as Chiree, at least as closely as the adventurers can pronounce it. Chirpers are a semi-intelligent race native to Vanejen, and not too popular with the locals.

Chiree stands about a meter tall, and is covered with small scaly feathers. The large head mounts eyes that can see in about a 270 degree span. The small wings on its back look like they could never really support it in flight, although it is possible that they will mature or develop as the creature grows older.

As a rough approximation, Chiree could be classified as UPP 346540, with a few exceptions. First, the creature said it dove into the icy waters around the prison and swam for some time; that would indicate a high endurance, or some special biological mechanisms. Second, it is difficult to truly evaluate the alien's intelligence because it does not have a total grasp of language, and is still only a child.

Finally, the social standing of zero should be noted— chirpers are not well liked on Vanejen. Chirpers inhabited the world before it was settled by humans. But the chirpers were of little value in the way of productive labor, being too small and weak for even unskilled tasks, and prone to wandering off when their interest waned. The humans' solution was a reservation on the barren northern continent, and some small enclaves in marginal land on the other continents.

When the Long Night fell, the reversion to barbarism put an end to any semblance of even-handed treatment of the chirpers, and the little aliens are fast becoming extinct.

**Library Data Listing— Chirper.** The semi-intelligent minor race native to Vanejen is called (by the locals) the chirpers. Once, they ranged widely over the entire world, but have now dwindled down to a few scattered groups.

Chirpers are omnivore/gatherers in the 25 kilogram class. Living in small groups with a limited social organization, they follow age old patterns of gathering fruits and berries in the wild.

Chirpers are intelligent to a point, and have been known to learn to speak. Their intelligence is more of a rudimentary cunning, devoted to stealing shiny objects or intriguing gadgets. Since this is usually keys, or shiny coins, or other small valuable items, the humans on Vanejen have never reacted well to the chirpers.

Finally, chirpers are extremely swift, much more so than their size or build would indicate. They can dash and dart about virtually unseen, if they care to. If someone tries to catch one, it usually can get away.



*Illustration 1— Chiree, the chirper.*



# Vanejen

Vanejen/Rhylanor (0709-C686854-5) is the major inhabited world in the Vanejen system, situated in a backwater cluster or worlds in the Rhylanor subsector in the Spinward Marches. The system consists of a bright central star, a total of seven planets (including Vanejen) and five satellites. Only Vanejen is in the system's life zone, and none of the other worlds show any sign of life or of value. In addition, the Vanejen system has no gas giant—surprisingly, an asset which first drew Imperial attention to the system. The oceans of Vanejen can provide water for starship fuel to forces occupying the world, but attacking starforces are at a distinct disadvantage, needing to conquer the world itself before gaining access to the water they require for volume refuelling.

Vanejen has two of the five satellites in the system, both of them small chunks of rock. Both were used as orbital bases by the Imperial Navy when Vanejen was fortified in 980; they have since been stripped of any armaments, but may retain some equipment not considered important enough to remove.

**Starport.** Vanejen itself boasts a class C starport, a lower quality installation which once served as an Imperial naval base. But no longer: the navy pulled out of the base in 995, and the installation was retained as the world's starport. In a few years, as Vanejen gets up to tech level 8 or 9, the starport will probably be upgraded to B. Currently, the starport provides unrefined fuel, and does not have either ship building or repair facilities. It is located at the urban center on the large central continent.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Vanejen is a medium-sized world with a dense atmosphere. Having a diameter of 8900 kilometers and a circumference of 28000 kilometers, the world has an atmosphere with a more or less standard gas mixture and no noxious elements. Seas of water cover 62% of the world's surface. These seas are quite deep, especially away from land masses. Polar icecaps are present in both hemispheres, but the lack of continental anchors or boundary land masses makes them fragile and prone to dispersion into icebergs due to weather.

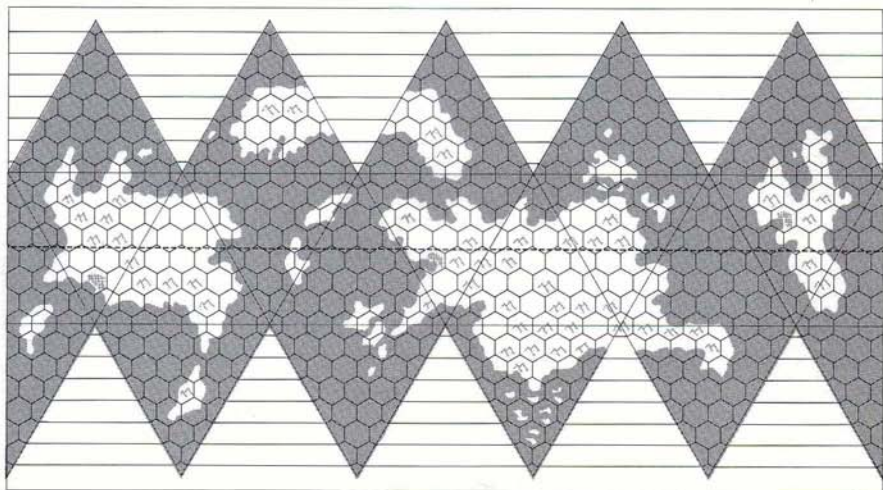
**Planetography.** A standard geodesic map of Vanejen using 800 kilometer hexes is shown in Map 1—Vanejen. The equator divides the world into north and south hemispheres, and passes through three of Vanejen's four continents. The northern fourth continent is relatively barren, without any mineral wealth or large human settlement, although there is a chirper population.

The three other continents each have urbanized and settled areas as indicated by the city symbols; urbanization and extensive development can be encountered on each continent within four hexes of those symbols.

Mountain symbols indicate mountainous, rough or broken terrain; clear areas may be clear, prairie, forest, jungle, desert, swamp, marsh, or river. Arctic terrain can be expected in the top and bottom four hex rows of the map.

**Flora and Fauna.** The animal and plant life of Vanejen is unremarkable (with the exception of the semi-intelligent chirpers) and corresponds to standard animal





*Map 1— Vanejen/Rhylanor (0709-C686854-5). Rich World. No gas giant.*

encounter tables constructed from the instructions contained in **Traveller Book 3**.

## **SOCIAL DESCRIPTION**

Human population on Vanejen is 543 million (a computer estimate) as of 1105. Racial extraction is primarily Vilani, a result of colonization some 3500 years ago; only limited intermingling (primarily from naval personnel during the Third Frontier War) with Solomani and other human races has occurred. Government is a planet-wide feudal technocracy imposing a rather liberal law level of 4.

**Technology.** The current technological level of Vanejen is 5, equivalent to the Terran period 1900 to 1939. Electronics are rudimentary and gravitics non-existent. The primary emphasis of manufacturing is mechanical.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

During the Third Frontier War (979 to 986), the major efforts of the Outworld Coalition were directed at Efate, Boughene, and Pixie, all in the Regina subsector. This strategy was essentially the same as had been used in the previous wars. But in addition, the Coalition launched a subordinate drive through the Vilis and Lanth subsectors, across the Abyss, and gaining a foothold at Jae Tellona. From there, both Rhylanor and Porozlo were put under seige. This salient diverted large portions of the Imperial fleet from their main engagement in the Regina subsector, and brought the war to a stalemate that lasted some eleven months. Neither side could make any real advances, but the entire rear of the Imperial defense was threatened. The insertion of substantial reinforcements from the neighboring Sabine subsector eventually broke the deadlock, and forced the Zhodani hordes back.

Vanejen figured prominently in this campaign of the Third Frontier War. Originally settled in the third colonization wave of the Vilani Empire, circa 1230 VI, Vanejen regressed (along with most of the human worlds) to barbarism during the Long Night, and remained at low tech levels until recontacted in 980. Strategically,

the Navy needed a rear area starbase from which to support the expulsion of the Outworlders; Vanejen looked to be most suitable. The local inhabitants became aware of their starfaring neighbors.

Ordinarily, this would be the cause of great civil upheaval, but the Navy was exceptionally prudent. Preliminary contacts were made; the ruling families were convinced that they could chart a well-planned course into their own future. The government of Vanejen was (and is) basically feudal, and (while static), was a comfortable sinecure for those in power. These ruling families each held their own territories, and competition had become essentially stylized, channelled into trade and commerce. The rulers could see the obvious appeals of progress, so long as their own power was not challenged.

In return for services to the Navy, the government received orbital surveys, computer simulations (complete with advisers to translate them), and basic technological assistance to get their programs moving. And then, the people in power translated their regional authority into monopolies in commerce and technology. The Margrave family, for example, assumed the monopoly on steel and construction metals, while the Flandren family took land transportation. Other families took other basic areas (such as communications, chemicals, or banking; sea transport was ultimately divided among several families), while long-range planning left open new areas (such as electronics, and gravitics) to be issued to worthy or powerful groups which might arise in the course of time.

In the century since the naval base was established (and long since closed down), Vanejen has progressed slowly and deliberately from tech level 2 to tech level 5, while the original ruling families have retained their power in the planet-wide government.

# Submersibles

Sea transport is commonplace on Vanejen, especially in the northern hemisphere. The ice-packed and storm swept southern seas of Vanejen were for many years virtually impassible to surface transport, often necessitating a longer northern route, a time-consuming and inefficient requirement in many cases. Within the past few decades, the Margrave family (already holding the monopoly on steel and metal construction materials) developed and produced the Margrave H Series boats, a submersible intended for commercial use in the storm and ice of the south.

## H-6 SUBMERSIBLES

The H-6 submersible boat is typical. A small undersea boat capable of rudimentary underwater cruising, its performance is not spectacular, but it is sufficient to provide transport in otherwise unnavigable seas. The H-Series includes submersibles in varying sizes, but the H-6 is the most common.

Power for the H-6 is typical of tech level 5: natural petroleum fuel drives internal combustion engines for most situations, and battery-powered electric motors propel the submersible when submerged.

Vision and navigation are an obvious problem for submersibles. Because these boats are not military, simple solutions are possible, and have been implemented. Direction is maintained by sensitive magnetic compasses carefully calibrated to take the hull into account. Close coordination underwater is maintained using an observer system; a crew member stands watch in the forward hatch, observing through thick glass ports, aided by a large searchlight mounted in the bow. With vision possible both above and below, as well as forward, at least elementary safety in close maneuver is possible. There is no radar or sonar system currently available. The use of glass ports is possible because the H-6 boat is not military, and can use devices which would be too dangerous in attack situations. This does mean, however, that an attack can easily break these ports, flooding the forward compartments and blinding the submersible.

Whenever possible, cruising is on the surface, for fuel efficiency and for speed. Once in the southern sea, however, most submersibles run underwater. To this end, two different types of snorkels have been invented.

One is the running snorkel, useful for very shallow running. The submersible continues to run on its internal combustion engines while cruising at a depth of five to ten meters. The boat takes advantage of the lowered friction below the sea/air interface, and avoids the turmoil of the storm-tossed sea surface.

The other is a recharging system. A buoy, connected by a flexible conduit, is released to the surface by controls on the submersible. This buoy is rugged, and contains a series of explosive charges which allow it to blow through a surface ice pack. Using this system, a submersible can halt, recharge its batteries (in perhaps six to eight hours) and then continue its journey. Submersibles rarely have more than one of these snorkel systems, due to weight and size considerations.

The limitations of tech level 5 steel and construction techniques restrict the H-6 to a maximum depth of 200 meters. Pressure sensitive mechanical valves auto-



matically blow the ballast at this depth. However this occurs in increments to keep the vessel at maximum safe depth, rather than all at once to bring the boat to the surface.

Refuelling is generally accomplished at a port, with petroleum purchased from local vendors. The operation takes at least several hours, and can take as long as a day. In emergencies, it is possible to draw fuel from another vessel.

The conning tower carries a standard periscope for vision and navigation. The forward air lock on board the H-6 allows access to the submarine and to the underwater depths while submerged. Personnel with appropriate underwater equipment can use this air lock to leave the vessel and return.

The H-6 is a combination passenger and cargo vessel. It can carry twelve persons and eight tons of cargo.

## COMMERCIAL SERVICE

In commercial service, a typical H-6 has a crew of eight, and a monthly payroll amounting to perhaps Cr1000. Additional overhead costs for the vessel,

### SUBMERSIBLE EXPENSES

Purchase Price. . . . . Cr500,000

Charter Cost, per month. . . Cr6,000  
plus Cr1,600 per 4,000 km.

Single Passage, 4,000 km trip. Cr700

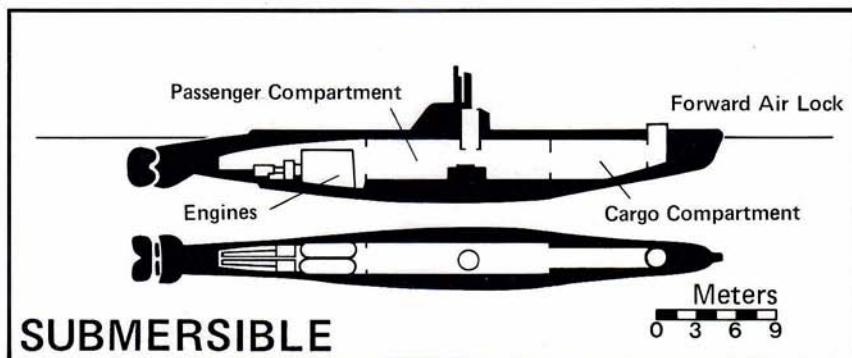
Cargo, per ton. . . . . Cr500

covering vessel purchase expense, replacement parts, repairs, and maintenance amount to Cr5,000. Fuel cost is Cr100 per ton, and the submersible carries a fuel load of 16 tons. At optimum fuel efficiency, this load is good

for 4400 kilometers, or about ten days of cruising. Higher speeds or submerged running will increase fuel usage. A typical charter for a submersible could cost up to Cr6,000 per month, plus fuel costs. Individual passage on an H-6 generally costs Cr700 per person for a trip of 4000 kilometers (about 5 hexes on the geodesic map).

Rarely does an H-6 have openings for working passage, and if it does, the potential employee would have to have water craft or submersible skill, oriented to tech level 5.

H-6 submersibles are built in the Margrave Shipyards on the central continent. Construction costs average Cr500,000 at tech level 5, with construction time running about twelve months.



*Illustration 2— Hargrave H-6 Submersible Boat.*

**Displacement:** 350 tons surfaced, 430 tons submerged. Not to be confused with space flight tonnage. Space flight tonnage (computed at 1 ton equals 14 cubic meters): 28 tons (388 cubic meters).

**Dimensions:** 45.0 meters long, by 4.5 meters high, by 3.7 meters wide. The sub is essentially a cylinder tapered toward its ends and averaging 3.5 meters in diameter. Maximum diameter is 4.5 meters, at approximately the center.

**Complement:** Eight. Four in the engine room, who can be abbreviated to two, and four for operations. The crew consists of a captain and first mate, a chief engineer, and up to five additional deck hands.

**Machinery:** Two diesels, and two electric motors, plus battery sets.

**Fuel Capacity:** 16 tons.

**Armament:** If needed, machine guns and deck guns. Such weaponry is used for and against piracy. No torpedo tubes are in use on this world.

**Navigation:** Other than compasses and charts, no sophisticated aids are available for navigation. Nevertheless, this boat is capable of reliable travel to most parts of Vanejen.

**Performance:** The following statistics indicate the performance to be expected from an H-6 in good repair.

<i>Speed, Surfaced—</i>	Full Speed, 21 kph	one hex in 38 hours.
	Radius, 3200 km (4 hexes)	152 hours.
	Cruise Speed, 16 kph	one hex in 50 hours.
	Radius, 4400 km (5.5 hexes)	275 hours.
<i>Speed, Submerged—</i>	Full Speed, 18 kph	one hex in 44 hours.
	Radius, 800 km (1 hex)	44 hours.
	Cruise Speed, 5 kph	one hex in 160 hours.
	Radius, 1600 km (2 hexes)	320 hours.

All performance figures assume full fuel loads at beginning of cruise, and snorkel recharging for submerged operations.

**Snorkel Operations.** Submerged cruising speed (5 kph) may be diesel with snorkel, or electric drive. Use of the recharging snorkel to recharge batteries can take six to eight hours.

# The Rhylanor Subsector

The Rhylanor subsector is located in the Spinward Marches of the Imperium, very close to the frontier. It contains 32 worlds with a total population of 131.1 billion. The following listing provides the basic statistics for the subsector.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Statistics</i>			<i>Remarks</i>	
Kinorb	0102	C449433	9	Non-industrial.	G
Gileden	0104	C483103	5	Non-industrial.	G
Pannet	0109	E9C5677	7	Non-industrial.	G
Garrincski	0110	B632520	7	S Poor. Non-industrial.	
Macene	0202	B000453	E	N Non-industrial. Asteroid Belt.	G
Fulacin	0203	A674210	D	Non-industrial.	
Natoko	0210	C8879AB	9		G
Risek	0302	A325579	A	N Non-industrial.	G
Porozlo	0305	A867A74	A		G
Rhylanor	0306	A434934	F	2 Subsector Capital.	
Loneseda	0310	C86A215	7	Non-industrial. Water World.	G
Valhalla	0401	E365432	5	Non-industrial.	G
Zivije	0402	C6B199C	B		G
Jae Tellona	0404	A560565	8	N Non-industrial. Desert World.	G
Gerome	0408	X573000	0	Non-industrial.	R G
Henoz	0502	A245543	B	Agricultural. Non-industrial.	G
Celepina	0503	B434456	8	2 Non-industrial.	G
Gitosy	0508	B000676	9	Asteroid Belt.	
Belizo	0605	B895646	5	Agricultural.	G
Kegena	0606	E869569	3	Non-industrial.	A G
Heroni	0607	E7A0614	3	Non-industrial. Desert World.	
457-973	0609	X372215	4	Non-industrial.	R G
Somem	0610	C301340	B	Non-industrial.	G
Vinorian	0701	B879610	9	Non-industrial.	
Nutema	0702	B846310	8	N Non-industrial.	G
Huderu	0704	X575000	0	Non-industrial.	R
Cipatwe	0708	B35879A	6	Agricultural.	G
Vanejen	0709	C686854	5	Rich. Imperial Research Station.	
Margesi	0802	A576257	C	2 Non-industrial.	
Bevey	0806	D4209CC	A	S Poor. Non-agricultural. Industrial.	G
Tacaxeb	0808	C230411	B	Poor. Non-industrial. Desert World.	G
Powaza	0810	C787566	5	Agricultural. Non-industrial.	G

Statistics include the four digit hex location, the seven digit planetary characteristics (starport, size, atmosphere, hydrographics, population, government, law), the technological level, and a code for any bases present (S = Scout Base, N = Naval Base, 2 = both). Codes in the remarks column include A (Amber Zone, use caution), R (Red Zone, prohibited), and G (a gas giant is present in the system).





# Rumors

The term *rumor* actually applies to a wide variety of information, including (in addition to rumors) such concepts as leads, clues, and hints. Rumors have three basic purposes: to direct the characters toward profitable endeavour, to misdirect them from such endeavour, and to assist them after they have established a goal for themselves. For example, a specific clue may be utterly incomprehensible to those who find it, at the time. Later, they may encounter a situation where the data fits perfectly; there, the clue's nature may finally come to light.

Rumors are encountered in a manner similar to that of patrons. The individuals involved determine that they are out mingling with the population, making the rounds of bars and taverns, local businesses, or just meeting people in the course of their activity. Per individual situation, throw 9+ for a rumor to be available; one throw is allowed for the entire party, with a single character selected as their leader for the purpose. A party should not be allowed to split up to canvass an area for rumors; such a procedure will produce all the rumors as information in too short a time. If the party insists on splitting up, the referee may roll for rumors for each, but should nevertheless disclose only one rumor, ignoring the others.

The rumor table is a six by six matrix calling for two separate die rolls. The 36 locations in the table contain 26 items, letters matching the 26 distinct rumors

## RUMORS

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	A	B	C	D	E	F
2	G	U	U	W	W	H
3	I	U	Y	Y	W	J
4	K	X	Z	Z	V	L
5	M	X	X	V	V	N
6	O	P	Q	R	S	T

given in this section. Six of the rumors (lettered U through Z) are of a general nature and appear more than once. The remaining twenty (lettered A through T) are specific, and appear only once each. Die roll modifications are called for to make certain rumors more probable to persons with specific qualities or experiences. Thus, a scout will more probably encounter some rumors while a noble will more probably encounter others. After a throw indicates that a rumor is encountered, roll two dice, modify by the nature of the

leader of the group, and determine which rumor should be relayed to the party. Modifications to the horizontal die roll are based on naval and scout service. If the leader of the party is a former scout, apply a DM of -1; if prior experience was in the navy, apply a DM of +1. Modifications to the vertical die roll are based on social standing. If the leader of the party is noble (social standing 11+), apply a DM of +1; if the individual has a skill of streetwise-1 or better, apply a DM of -1. Throws on the rumor table of less than 1 equal 1; throws greater than 6 equal 6.

The specific rumor should be embellished by the referee, providing both a situation and setting, plus allowing the players to interact with the source. He or she may be a patron, or may require some mission be performed before disclosing the information. Reactions (page 23, Book 3) should be rolled as well.

The same rumor can turn up more than once. Referee notes of which rumors have actually been encountered can be recorded by marking each letter on the rumor table with a light pencil stroke. If a rumor has already been encountered, the referee may indicate no rumor has been encountered, or may allow a different one.



## SPECIFIC RUMORS

The following rumors appear only once in the table.

A. A local farmer (age 50, 989678) in a bar comments that chirpers are impossible to catch. You can see them off about 400 meters, but rarely can you get any closer.

B. A deck hand (age 26, B99764) on a submersible comments that the pack ice down south is extremely thin this time of year.

C. Local newspapers carry articles about the latest government attempts to transfer more chirpers to reservations on the barren fourth continent.

D. A gossipy and opinionated young man strikes up a conversation about the Imperium. He continues at length on their leaving Vanejen high and dry after using them for a naval base. He mentions something about the Imperial Research Station down south, and how even that is an example of their using Vanejen.

E. A government clerk (age 30, 4B69AA) tells of having seen the research station while on a ship passing through the southern sea en route to some assignment.

F. A land owner (age 46, 9787B9) states that he was a commander in naval intelligence (Imperial) before he settled here. He remembers that they wore silver discs as insignia; they were specially coded to allow access to any part of a ship.

G. In a local storefront, a small political booklet is found. It discourses at length that Vanejen has never had a war, because the ruling families will not allow one. Besides, they simply don't call them wars. But there are a lot of pirates to the south.

H. A rancher (age 34, BB4756) talks about a chirper he captured once and kept in a cage. One day, while feeding him, the chirper escaped. Actually, it seemed strange, even now, because he never actually saw it escape. It was just gone.

I. A barkeep in a seaman's tavern tells about a captain down by the docks who is going to lose his submersible because he cannot keep up the payments. Shipping has been a bad business these past few months, especially with the pirates operating as they do. The captain even has a job that could get him back on his feet, if he can get a crew to make the trip.

J. An old man talks at length about the research station, but actually conveys very little information. He says his ship made a delivery to the station's underwater dock because the place was iced in that winter.

K. A local radio program has as its topic an encounter between a sailing ship and a multi-tentacled sea beast in the ice floes of the southern seas.

L. The group is stopped by a local peace enforcer who insists that they prove they are not of Zhodani blood.

M. A warehouse manager (age 46, 576A98) says that she once had a scheme to import fancy Imperial technology to make radios, building them on Vanejen. The ruling families, however, heard of the plan, and stopped it with regulations. At this point, the manager's friend interjects that the scheme wouldn't have worked anyway, because the background technology isn't available to make it work.

N. On the other side of a restaurant, a conversation is overheard about the Vilani racial roots of Vanejen. The thread of the topic is that Vilani humans are indeed superior to the Solomani and their Ramshackle Empire.

O. The wine in this bar is superb. Checking the label shows that it is locally produced, from vineyards just outside of town.

P. A newspaper has an article about rumors of gold on the barren northern continent. It says they are false, like all stories of chirpers and their hoards of gold.

Q. The old orbital base the Navy kept here used to be a research station; after several years, the station was moved down to the surface, in a dome on the bottom of the southern sea.

R. With the current depression, and all the pirate activity, what this world needs is another war. The Imperium would step in and straighten things out. There would be jobs for everyone.

S. Someone mentions the legend of Twilight's Peak, and the cargo of drugs that was lost with the convoy.

T. A drunken seaman talks about almost being sunk by pirates in the archipelago to the south.

### GENERAL RUMORS

The following rumors appear multiply in the table. Each time one appears, it should be embellished and restated.

U. Someday they're going to put an xboat link through this cluster and the economy will pick up.

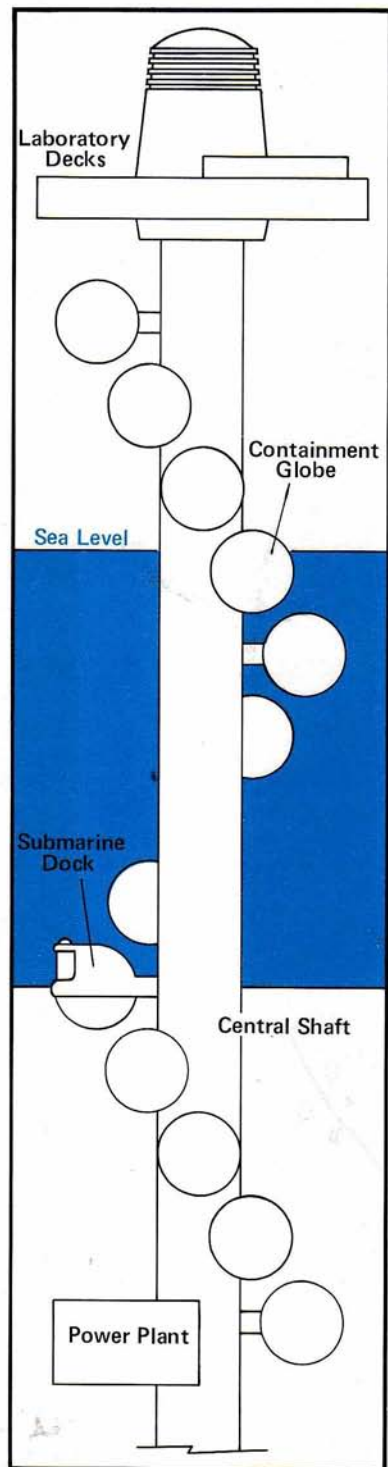
V. An Imperial Navy ship, possibly a close escort, recently called at the research station. It had just come in from beyond the border.

W. The neighboring world of 457-973 is interdicted. Its Red Zone classification is rumored to exist because prospectors have found lanthanum.

X. The local university has an excellent reputation for metallurgical engineering. In fact, they have been working on some concepts that are quite unique, such as fibre-reinforced metal struts.

Y. Back during the war, the Zhodani even attacked this system once, but they were pushed back quickly by the Imperial defenders.

Z. Zhodani agents have been coming to Vanejen for some time, though the fact is not well-known. Although they talk trade and commerce, they also spend a lot of time on the barren fourth continent, touring and studying the chirper villages.



# The Station

Situated among the scattered ice-clogged islands of the southern sea is Imperial Research Station Gamma, one of seven in the Spinward Marches. The exact location must be specified by the referee, and suitable rumors or charts provided for the benefit of the adventurers.

The station is readily recognizable from a distance as a slender column topped by a circular cap; spiralling down the shaft is a succession of globular attachments. Depending on the season, the station may be ice-locked, surrounded by separate ice floes, or in open sea. The nearest land is a small island on the horizon to the north.

At night, the station is topped by a strong white light visible for at least fifteen kilometers, serving primarily to warn off shipping.

## APPROACHES

Externally, the station appears impossible to enter. There are no visible entrances, at least as seen from the sea surface. Even up close, the central shaft is seamless and forbidding. The spiral of globes enters the water with one globe (no. 3) slightly above the waves and one globe (no. 4) with its upper surface awash.

**Globe No. 3:** Sailing up close to the station, directly underneath this globe reveals a small vertical shaft complete with ladder rungs and hatch. This shaft is high enough above sea level to make entry difficult. Its lowest edge is about six meters above sea level. Entry requires that an individual reach that high and then pull himself or herself up to the shaft.

Climbing to 4.5 meters or so is possible if a submarine maneuvers directly below the hatch and the person climbs to the top of the conning tower. Any good surface boat can also assist in gaining the initial 4.5 meter elevation.

The individual must then use personal strength (minimum required: 8+) to pull up into the shaft. Dexterity is a factor, and the individual must throw dexterity minus 4, or less, to succeed. Success allows the person to then ascend the ladder to the hatch.

The hatch is locked; it can be opened by smashing the lock (throw 10+ to do so, no more than two tries allowed) or by picking it (with a lock pick set; throw 7+ to succeed, DM + 2 if dexterity is 9+).

Getting through the hatch places the individual in the access tunnels of containment globe no. 3.

**Globe No. 4:** The upper surface of containment globe no. 4 is awash at the ocean surface. Because the globe is spherical, it is difficult for any vessel to approach close to it; climbing aboard entails a leap and then considerable dexterity as a handhold is gained, and the person scrambles to the reasonably flat upper surface. Assuming the submersible or boat maneuvers close enough to touch the globe, a leap succeeds on a throw of 12+, DM of +1 if strength 11+. If unsuccessful,

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← *Illustration 3—Side View of Research Station Gamma.*



the person falls into the water, and must be retrieved by the ship.

Unfortunately, the upper surface of the globe is about six meters above the water, and it cannot be surveyed from a boat or submersible. It is totally featureless, and offers no access to the interior of the globe. A cutting torch or laser carbine can probably slice a hole into the globe (taking about twenty minutes) but that will only reveal a drop of twenty meters to the interior of globe no. 4.

**The Submarine Dock:** Rumor or crew experience may have indicated the presence of a submarine dock somewhere lower on the research station shaft. Searching through the depths with a submersible will show the continuation of the spiral of globes down the shaft. At the seabed is a submarine dock marked by a strobing light and a set of large water-tight doors. Approaching the dock in a submersible will cause the doors to open and allow the bow of the boat to enter. Then, the doors will close to snugly hold the vessel in place. The entire dock then drains of water and the station may be entered through the submersible's forward air lock. The layout of the dock is similar to the deck plan of a containment globe (Illustration 7, page 28). The submarine dock is globe no. 9.

**The Upper Decks:** An approach to the station by air will reveal the normal methods of entry to the station. The flat upper laboratory deck of the station (Illustration 4, page 20) has a large open surface which will allow the landing of air/rafts or helicopters. There is a chance (throw 10+) that at least one air/raft will be visible on the upper surface. Location 16 appears to be a set of elevators which will carry air/rafts into the station interior. Location 17 is a separate air/raft elevator; this location is walled off by barriers, and the entire surface portion is painted in red and white stripes.

The deck is not strong enough to support larger vehicles, such as gigs, ship's boats, pinnaces or cutters. They may unload personnel or supplies on the upper decks, and even remain for short periods of time under grav power, so as not to rest on the deck plates. For longer time periods, such vehicles are moved to the sea and floated or rested on the seabed; in such cases, a pilot remains aboard.

The single doorway on the upper surface leads to location 6, which is a reception and hospitality area.

## THE STATION INTERIOR

The research station consists of two laboratory decks, twelve containment globes for experimental animals (one globe is the submarine dock), a central support shaft, a power plant deep in the depths of ocean bottom, and a cap to the shaft containing environment maintenance machinery.

Within the lab decks, ceilings are about three meters high, with an additional meter of overhead to contain air shafts, electrical conduit, and structural members. Doors are of ordinary types, sliding into recesses at a touch of a button. They are primarily privacy doors, and can be broken down by throwing strength or less; one throw per combat round, the number of attempts per day on a specific door is limited to the character's endurance.

## THE UPPER LAB DECK

This deck consists of an open area for air/raft landings, several air/raft elevators allowing access to the deck below, and a covered section of rooms.

**1. Central Shaft.** This open shaft is surrounded by a guard rail about waist

height. The shaft is about 850 meters down, and a fall over that railing will kill any person and shatter any robot.

**2. Elevator Capsule.** Spiralling down the interior of the central shaft is a guide rail or track. On the track rides the single elevator capsule. With a capacity for up to eight persons, or about four tons of cargo, this elevator is the only ordinary mode of transportation down the shaft. It is entered through a break in the guard rail; this break has safety interlocks, and will open when the elevator arrives, or if a special override is activated.

**3. Central Computer Control Room.** The entire station is routinely run by a large computer which surrounds location 3. The room itself is small, and consists of three identical computer terminals, plus walls lined with removable panels.

The terminals allow direct access to the computer for reprogramming (a difficult task requiring at least computer-4 and days of work), temporary overrides or repairs, and routine operations. It is possible to operate all doors, the elevator, and the access doors to the containment globes, from this room, provided the operator has been trained on this computer, or has at least computer-2.

Robots can be monitored from this location, but cannot be controlled without special codewords. With the codeword (Gamma), robots can be halted in their tracks, but each must be halted separately (time required: one minute).

**4. Auxilliary Computer Maintenance Room.** This room contains repair parts for the station's computer, plus diagnostic equipment for electronics components and access panels to the computer.

This room allows access to the interior of the computer. Multiple backups make the actual disabling of the computer difficult without a major bomb blast or at least an hour of work. A talented electronic-3 or computer-3 could disable specific parts of the computer (robots control, environment maintenance, elevators, power generation, or information processing) in about twenty minutes per part.

**5. Elevator Shaft.** This small elevator communicates between the upper lab deck and the quarters area of the lab deck. It can carry up to four persons, and is not generally used for cargo.

**6. Reception and Hospitality Area.** Arrivals by air generally enter the station through this room. Casual furniture is scattered about, and wall decorations show views of the station in various seasons. The far wall (adjoining location 8) appears to be a constantly rippling water fall—a holographic image.

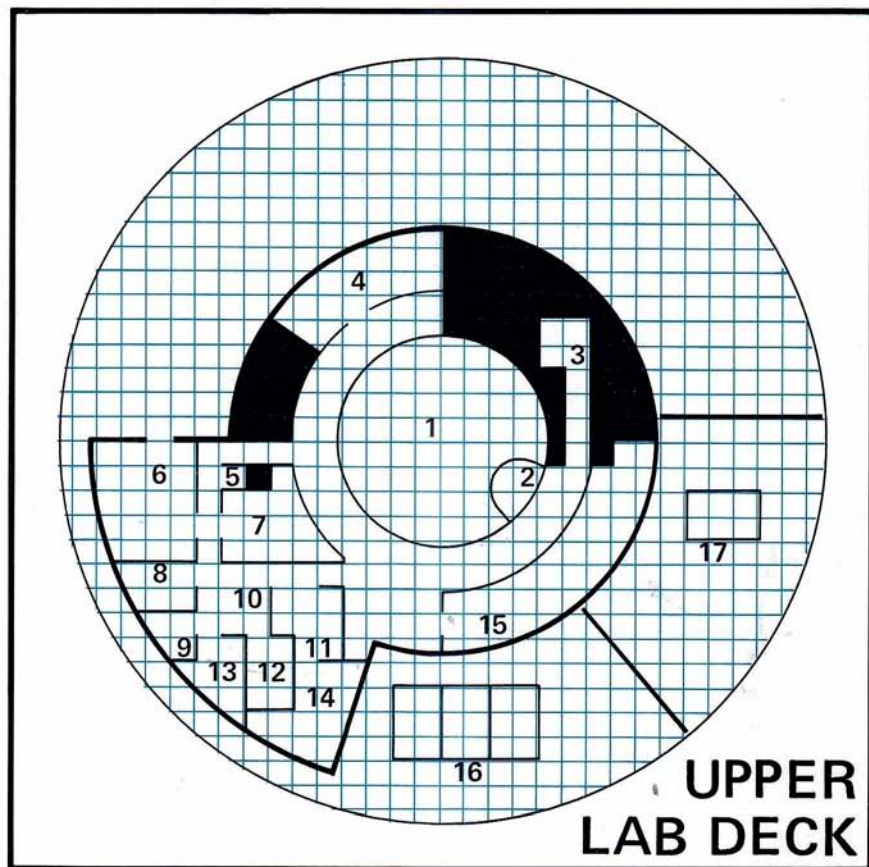
**7. Meeting Room.** This room contains a central table surrounded by sixteen chairs. Each place has a small calculator/computer terminal. In the corner behind the elevator shaft is a small refreshment bar.

**8. Security Station.** This room is behind the holographic water fall in location 6. It contains maps of both decks on the outer wall. The holographic image is transparent from this side, and observers can monitor all events in location 6 without being seen.

**9. Maintenance Equipment Closet.** This small maintenance storage locker contains cleaning equipment and supplies for this deck.

**10. Central Foyer and Office.** This open area contains two desks, some storage shelves ornamented with bric-a-brac, and a potted plant. It serves as an administrative area. On the wall is a framed coin holder with 38 holes for coins, of which only two are filled. One coin is engraved with a flame, similar to the coin presented by Chiree, and the other is engraved with a creature much like Chiree. Both coins





*Illustration 4— Research Station Gamma, Upper Lab Deck.*

are, however, not gold, but gold-plated aluminum. The solid gold originals are in the vault (Illustration 5, location 15).

**11. Office.** This large office contains three desks and chairs, plus vision screens and other projection equipment. Records and file folders in this area indicate that the area is used in financial and accounting operations. Close search of all three desks may reveal a book of blank vouchers payable against an Imperial Navy account in a bank at the Vanejen starport.

**12. Office.** This office is empty, and a light layer of dust indicates that the area has not even been cleaned in the past few weeks.

**13. Office.** This office contains a single desk and chair, plus a large flat table with an integral map box. A wall file contains map box chips for several worlds in the Rhyllanor subsector, especially 457-973, Tacaxeb, Gerome, and Huderu.

**Referee's Note:** The chip for 457-973 is annotated for several mineral deposits (especially lanthanum), and can be used as a basis for another adventure in search of lanthanum on that world. The chip could possibly be sold to various individuals looking for this data.

**14. Large Office.** This office area is clustered with casual furniture and desks. The entire office is in complete disarray, with sheafs of papers, charts, and hard-copy computer printouts on the floor and on every flat surface. In some places, this clutter is half a meter deep.

Looking through this material is the work of at least eight hours. After that time, the individual looking through the material will gain a basic impression that the material concerns two topics— information transfer, and psionics. The researcher is evidently investigating the theoretical potential for long-range communication using psionics.

**15. Library.** This long curved room is lined with shelves of books, unusual in that most collections of data would be computerized or on microfilm. At first there is no apparant subject for the library, but closer investigation shows three primary subjects which are well covered. These are:

Zoology and Biology, especially of intelligent and semi-intelligent beings.

History and Sociology of the Zhodani, especially of their use of psionics in government.

Psionics in general. Throw for each adventurer; on 9+, he or she will notice that many of the books are unavailable to ordinary individuals, being psionics instruction texts or books banned by the Imperium.

Throw 8+ for each adventurer until one succeeds; allow a DM of +2 if intelligence is 10+. The successful one is then struck with a theory that much of this information is in book form because it then stays out of computer banks where casual inquiries could uncover it. It is a form of security classification.

**16. Air/Raft Elevators.** This is a bank of three independently operating elevator platforms which can transport one air/raft each to the next lower deck. That deck contains a garage for the vehicles. In addition, these elevators can carry cargo or supplies below. Controls for operating the elevators are on the wall toward the center of the platform.

**17. Air/Raft Elevator.** The area around location 17 is striped red and white as a warning to keep vehicles away. The elevator itself leads down to the deck below and to the sample reception areas (Illustration 5, location 6).

Rising as a cylinder from the center of the upper deck is a finned cap containing environmental maintenance machinery. This area is filled with sealed solid-state equipment and cannot be entered under normal circumstances.

## THE LAB DECK

This deck is entirely under the upper lab deck and includes laboratories, receiving areas, garages, robot stables, and recreation areas.

**1. Central Shaft.** This open shaft is surrounded by a guard rail about waist height. The shaft is 846 meters down, and a fall over the railing, though less than from the deck above, will still kill any person and shatter any robot.

**2. Elevator Capsule.** Spiralling down the interior of the central shaft is a guide rail or track on which the elevator capsule rides. With a capacity of up to eight persons, this elevator is the only ordinary mode of transportation down the shaft. It is entered through a break in the guard rail; this break has safety interlocks and will only open when the elevator arrives or if a special override is activated.

**3. Circular Corridor.** This corridor, overlooking the central shaft, is the main hallway of the deck.



**4. Security Station.** This transparent-enclosed area commands a view of the elevator capsule, the corridor, and the entrances to the sample reception area. It has a computer terminal and intercoms. A set of switches controls the emergency doors on the sample reception areas.

**5. Air/Raft Garage.** Accessed through the air/raft elevators, this area contains three air/rafts, one of which is partially disassembled and being repaired. The other two each bear the Imperial crest, and appear to be standard models.

**6. Main Sample Reception Area.** When biological samples are brought to the station, they are first taken to the sample reception area through the special air/raft elevator at location 17 of illustration 4. That elevator is in the center of location 6. Located on that elevator is an air/raft with a covered compartment separate from the driving area. The compartment is obviously an animal containment cage. This air/raft can carry ten persons.

**7. Laboratory.** Entered from locations 5 and 6 through heavy doors, electronically locked, and capable of being opened only with the correct code word being keyed in (code word Gamma; throw 7+ for each door to already be open).

**8. Temporary Holding Cell.** This bare room is entered through a heavy, electronically locked door as in location 7.

**9. Temporary Holding Cell.** This bare room is entered through a heavy, electronically locked door as in location 7. This room is similar to location 8, but contains a bedding of loose vegetable fiber.

**10. Temporary Holding Cell.** This cell is entered through a long corridor containing rows of heavy ultra-violet lights. There are no doors to this location. The room itself contains a bedding of loose vegetable fiber.

Any individuals entering this room will discover that the bedding is infested with numerous small bugs; they cannot leave the room because of the UV lights. Throw 9+ for each character entering the area to see if a bug attaches itself to the person. Wait for about ten minutes, and then inflict 1D hits on person character as the insect stings.

**11. Robot Stables.** This area contains a large group of individually numbered stalls, each being the off-duty or storage location for a single robot. The stalls contain computer link sockets and electrical recharge outlets which allow the robot to maintain themselves when not performing their normal operations. There are four rows of six stalls each.

The small area along the outer wall is a parts storage area with numerous individual locations containing a variety of spare robot parts. The robots are capable of self- and cooperative repair, and can retrieve parts from this area by themselves.

The large open area labelled location 11 is a maintenance area with cleaning equipment, diagnostic machines, and work tables. This area contains extensive metal working equipment of a specialized nature good for miniature and micro-miniature mechanical work.

**12. Computer.** This area, including the two square areas adjacent to location 12, is the main data computer for the station. Isolated from the station computer, it consists of three separate systems which process data in parallel for the highest in accurate computation and processing. The corridors around location 12 contain computer terminals and display devices.

This computer does not control any portion of the operations of the station, but does contain large quantities of research data for the station. An individual with



computer-1 or greater may trigger synopsis print-outs of the data contained. This would include a current listing of the contents of the containment globes, plus information that experiments are being conducted to determine the ability of psionic talent (non-human) to communicate over interstellar distances. The data is indicative of a strong potential for ultimate success.

**13. Office and Administrative Area.** This area consists of numerous offices. They appear empty and unused.

**14. Scanner and Detectors Station.** This location contains extensive radar, sonar, and detector equipment. It appears to be capable of observing and tracking any vehicles as far as the horizon, under sea, or in close orbit. The equipment is in operation, and appears to be hooked into the central computer.

**15. Vault.** This strongly walled room is closed by a large metal door with both an electronic and a mechanical lock. It can be opened only with the key and a keyed in code word (a string of numbers: 452-3632).

Inside the vault are the following items:

Approximately Cr123,000 in Imperial currency.

Two gold coins, as described for illustration 4, location 10. They are each in small plastic holders. An accompanying sheet of information indicates that they are coins, an artifact recovered from an Ancient site on Knorbes in the Regina sub-sector. Coins are used, it says, for some sort of function similar to tarot cards.

Additional miscellaneous materials without apparent value.

**16. Communications Center.** This area contains the primary communications equipment for the station. This includes radio for close orbit contact, and a wide variety of equipment for contact with Vanejen starport and ships at sea. A terminal retains and can recall messages on the major communications links.

**17. Large Lounge and Recreation Area.** This extensive area is carpeted and filled with casual furniture. Entertainment complexes make recordings of video and audio material available in a luxurious setting. Small rooms off to the edges of this area contain games, recreational reading, and athletic equipment.

**18. Observation Deck.** The exterior wall of this location is transparent, and reveals a view of the sea. The entire area is carpeted but empty.

**19. Quarters.** A total of 16 small rooms, each with its own fresher, bed, and storage areas, form the majority of the quarters facilities. A single double-sized room appears to be the only one in use. There appear to be no items of specific value.

**20. Formal Mess Hall.** This area contains several tables, and is adjoined by a fully automated kitchen. Most of the tables are bare, and do not even have condiments on them. One table has a single place setting laid out.

**21. Cold Weather Clothing Storage Room.** This room and the one adjacent to it contain large quantities of cold weather clothing (type II, and heatsuits). There is sufficient variety in sizes to outfit nearly anyone.

**22. Air/Raft Garage Maintenance Area.** This location is the other half of location 5. It is extremely cluttered with crates and boxes of supplies, primarily food, and business materials.

**23. Storage Room.** This area is filled with supplies similar to those cramming location 22. A detailed examination of this area will reveal the following items among the goods.

A crate of five automatic pistols, each with five spare magazines. No ammu-

nitration is contained within it.

Three coils of rope, each 100 meters in length.

In a special container, with red warning stripes on the outside, 100 meters of explosive detonation cord, complete with molded timer fuses at each end. This cord is extremely fine (only a few millimeters in diameter). When detonated, it is capable of cutting even structural steel. For example, it could be wrapped around a globe shaft, and could sever it from the station.

On a throw of 9+, a separate crate of pistol ammunition for the automatic pistols is present. Loading the cartridges into magazines should take about two minutes per magazine.

The small dead-end corridor adjacent to location 23 contains an access hatch in the floor. If opened, it reveals a sheer drop straight down to the sea below. An object dropped would strike the sea surface between containment globes 4 (which is barely awash) and 5. It is thus possible to jump to the sea below if absolutely necessary. It is also possible to drop a rope or cable through the hatch and climb down it. The drop is about 120 meters.

This hatch is the only direct access to the outside from this deck.

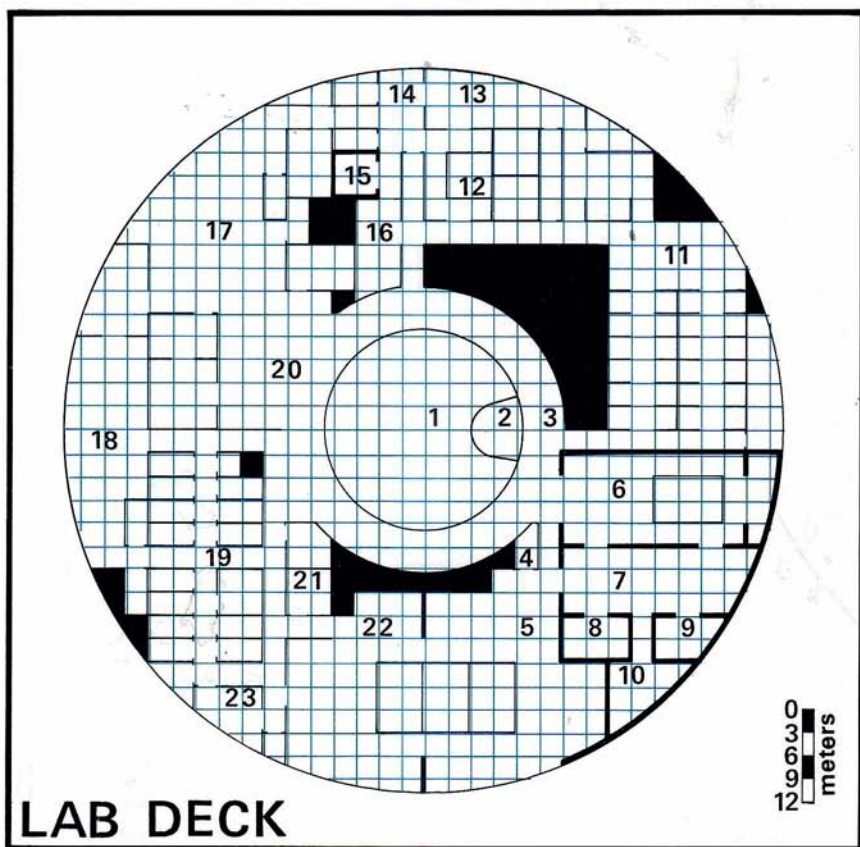


Illustration 5— Research Station Gamma, Lab Deck.

## THE ELEVATOR CAPSULE

• The long central shaft of the research station is hollow, and allows the only ordinary mode of access to the containment globes spiralling down its length. A single guide rail or track spirals down the shaft passing each of the entry areas for the globes.

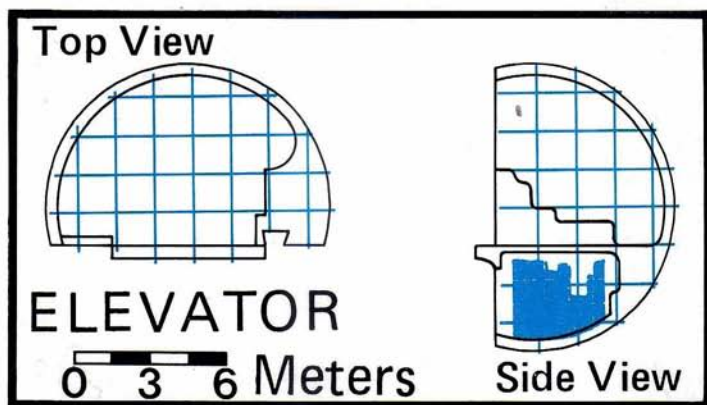
Riding along this track is the elevator capsule. Each station along the track has an ordinary call button which will bring the capsule to that station. Within the capsule, a self-contained power plant and motive source propel the capsule along the track. Illustration 6 shows the elevator capsule in side and top views.

Ordinarily, the elevator capsule is under the control of the central station computer. Because it has an independent motive source, however, it can be overridden by an individual with electronic-1 or better, or mechanical-2 or better.

The capsule is reasonably fast, and can move from one level (globe or deck) to the next higher or lower in approximately 30 seconds.

Robots within the station do not generally use the elevator capsule; it is reserved for the transport of specimens, cargo, and personnel. Instead, robots have as an integral part of their construction a grapple with which they can attach themselves to the elevator guide rail. In this manner, they are not dependent on the elevator itself, and need not wait for it to arrive.

Robots attached to the guide rail cannot get off at a floor which currently has the elevator capsule present, and they cannot pass the elevator capsule.



*Illustration 6— The Elevator Capsule.*

## THE POWER PLANT

At the very bottom of the central shaft of the research station is a power plant which provides energy for the functions of the station. This power plant is a maintenance free assembly and need never be entered or manipulated by station personnel. The elevator capsule can reach the power plant level, but all that is revealed is a blank, sealed wall.

The power plant is the lowest point in the station, and the central shaft ends at that point.



# The Globes

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The containment globes which spiral down the length of the central shaft are separate areas intended for various specimens. Each is entirely independent of the others, and can be tailored to a specific environment for the biological specimens which it holds.

Illustration 7 shows both side and top view of the containment globes. In the top view, the area of the containment area can be clearly seen, as can the large window of the viewing area and the interlocking doors of the access shaft. In the side view, the areas below the containment area are also visible, including the access tunnels which move through the environment maintenance machinery. Note that the access tunnel allows an exit from the bottom of the globe. The hatches for the access tunnels are concealed and locked.

A containment globe can be tailored to a specific environment, including any type of atmosphere, range of temperature, or strength of gravity. A simple computer terminal read-out in the access shaft for the globe will indicate the first three digits of the planetary profile for the world which the environment mimics.

**Changing Environments:** It is possible to reprogram the computer to change an environment, and the operation is very simple, involving only the specification of the statistics. The actual execution occurs slowly, however, and takes about ten hours.

The globe itself is of high quality structural metal and is breached only with great difficulty; approximately twenty minutes work with a cutting torch or laser carbine. Note that some of the globes are high in the air, some are under water, and some are actually below the seabed.

**Access to the Containment Area.** The containment area is sealed from the viewing chamber, and from the access shaft. A set of large and small doors directly below the viewing chamber can allow both personnel and robots into the containment area. The large doors sealing the access shaft from the globe are also used to insure that the specimens do not escape. In any case, the sheer drop of the central shaft is sufficient to keep many specimens confined, even if they should escape.

The access tunnels which honeycomb the environment maintenance area in the bottom half of the globe use ladders for personnel movement. Robots cannot move into these areas; in the rare event that some form of work must be performed in these areas, it must be performed by human personnel.

**Viewing Chamber:** The viewing chamber is on a second level above the entrance way to the globe. Provisions there allow observers to monitor the specimens within the globe. The chamber is entered using a spiral staircase; because of this staircase, robots cannot enter the viewing chamber.

## GLOBE CONTENTS

The containment globes are numbered 1 through 12, beginning with the highest globe. The following is an indication of the contents of each.

**Globe No. 1.** This globe contains an environment for a world with the statistics 372; this may, or may not, be evident as the statistics for the interdicted neighbor

world 457-573. The containment globe floor is covered with about a half meter of water, and low mounds of mud and reeds dot the floor to create a swamp-like appearance. Initially, this area will appear to be empty. Throw two dice until 10+ occurs or the characters leave the area. If 10+ is thrown, then a character notices that one of the mounds moves, and it becomes apparent as a large animal with a thick hide and small, beady eyes appears.

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
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6 Amphibious Hunters	3200kg	29/17	none-1	51 as sword A0 F0 S1
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**Referee's Note:** These water-dwelling hunters are of large size and prefer to lurk in water until a likely prey comes close. They have a psionic ability which conveys a feeling of safety or well-being to likely prey. As a result, they appear cuddly to the characters. If anyone enters the area, they will attempt to pet or otherwise move closer to the animals; this feeling of safety will disappear as soon as the animal attacks, which it will do when any prey moves to short range. (S2-07-1-05)

**Globe No. 2:** This globe has an environment reading of 686 (which matches Rio in the Cronor subsector). The entire globe is criss-crossed with a structure of metal tubing (much like construction scaffolding); perched on the scaffolding are a large number of winged creatures. Many are flying about, and roosting, then flying again. They appear to be disturbed by the entry of the characters to the viewing chamber.

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
--------------------	---------------	-------------	--------------	-----------------------------

800 Flying Reducers	1kg	5/ 0	none	1 claws A8 F8 S2
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**Referee's Note:** These birds are ordinary, and will tend to fly up and out of reach if approached. They have no psionic ability and merely exhibit the normal tendency of animals to become excited or uneasy in the presence of unfamiliar stimuli (the adventurers). (S2-25-1-04)

**Globe No. 3:** The environment reading for this globe is 256 (matching Zila in the Aramis subsector). The confinement area is nearly invisible from the viewing area as the atmosphere is a dense fog. Opening the entry doors will allow some of the fog to roll out; it appears (and even tests) harmless and ordinary.

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
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1 Killer	200kg	19/10	none-1	26 claws A6 F9 S3
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**Referee's Note:** This beast remains hidden within the fog and will not reveal itself until it attacks. It has vision in the infrared and can see easily; it can be seen with IR goggles, if anyone has them. The animal has no psionic ability, although it is being investigated to see if there is psionic enhancement to its vision. (S2-05-3-12)

**Globe No. 4:** This globe is filled with water; the statistics for the environment read 98A (matching Nasemin, a water world in the Aramis subsector). The water itself is warm (as compared to the sea outside) and fills the globe to within three meters of its top. Floating on the water, and within the globe are a large number of flat green leaves.

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
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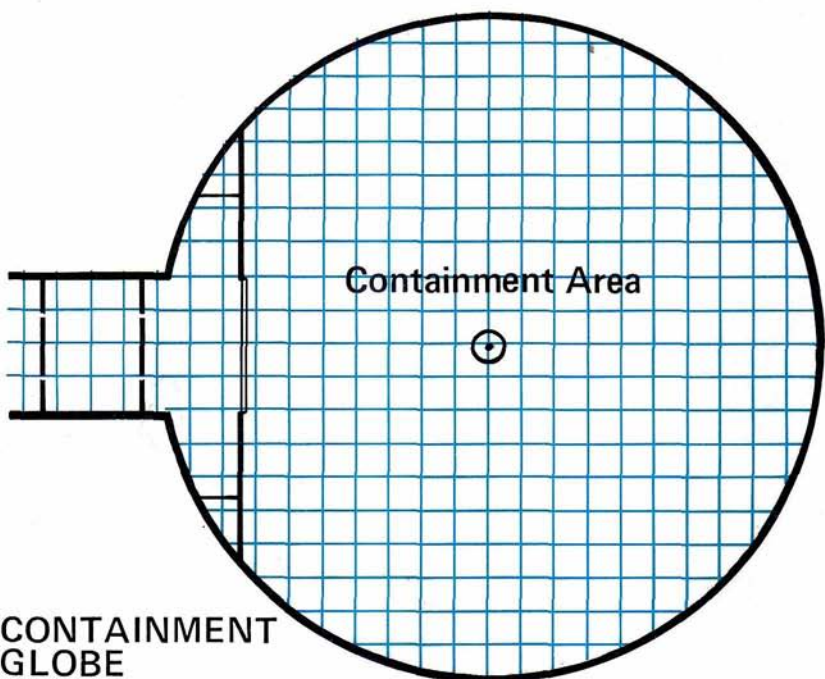
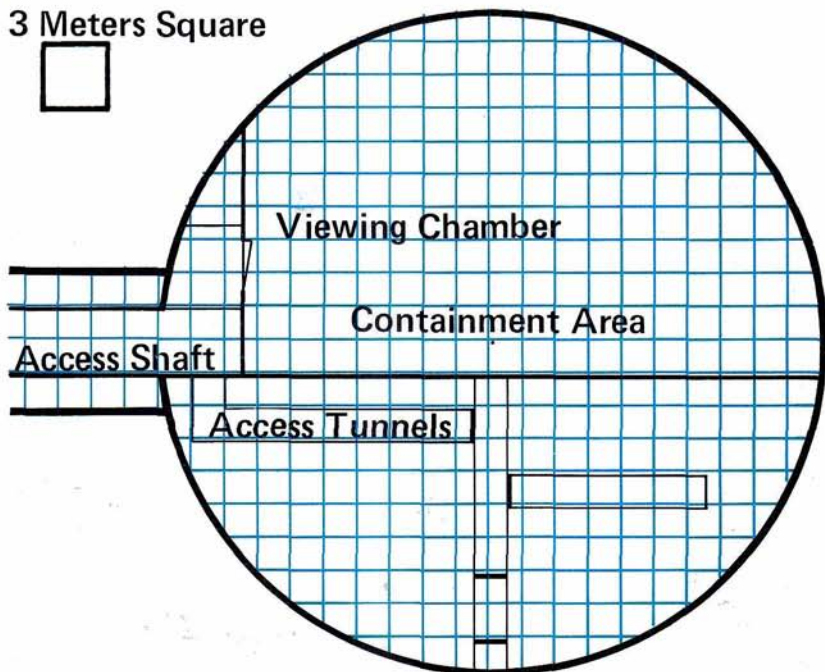
80 Swimming Reducers	6kg	4/ 1	cloth	1 teeth A8 F5 S2
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**Referee's Note:** The flat green leaves are part of the environment. Scattered among the leaves are the swimming reducer which eat the leaves. They have no psionic ability and are relatively harmless. (S2-42-3-12)

**Globe No. 5:** This globe shows environment statistics of 686 (which match Vanejen). Within the globe is a field of grass with a set of small huts forming a recognizable chirper village.



3 Meters Square



CONTAINMENT  
GLOBE

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
2 Omnivore Gatherers	25kg	10/ 3	none	5 as teeth A0 F0 S1

**Referee's Note:** This globe contains Chiree's two siblings. They are unharmed and quite scared. If Chiree is not visible or present, however, they will not be visible to the adventurers and will not show themselves. They will use their psionics ability to remain unseen (except to television cameras and robots).

**Globe No. 6:** The environment reading for this globe is 774 (matching Bularia in the Darrian subsector). The globe is filled with a proliferation of jungle plants and has a very high humidity. Limited movement within the globe is visible from the viewing chamber.

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
13 Omnivore Gatherers	3kg	5/ 2	none	4 as blade A9 F7 S2

**Referee's Note:** This globe contains a number of small beaked monkeys, all of them white. Known as beakers and reputed to have some psionic powers, they are friendly and well-behaved.

Pair up these animals with the adventurers, and throw 10+ for each. If successful, that "beaker" will decide it likes the person and attempt to form an attachment; if the person responds, then the little monkey will accompany him or her when they leave the station. (J3-26)

**Globe No. 7:** The environment statistics for this globe read 888 (which match those of 875-496 in the Five Sisters subsector, Saurus in the Vilis subsector, and Knorbes in the Regina subsector). The globe itself is carpeted with a type of short grass, uniformly green and lush. But, a patch of brown mars the area, emanating from a point on the far edge of the globe.

Visible within the green area are several small brown teddy bear type animals.

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
17 Omnivore Gatherers	12kg	8/ 8	jack	4 teeth A9 F8 S1

**Referee's Note:** This group of small animals are being slowly tested to show their psionic ability for teleport. As the brown patch proceeds, it will kill animals as the edge passes by them. Its rate of advance (one meter per day) gives the bears a chance to determine the threat and react to it. If they teleport beyond the line, they will be safe.

**Globe No. 8:** This globe shows statistics reading 000. It is empty, and the interior is vacuum.

**Globe No. 9:** This globe is not for containment, but instead contains the under-sea docking facility. The area includes an air lock for submersibles and cargo receiving facilities.

**Globe No. 10:** The environment statistics for this globe read 140 (which match both Terant 340 and Spume of the Darrian subsector). The interior is covered with a fine red sand and a constant wind is blowing this sand into shifting dunes. There are no animals apparent within the globe.

Entering the containment area will also fail to reveal any animal life.

**Referee's Note:** A psionic using life-detection will see a strongly psionic life form of microscopic size. It uses telekinesis to shift granules of sand which are used for its food; the environment is being used to encourage use of this talent.

**Globe No. 11:** This globe shows an environment statistic reading of FA0; this is not equivalent to any inhabited world, and indicates a planetary diameter of 15,000 miles. This very high gravity is simulated within the containment area.

Within the area are rudimentary living arrangements: beds, tables, chairs, some small partitions to wall off or designate areas. Visible in the interior are five individuals, roughly bilateral bipeds who appear to be straining against the gravity. An estimate of their characteristics would place their strength and endurance at the D-E-F level while the remaining of their personal characteristics are the same as humans. They appear to be of human origin.

Entering the viewing chamber will attract their attention; one or more will communicate telepathically with the adventurers. Throw on the reaction table (Book 3) to determine the nature of their communications.

These people are being held here against their will as part of a grand psionics experiment to achieve instantaneous interstellar communication. There has been no success so far, but they have been able to communicate at interplanetary distances. If they react positively to the adventurers, they will indicate that they want their freedom.

**Globe No. 12:** This globe is empty, and the statistic readout has no readings at all. The access doors are open to the containment area.

## ANIMAL STATISTICS

The individual globe notes include sample entries from animal encounter tables which produced the specimens. The following indicates the meanings of the various data:

<i>Animal Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
11 Gatherers	3kg	3/ 6	none	2 thrasher A8 F6 S2

There are eleven animals, classified as gatherers and each weighing 3 kilograms. Each will take three hits prior to unconsciousness, and then six more prior to death. Each will inflict two damage points on its prey each time it hits, attacking with thrasher. It will attack on 8+, or flee on 6+. It has a speed of 2. Entries of A0 and F0 indicate that attack or flight are at the discretion of the referee.

## ADDITIONAL DATA

At the end of several globe entries are a string of numbers in parentheses. This data is intended to allow additional information for the referee; possibly for use in other or later adventures.

The first two letters/numbers indicates the source (S2 is Supplement 2— Animal Encounters, and J3 is Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society Issue 3). The next two numbers are the page number of the data (23 indicates page 23). The next single number is the encounter table on the page; the last number is the die roll involved.



# Robots

Research Station Gamma is an experimental facility, and in addition to its primary research function, it is a practical testing facility for several models of robots. Each has already passed preliminary design and function tests, and is in normal day-to-day use at the station. Their presence reduces the number of live beings necessary to the station, and thus reduces the chance of security leaks.

Three types of robots are in service: a 100kg janitorial robot, a 100kg animal care robot, and a 200kg security robot. Each has its own function within the station, and each has its own particular features. There are six security robots, six janitorial robots, and twelve animal care robots.

## MOVEMENT

All three robot types are intended for service only within the station itself, and can negotiate clear floors only. They cannot swim or cross gaps larger than several centimeters.

**Traveller Book 1 Movement:** For combat purposes using Book 1, all three types of robot are considered equal to humans. They move one band per combat round (two when running). They are not agile enough to evade.

**Movement on the Station Plans:** When moving on the 1.5 meter squares of the research station deck plans, robots move two squares when on patrol or going about their duties and five squares when deliberately moving to a destination.

**The Elevators:** Each robot has a special elevator transport fitting which permits it to use the elevator guide rail without the elevator itself. This permits the elevator itself to be reserved for station personnel; it also permits the robots to move without waiting for the elevator if it is in use.

A robot requires one turn (15 seconds) to attach to or detach itself from the guide rail, during which time it cannot perform any other action. Its arms are not required for this operation.

A robot riding the guide rail can change deck levels (for example, from one containment globe level to the next higher or lower level) in two turns (30 seconds). However, a robot cannot bypass the elevator itself, because it blocks the guide rail, and cannot get off on the deck level at which the elevator is present. It is possible for the robot to communicate with the central computer and have it move the elevator, providing it is under computer control.

## COMBAT

Generally, the robots of the station are treated as non-player humans for the purposes of combat. The differences are enumerated below.

**Surprise (Book 1, pages 26 and 27):** When performing the surprise die roll, security robots receive a DM of +2 and animal care robots receive a DM of +1. In each case, this DM is called for because of the robot's enhanced sensor packages.

**Armor:** Janitorial and Animal Care robots are treated as humans wearing mesh; Security robots are treated as humans wearing reflec for all laser hits and battle dress for all other hits.

**Resolution of Combat:** After wound points have been determined, allocate the damage to various parts of the robot by rolling two dice and consulting the robot damage table. Damage is defined as follows:

### ROBOT DAMAGE TABLE

Die	Robot Type		
Roll	Animal Care	Janitorial	Security
2	Commo	Brain	Brain
3	Wheels	Brain	Wheels
4	Wheels	Wheels	Wheels
5	Arms	Arms	Arms
6	Arms	Arms	Arms
7	Arms	Arms	No Effect
8	Power Plant	Power Plant	Power Plant
9	Power Plant	Power Plant	Sensors
10	Sensors	Sensors	Sensors
11	Brain	Commo	Commo
12	Sensors	Sensors	Sensors

**Brain:** Any hits destroy the brain. The robot is no longer able to function.

**Wheels:** One hit point of damage or less has no effect. Between two and four points of damage will reduce mobility by 50%. Between five and eight points will reduce mobility by 75%. Nine or more points of damage will immobilize the robot.

**Arms:** If a weapon is being carried, the number of points

of damage is the negative DM on the hit die roll when firing.

**Power Plant:** If two or three points of damage are inflicted, the robot takes twice as long to perform all activity. If more than three points are inflicted, the robot may only perform two of the following at one time: move, shoot, or use sensors. If shooting while not using sensors, then apply a DM of -6 for shooting blind.

**Weapons:** If the robot has taken from one to three hits, apply a DM of -3 on the to hit die roll when firing. Four or more hits means that the weapon has been destroyed. The robot may not fire, but may engage in hand-to-hand combat as if armed with club.

**Sensors:** Any hits destroy. The robot may not see or hear, but may be directed by the central computer complex. All actions take twice as long as normal, and a DM of -2 applies if weapons are fired.

**Communications:** Any hits destroy. The robot may no longer communicate with computer control.

### COMMITTMENT

The robots of the station are all committed to maintenance or to routine duties at all times. Thus they are in the robot stables, or at some duty station. In the event of an emergency, the central computer will call for additional robots to move to the location in question. Usually, this will call for only one security robot, from the robot stables area, which will then investigate the situation. Should that report not be forthcoming, or if it indicates a problem, all available resources (about half of the robots) will be directed to the area.

In the event of a large scale problem, the referee (acting as the central computer) should assign the robots to various tasks.

### THE ROBOTS

The following data describe the robots, their capabilities, and their general duties.

## AF-390 Animal Care Robot

<b>Height:</b>	1.2 meters
<b>Mass:</b>	100 kilograms
<b>Sensors:</b>	Henderson basic sensor package and GD-88 passive IR/UV vision systems.
<b>Weaponry:</b>	LSV-64 Snub Pistol and tranquilizer ammunition. Programming includes automatic adjustment of dosage to estimated target mass and metabolism. Target hit results in unconsciousness for two minutes.
<b>Armor:</b>	None. Structure is equivalent of mesh.
<b>Programming:</b>	Standard package plus animal husbandry and veterinarian experiment programs.
<b>Communications:</b>	Single standard frequency radio link with central computer.
<b>Additional Equipment:</b>	Veterinary instrument package on some models. Elevator transport fitting.
<b>Comment:</b>	Animal care robots are programmed to feed and

tend the various organisms at the research station, regardless of the environmental conditions which prevail. In addition, they aid the security robots in tracking and recovering any experimental subjects which might escape, and they perform most of any routine experiments which might be called for.

The robot's programming permits it to estimate the size and metabolism of the target for its tranquilizer darts; dosage is adjusted automatically. Its auditory sensors are equivalent to human ears, but its visual sensors enable it to see in total darkness, provided a source of infrared or ultraviolet light is available.

If this robot detects unauthorized persons, it will report the fact to computer central and attempt to tranquilize as many as possible.

**Referee's Data:** Although in communication with the central computer, the AF 390 is not an especially smart robot, and it is not looking for trouble. It will detect an unusual situation on a throw of 9+, provided it is obvious. Simply hiding from, or avoiding, the robot is often sufficient to escape its attention.

The animal care arms for the robot are designed to grab and hold without harm to the specimen. They are quite efficient at the task; internal tactile feedback circuits in the grippers make the grip unbreakable unless the robot itself is turned off or destroyed.

The animal care robot can lift a load equal to its own weight, and is capable of carrying it without harm along the elevator guide rail.



Illustration 8— Animal Care Robot.



## AJ-62 Janitorial Robot

<b>Height:</b>	1.0 meters
<b>Mass:</b>	100 kilograms
<b>Sensors:</b>	Henderson basic sensor package.
<b>Weaponry:</b>	None.
<b>Armor:</b>	None. Structure is equivalent of mesh.
<b>Programming:</b>	Standard package plus custodial program.
<b>Communications:</b>	Single standard frequency radio link with

central computer.

**Additional Equipment:**

Janitorial tool kit. Elevator transport package.

**Comment:**

Janitorial robots are responsible for cleaning and maintaining the interior of the station on a daily basis and spend most of their

time in routine sweeping, dusting, polishing and vacuuming. Equipment includes static charge dissipators and a wide variety of mechanical cleaning aids.

The janitorial robot's programming is quite rudimentary, and each spends its time slowly and laboriously performing its duties. Detection of individuals is equally rudimentary; notice is taken only if the robot is interfered with in some way. In such a case, the central computer is notified, and the robot attempts to continue its duties.

Auditory and visual sensors are equivalent to human senses.

Because the janitorial robot cannot see in the dark, it mounts a powerful lamp on its rotating head. When operating in dark areas, this lamp illuminates the

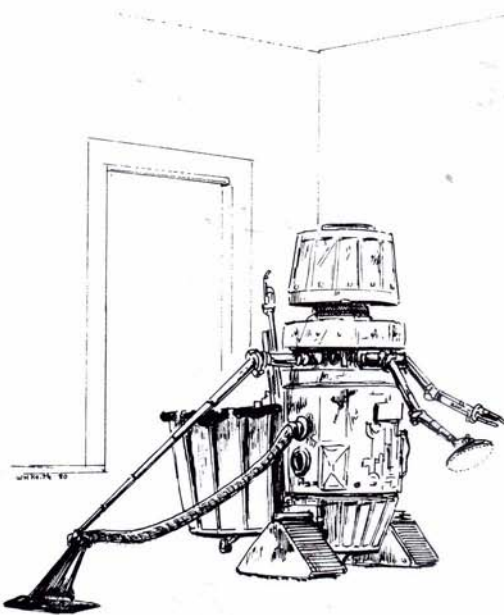
work area. On instructions from the central computer, it is possible for the lamp to be aimed at a person and snapped on with overload power; throw 8+ for it to temporarily blind the person (for 1D combat rounds, with no lasting damage).

**Referee's Data:**

The janitorial robot is the dumbest of the group of robots in the station. It will detect an unusual situation only if deliberately interfered with (for example, if it is attacked, or if it is sabotaged).

The janitorial robot does not have grapples or grippers and cannot pick up or hold an individual. The maximum weight which it can lift is ten kilograms.

The janitorial robot carries no weapons, and if called upon to attack, will do so with whatever maintenance equipment it is currently carrying. A vacuum handle would be equivalent to cudgel; most others equivalent to clubs.



*Illustration 9— Janitorial Robot.*

## AN-427 Maximum Security Robot

<b>Height:</b>	2.0 meters
<b>Mass:</b>	200 kilograms
<b>Sensors:</b>	GD-101 Active IR and UV. FN/D-7 Low Level
Audio sensor. Henderson Enhanced	night vision and basic sensor package.
<b>Weaponry:</b>	LS-303 7.5mm pulse laser.
<b>Armor:</b>	Bendix 54 armor system, with outer surface
polished to reflect standards.	
<b>Programming:</b>	Standard package plus maximum security and
ground combat: infantry programs.	
<b>Communications:</b>	Standard multi frequency radio link with central
computer. Tape-recorded challenge and warning messages.	
<b>Additional Equipment:</b>	Elevator transport package.
<b>Comment:</b>	Security robots are programmed to patrol all
areas of the research station, seek out unauthorized intruders, and destroy them.	

All authorized personnel are computer profiled upon entering, and will be noticed (but not harmed) by the robot. Similarly, all biological samples in the station are recognized by the robot, and will be recaptured, but not harmed.

Security robots are armed with pulse lasers (equivalent to laser carbine) and have an equivalent skill level of laser carbine-2. Programming instructs the robot to choose the target posing the greatest threat to itself, and fire until that target is destroyed (or no longer a threat) before selecting a new target. If several robots are operating together, they share information (instantaneously) to avoid duplication of target selection.

**Referee's Data:** Security robots have very sensitive sensors, and can detect any human personnel at a distance of ten meters in absolute darkness (hearing the heartbeat of the person). Coordination through the central computer allows them to call for reinforcements when needed.

The security robot has grapples similar to those of the animal care robots, and can handle weapons which it acquires or finds in the course of its operations. This is especially useful if its pulse laser is disabled. In addition, the grapples can hold a captured subject in an unbreakable grip and carry the subject (maximum weight: 100 kilograms) to any part of the station to which the robot has access.

This robot is top-heavy, and has difficulty righting itself if toppled.

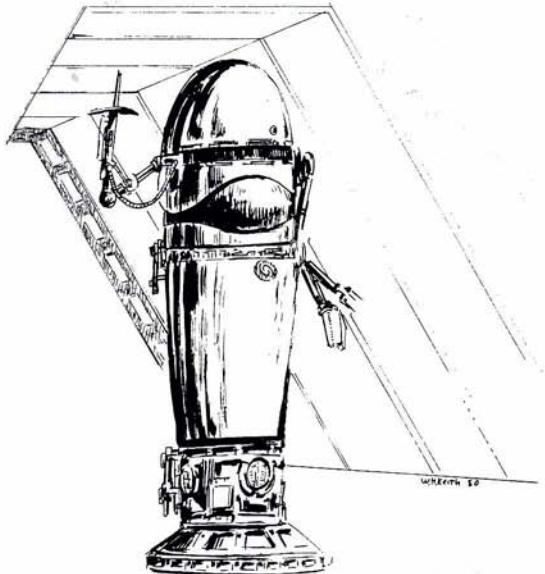


Illustration 10— Maximum Security Robot.

## ROBOT ENCOUNTERS

Once the adventurers enter the research station, there is the certainty that they will encounter one or more robots. This table makes provision for such encounters. For each five minutes within the station, throw two dice for 9+ for an encounter to occur. If an encounter is called for, then throw one die on the table and apply DMs as indicated below.

### ROBOT ENCOUNTER TABLE

#### RESEARCH STATION INTERIOR

Vanejen C686854-5 (9+)

<i>Die</i>	<i>Robot Type</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armor</i>	<i>Wounds &amp; Weapons</i>
0	1 Animal Care Robot	100kg	—	mesh	tranq with snub pistol
1	2 Animal Care Robot	100kg	—	mesh	tranq with snub pistol
2	1 Animal Care Robot	100kg	—	mesh	tranq with snub pistol
3	1 Janitorial Robot	100kg	—	mesh	club
4	2 Janitorial Robot	100kg	—	mesh	cudgel
5	1 Security Robot	200kg	—	battle	laser carbine
6	2 Security Robot	200kg	—	battle	laser carbine
7	3 Security Robot	200kg	—	battle	laser carbine

This table uses one die to determine the type of robot encountered. Apply as DMs the following based on location within the research station: Central Shaft or Containment Globe, -1, Upper Lab Deck, +2, anywhere else, no DM.

This table indicates the type of robot encountered, and some basic data. The previous portions of this chapter provide more complete information.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Although the data on robots in this adventure is relatively complete, the referee may wish to expand or elaborate on robots in future situations. A three-part article on robots, their design, and their construction, was presented in the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society, Issues Number 2, 3, and 4.



# Referee's Notes

These referee's notes are intended to provide additional information about the research station and its research projects, and to elaborate on the various aspects of the adventure the characters are embarked upon.

## RESEARCH STATION GAMMA

Research Station Gamma is engaged in psionic research, an area which is frowned upon (if not actively abhorred) within the Imperium. Although the station is itself an Imperial project, the scientist who runs the station has gradually released all researchers and now continues the project alone, accompanied only by his robots and the specimens within the globes.

The station is situated in the group of islands in the southern sea. The referee should select one specific hex for the station to occupy.

The project is showing some signs of success, at least at interplanetary distances, and might lead to interstellar telepathy, if initial success leads to more funding. It probably won't, for two reasons. First, the public still rejects psionics as a legitimate interest, and is not likely to accept it as a means of communication. Second, other races (for example, the Zhodani) use psionics already, and they could implement such a system, if developed, much faster than the Imperium. The result would be to the military advantage of the enemy. The Imperium, if it learns of the progress of the project, would immediately suppress the information.

The station computer has been programmed to make periodic reports on the project's status, and to falsify the data to make the progress appear slow and fruitless. A person with computer-2 or better might (if examining the computer) find the tapes with the real data on them. This data is of extreme value to a Zhodani Intelligence operative (maybe Cr30 million, plus expenses)—delivery of the data would require an adventurer crossing the Spinward Marches to the Cronor subsector, a distance of about 22 parsecs.

## THE RESEARCHER

Professor Sir Gnetus Jerrold Vicervis (353EEB, age 102) was assigned to this research station when it was first built and has run it with an iron hand. Originally, he was assistant director, but the director died of natural causes and Vicervis was promoted to his present position.

Professor Sir Gnetus Jerrold Vicervis      353EEB   Age 102   21 terms  
Computer-5, Electronic-3, Body Pistol-2, Air/Raft-2, Admin-3, Jack-o-T-3

Vicervis is old, and has maintained his health through the use of anagathics, which are purchased with research station budget. The drugs are well-concealed in the vault (illustration 5, location 15) and will not be discovered unless the professor is made to tell where they are. Possibly the data that anagathics are present here can come from the computer, or from a chirper in the containment globe, or one of the characters might guess at the fact.

## THE CHIRPERS

Important to the central theme of the adventure are the chirpers. It is suggested that an incident occur with the adventurers as soon as they leave the tavern with Chiree.

**The Incident:** Two local peace enforcers (887678 and B67897, both armed with revolver) stop the group (roll dice to make the situation seem to be a random encounter) and ask for identification. After looking over the group, they say they are looking for a gang of thugs with a chirper. The band would appear to be them, except there is no chirper with them. After asking questions, they will let the group continue, if their answers are reasonably proper.

The point is that Chiree has disappeared. At the point the police appear, Chiree is no longer with the group. Of course, the group may not have noticed this fact, and make some incriminating statements. After the encounter, Chiree will rejoin the group and after being noticed will proceed as if nothing happened. If questioned, the alien will seem to not understand (it is only semi-intelligent) and say "I was there, I don't understand." The group should be encouraged to think initially that the alien was hiding just out of sight.

In actuality, Chiree is demonstrating perhaps its greatest asset and secret; one which the group may eventually discover through logic and rumors. The alien has the psionic power to cloud the minds of beings around it, making itself seem to be invisible. Within about 400 meters, no one can see the creature unless it allows it; if it allows itself to be seen, all persons around can see it. This power does not work against a person wearing a psionics shield, or someone with a natural shield in operation. Further, it has no effect against a television camera or robots. Finally, image intensifiers allow it to be seen as they use a television camera principle.

**Chiree's Capture:** Chiree was captured, along with its siblings, from a village on the barren northern continent. When the naval intelligence troops appeared, the chirpers used their powers to vanish, but Chiree and the two siblings were still immature and had not yet learned to use their ability. In the time since they were captured, the young aliens have used their ability.

**Returning Chiree:** Chiree and the two siblings will want to return to their village. This should be an essential part of the adventure. The group could travel by submersible, or perhaps steal an air/raft from the station. The distance is at least 12 hexes, and could take quite a long time.

Once there, the question of payment will come up. The chirpers do have some of the gold coins mentioned by Chiree at the first encounter, but they will be very reluctant to part with them. Each village has perhaps five sets of the coins, each set amounting to 38 coins, each with a different design. Each coin is worth approximately Cr400 (two ounces of gold at Cr200 per ounce). The villages will resist turning over the coins, but will do so if pressured.

If the group elects to forego the gold, then the chirpers may suggest an alternative: perhaps the location of a wrecked ship loaded with valuable cargo (to be salvaged by a submarine).

Finally, one of the group should be singled out as especially friendly with the chirpers. When the final parting occurs, a chirper will present that individual with a gold coin engraved with a full-body representation of a human.

**The Droyne:** The droyne are an alien race present on various worlds within the



the Imperium. They are not very important, and keep to themselves. They are, however, considered a major race (see the Library Data), and once had a far wider range than today.

Chirpers are very similar to the droyne, but with several distinct differences. The droynes have six castes, assigned as the young reach maturity. The chirpers have no caste system; their appearance is similar to immature droyne. Most library data, however, does not show immature droyne, only casted droyne. Thus, only someone familiar with the appearance of immature droyne would make the connection; so far on this world, no one has.

The chirpers are an isolated branch of the droyne race; they have lost the ability to assign castes, and are not aware of their own heritage.

There is more to the whole question of the coins (coyns), and their relation to the droyne, and of the droyne to the chirpers. The matter is to be resolved in the next adventure— *Twilight's Peak*.

## PIRATES

This concept, encouraged by the rumors available, is a red herring. There may be pirates, and the adventurers may prepare themselves for pirates. But there are none present. Of course, the referee may decide to impose them anyway.

## THE ICY COLD OF THE SOUTH

In dealing with the climatic conditions of the southern regions, the following procedure may be used to deal with the cold.

**Cold Weather Situations:** For each hour spent in an area with air temperature below 0 degrees centigrade (freezing point of water), roll one die. Add or subtract the appropriate DMs. If the result is negative, subtract it from strength, dexterity, and endurance (the same number is subtracted from each of the characteristics) on a temporary basis. When any of these characteristics is reduced to zero or below, the player becomes unconscious. When two characteristics have been reduced to zero, the character is severely frostbitten, and will require medical care prior to recovery. When all three characteristics have been reduced to zero, the character is dead. Note: this procedure is very similar to the wounding procedure.

The following DMs apply. Without protective clothing, -15. With cold weather clothing (type I), -9. With cold weather clothing (type II), -6. With cold weather clothing (type I or type II), if augmented by artificial means (hot bricks, pocket-sized catalytic heaters, etc), +3. Per level of survival skill, +1.

With battle dress, -9. With combat armor, -7. With heatsuit, +4. With combat environment suit, -5. With vacc suit, -7. For each increment of twenty degrees centigrade below zero, -1. If the subject is immersed in water at any temperature below 20 degrees centigrade, -10.

**Cold Weather Clothing, Type I (TL 1, Cr200):** Boots, pants, hooded coat, mittens, and facemask, made from animal skins sewn together. This clothing provides protection from extreme low temperatures for a short length of time. This item may be manufactured from local materials, provided several large furs, properly cured, are available. Referees should use their discretion as to the ease with which these conditions may be met. Immersion in water totally negates the effects of this clothing.

**Cold Weather Clothing, Type II (TL 6, Cr200):** A head-to-toe garment, made of



several layers of fabric around an insulating layer of fluffy fibers. Immersion in water renders this clothing totally ineffective.

At tech level 7, this cold weather clothing begins to retain its ability to insulate even if wet or waterlogged. For tech level 7, ignore the effects of water immersion for the first five minutes.

*Heatsuit* (TL 8, Cr300): This skin-tight head-to-toe covering (complete with gloves and transparent face-plate) provides almost complete protection against extreme cold.

*Combat Environment Suit* (TL 10, Cr1000): A neck to toe air-tight suit constructed of ballistic cloth. Generally worn open at the neck and wrists, the combat environment suit can be sealed by donning gauntlets and a clear flexible plastic head piece. The suit is a military uniform, giving complete protection against most chemical agents, tainted atmospheres, biological agents, and a moderate defense against radiation. Heat buildup in the suit is handled by a simple cooling system, solid state, woven into the garment, which eliminates all infrared signature except on the exposed face, hands, and heat exhaust. The heat exhaust is a very pronounced IR source, but can be dampened by a chill can—easily inserted by the wearer into the cooling system. The chill can eliminates the signature for 45 minutes to two hours; at the end of that time, the can is disposable. This suit is treated as cloth-1 in combat.

At tech level 12, the chameleon suit becomes available for Cr1500. It selectively bleeds heat to match background IR levels, effectively rendering the soldier invisible to IR sensors.

Both the combat environment suit and the chameleon suit are preferred types of cold weather clothing for people who have any experience with them. Because they manage heat exhaust, they are effectively insulated. Light in weight, the suits are very good cold weather clothing.

Combat armor and battle dress are described in *Mercenary*, Book 4.

Vacc suits are described in Book 3.

# Library Data

Library data is information obtainable from ship's computers, local reference computers, or other sources of data in response to browsing or keywords. Only the specific information requested should be given to requesting players; care should be taken not to reveal additional data. The referee should read through the entire bank of library data as background to the situation.

**Ancients.** Extinct intelligent major race of unclassified origin which pervaded this spiral arm approximately 300,000 years ago. Archeological evidence recovered from excavations of the few known Ancient cities indicate that the race died out during a two thousand year period of intense warfare, leaving only ruined cities and shattered planets.

The Ancients were responsible for the wide dissemination of humaniti within its current domain when (for reasons currently unclear) they transplanted genetic stock from Sol/Terra to at least forty worlds across a span of 360 parsecs, and accounts for the widespread presence of humaniti in the galaxy.

The Ancients were also responsible for the creation of the vargr through genetic manipulation of carnivore/chasers.

**Capital** (Core subsector 0508-A586A98-F). Central world of the Imperium and seat of government since its founding. Situated in the center of the Imperium, its astrographical location has proven of prime importance, as it controls the only gap in the Rifts for thousands of parsecs. Besides being a communications hub, Capital is a cultural and educational center.

**Chirpers:** See page 5.

**Confederation.** Group of independent states, worlds or systems united for specified purposes, while generally retaining more freedom of action than the members of a federation. League. Alliance (especially of princes, nations, states, worlds, or systems).

**Directions, Galactic.** North and South do not work when referring to directions within the galaxy. Instead, the following conventions have achieved widespread acceptance when referring to direction.

Toward the galactic core is coreward, away from it, in the direction of the rim is rimward. In the direction in which the galaxy is rotating is spinward, while the other direction is trailing.

These directions are in widespread use in describing Imperial features and businesses. For example, the Spinward Marches is a sector at the extreme spinward fringe of the Imperium; Rimward Lines is an important interstellar transport company.

Finally, within the Imperium, the term coreward is also used to indicate the direction of Capital, the Imperial core. There is some potential for confusion if the term is accepted out of context.

**Dating Systems.** Three major dating systems are in use when referring to historical events— Terran, Vilani, and Imperial.

Terran dates center on a year about midway through the period of Vilani ascen-

dance. After that date, years ascend, and are suffixed AD; before that date, years descend, and are suffixed BC. There is no year zero.

Vilani Dates count from the year of the Establishment of the First (or Vilani) Imperium. Those before are suffixed PI (pre-Imperium), those after are suffixed VI (Vilani Imperium).

# **EQUIVALENT DATES**

Imperial dates count from the year of the founding of the Third Imperium, specifying the year zero as a holiday year. Dates before that are negative, dates after that are positive, with the sign usually suppressed. Imperial dating also uses a julian system for days. Each day in the year is consecutively numbered beginning with 001. Thus, in the year 1105, the first day of the year is 001-1105.

<i>Terran</i>	<i>Vilani</i>	<i>Imperial</i>
100 BC	432 PI	- 4620
1 BC	358 PI	- 4521
1 AD	357 PI	- 4520
100 AD	283 PI	- 4421
475 AD	1 PI	- 4046
476 AD	1 VI	- 4045
575 AD	75 VI	- 3946
4521 AD	3038 VI	0
4522 AD	3039 VI	1
5523 AD	3791 VI	1002
5627 AD	3869 VI	1106

Zhodani dating is in olympiads (obviously a translation). Each olympiad is of three Zhodani years; each Zhodani year is 273 days. The first olympiad corresponds to 2209 BC. The dating system itself has been in more or less continuous use since then, with minor lapses due to war or temporary decline of ruling parties.

**Express Boats:** The primary means of interstellar communication within the Imperium is the express boat— a small, fast, information carrying starship. Rhy-lanor is nearly four years out from the Imperial Core, and the express boat links were established to insure the rapid transmission of messages (governmental, commercial, and private) with a maximum of efficiency.

Selected locations along major trade routes are established as express stations, orbital facilities which service and refuel the xboats on their communications runs. As an xboat arrives in a system, it beams its recorded messages to the express station, which then retransmits it to an xboat standing by for a jump outsystem. Time between jumps is almost always less than four hours, and can be under seven minutes. The speed of communication is thus nearly the speed of jump (xboats are equipped with jump-4 drives, four parsecs per week). In practice, this speed is somewhat reduced as trade routes do not follow straight lines, and not all jumps are made at jump-4. Average speed approximates jump-2.6 per week.

**False War (1082 to 1084).** See Fourth Frontier War.

**Federation.** Group of states, worlds, or systems, each internally independent, joined into a union to which has been surrendered certain rights and responsibilities, most generally dealing with foreign affairs.

**First Imperium (1 VI to 1383 VI).** The first major interstellar civilization, originating extensive colonization by Vland in the period - 5200 to - 4000 (750 BC to 450 AD Terran). In this era of interstellar exploration and expansion, the Vilani (native humans evolved on Vland) demonstrated their technological superiority and strong central authority over a period of 1500 years. Neighboring worlds were assimilated into a trade community, and gradually absorbed into the central Vilani society.

By - 4045 (the traditional date of Establishment) the First Imperium was a far-flung empire encompassing ten sectors and nearly five thousand worlds. Centuries of continuing expansion added new worlds, including four more sectors in



the next thousand years. No new sectors were added to the First Imperium after - 2900.

Instead, with cultural maturity, the First Imperium became a pinnacle of interstellar diplomacy. Client-states under the protection or the patronage of the Vilani numbered in the thousands, while the influence of the Imperium stretched from Zhodane and Lair to Kirur and Guaran. Indeed, Vilani suzerainty is credited with the protective embrace which allowed the development of most major races into their current status.

However, by - 3000 the Imperium had begun to decline. Its client-states were becoming restive, expanding, and stretching their growing muscles; the Imperium's own power was waning, and stretched thin. The rise of the Solomani and their expansionism on the rim led to a series of interstellar wars ultimately decided against the Imperium. Its fall, in - 2204, was accompanied by the rise of the Second Imperium.

The First Imperium bore many names in its long life, including the Grand Imperium of Stars, the Grand Imperium, and the Vilani Empire.

**Fourth Frontier War (1082 to 1084).** Also known as the False War. The Vargr and Zhodani again joined in an assault on the Imperium, this time (as before) aimed at the Jewell and Regina subsectors of the Spinward Marches. As before, they were thrown back with relative ease.

**Gas Giant.** A large planet with an extensive atmosphere of hydrogen and hydrogen compounds. Starships fuel themselves by diving into this atmosphere and skimming hydrogen from this atmosphere. The only other methods available for refuelling are 1) dipping water from oceans, 2) melting it from icecaps, and 3) buying it at a base or starport. Jupiter is an example of a gas giant.

**Humaniti (old spelling: Humanity).** One of the Major Races. Intelligent bilateral bipeds. All of humaniti originated from genetic stock on Sol/Terra, transplanted for unknown reasons throughout the spiral arm by the Ancients. Parallel development resulted in the predominance of essentially identical human races in the worlds of this arm. Of these, three have achieved major status: Vilani, Solomani, and Zhodani.

**Major Race.** An arbitrary distinction based on the achievement of a specific intelligent race. A race which achieves interstellar travel (jump drive) through its own efforts is classed major; one which does not is classed minor.

To date, generally accepted major races include Humaniti (Zhodani, Solomani, and Vilani, but not other examples), Aslan, the Hive, Centaurs, Vargr, Ancients, and Droyne.

The Suerrat (a human race) have been held to be minor, because their achievement of interstellar travel utilized generation ships. Similarly, the Geonee were originally thought to be a major race, but their development of jump drive was based on recovered Ancient artifacts rather than true racial efforts. The Geonee dispute this prevailing opinion and hold the (unshared) view that they are of major standing.

The Droyne have been demonstrated to be major, having developed jump drive as far back as - 7000. At present, however, they do not build or use jump drives, and remain voluntarily sequestered in their scattered systems to spinward.

**Minor Race.** An intelligent race which has not achieved jump drive through its own efforts. For most races, this classification is appropriate. Many are contacted

before they have reached a technological level capable of even considering jump drive, thus permanently prejudicing their potential.

Indeed, the shock of such classification, and the realization that this classification pervades interstellar society, is sufficient to relegate a race to a permanent role as shopkeepers and accountants. Some slump, while others violently resist the classification. The fact that the typing is informal and arbitrary, and tends to elevate those already in power, has made resistance difficult, if not impossible.

**Research Station, Imperial:** The scattered worlds of the Imperium manifest a wide range of technological levels: this diversity is maintained by the distances between worlds, the high cost of transportation, and the relative independence allowed to worlds within the Imperium.

Nevertheless, the Imperium itself is constantly involved with research projects at the forefronts of technology. While some new technology can be purchased from advanced cultures beyond the Imperial boundaries, such high technology is expensive, and still requires a solid technological foundation to allow its usage. Consider: however useful solid-state chip circuits are, they still require a firm grounding in electronics, and cannot be used on a large scale without electronics, individual solid-state chip components, photo processing, and even crystal culture. It is vital that the Imperium pass through many stages of technological development on the way to achievement in higher tech level areas.

Imperial technological research is performed in two ways: under contract by corporations, or in established Imperial Research Stations. The difference is that the corporate (and equivalent privately financed) research is directed at specific practical uses, while Imperial projects are breaking new ground on the forefronts of knowledge. Often this is an attempt to duplicate technology observed or reported in neighboring cultures and not yet within the ability of Imperial science. Such research stations are sited in areas which need the boost to the local economy, or in remote areas far from the potential disturbance of Imperial politics. Many different stations may be working in the same region, and many different areas of knowledge may be under investigation at one time. In general, one station will be constructed for one purpose, and continue in that area of knowledge for its entire span of usefulness. Its size, personnel roster, power plant capacity, and even visibility profile, are dependent on its area of investigation.

Imperial research may delve into many areas. Some examples include black hole research, both large-scale and mini-black hole investigation, instantaneous transmitter development (so far proving impossible), advanced gravity manipulation, genetic manipulation, anti-matter containment, weaponry research, disintegrator beams, black globe development, deep planetary core soundings, nova prevention (and prediction), psychohistory, mass population behavior prediction, psionics, stable superheavy elements, deep radar analysis, long-range detection systems, robotics, artificial intelligence, stasis and time travel, so-called magic, cryptography, bionics, personal shields, x-ray laser technology, and high temperature superconductors.



*The alien needs help...wounded, frightened, reluctant, the little birdlike creature can only slowly be coaxed into telling its story. Out there, in a research station in the middle of the sea, its sister and brother are being held for terrible experiments, vivisection, ultimately death!*

*The alien makes its plea; please, can't someone help? Can you?*