Adventure 3
Twilight's Peak

TRAVELLER

*Science-Fiction Adventure
in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop

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Twilight's Peak was designed and produced by Marc W. Miller.

Interior artwork was produced by the following artists. Animals (Snowcat, Groat, and Trapper) and Aliens (Droyne, Aslan, and Vargr) by Richard Hentz. Octagon Book by Dawn Riordan. Map of Fulacin and Spinward Main by Paul R. Banner.

This booklet is intended for use with
Traveller, GDW's science-fiction role-playing game set in the far future.

Traveller is GDW's trademark for its science-fiction role-playing game materials.

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Introduction

This booklet is a comprehensive adventure for **Traveller** entitled *Twilight's Peak*. Set in the Spinward Marches, it deals with a search for the remains of a military expedition lost on a mission over a century ago.

It is assumed that this adventure will be administered by a referee who has read through this booklet, and who is familiar with both it and the rules for **Traveller**. The *Twilight's Peak* situation requires several of the **Traveller**

Requires Basic Traveller and Mercenary.

materials: the basic **Traveller** booklets (Books 1, 2, and 3) and *Mercenary* (Book 4) for its advanced weaponry. If players wish to generate Droyne characters as explained in the last section of this booklet, *High Guard* (Book 6) and *Citizens of the Imperium* (Supplement 4) will be needed to explain some of the skills. A variety of other **Traveller** materials are desirable, but not required; if you have them, they can be used to enhance specific parts of the adventure. *Spinward Marches* (Supplement 3) provides starmaps of the area in which this adventure takes place; they supplement the starmap given in this adventure. *1001 Characters* (Supplement 1) provides pregenerated non-player characters for encounters. *Snapshot* (Game 2) or *Azhanti High Lightning* (Game 3) provide game rules for precise resolution of personal combat on a square grid; if the ultimate combat sequences in this adventure are to be fought out in detail, either of these two games may prove useful.

As usual, paper, pencils, six-sided dice, and square-grid graph paper will prove necessary during the course of the adventure.

To The Referee: This adventure is set in the Spinward Marches, the same background used for previous **Traveller** adventures and double adventures, and a consistent setting for most of the published **Traveller** materials. In addition, this adventure contains a set of pre-generated characters for use by the players. As such, this entire adventure is self-contained and can be played without an on-going **Traveller** campaign being in the hands of the referee. There are two additional considerations which should be addressed.

First, this adventure can be altered or modified for use by any referee in his or her own on-going **Traveller** campaign. Changes in the starmaps and to some of the backgrounds may be necessary, but any good referee should have no trouble taking care of these details. Further, characters from such a campaign can easily be used in this adventure in place of the pre-generated ones.

Second, this adventure is itself an extension of two previously published **Traveller** adventures— *Research Station Gamma* (Adventure 2), and *Shadows* (part of Double Adventure 1). If the players to be involved in this situation have not played either of these items, the referee may consider playing several sessions with them before beginning *Twilight's Peak*. Alternatively, the characters may begin with the *Twilight's Peak* situation and encounter *Research Station Gamma* and *Shadows* along the way.

Be sure to read this adventure through completely and to be familiar with its contents before beginning the situation. You won't understand what's going on until you read the sections on the Octagon Society, the epic, and the referee's notes.

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.

1	**Retired Merchant Captain**	779C99	Age 56	5 terms	Cr1,000
	Pilot-2, Vacc-1, Cutlass-1, Dagger-1, Body Pistol-1, Electronic-3, SMG-1				Ship
2	**Merchant First Officer**	6A7C8A	Age 34	4 terms	Cr1,500
	Pilot-1, Vacc-1, Navigation-2, Forgery-1, Computer-2, Autorifle-2, Steward-1				
3	**Merchant Second Officer**	756987	Age 38	5 terms	Cr400
	Engineer-3, Vacc-1, Mech-1, Jack of all trades-1, Gunnery-1, Autopistol-2				
4	**Merchant Third Officer**	B59848	Age 30	3 terms	Cr1,100
	Gunnery-2, Vacc-1, Mechanical-1, Electronic-1, Computer-1, Blade-1				Blade
5	**Merchant Fourth Officer**	7958C3	Age 26	2 terms	Cr900
	Vacc-1, Steward-1, Bribery-1, Body Pistol-1				Body Pistol
6	**Ex-other** (working passage)	A92789	Age 26	2 terms	Cr1,200
	Vacc-0, Streetwise-1, Brawling-1, SMG-1				SMG
7	**Ex-navy Lieutenant** (middle passage)	89C7B7	Age 30	3 terms	Cr750
	Ship's Boat-2, Vacc-1, Gunnery-2, Shotgun-1				Travellers'
8	**Ex-scout** (middle passage)	6B4387	Age 26	2 terms	Cr100
	Pilot-1, Vacc-1, SMG-1, Gunnery-1				

A skill level of 0 has been assigned to show some familiarity with a skill sufficient for use but without conferring real expertise. Thus, vacc-0 allows a person to use a vacc suit but not to perform dangerous stunts in it.

EQUIPMENT

Characters should review their equipment, and may purchase more. However, it is essential that one of the characters be the merchant captain (character number 1), because he provides the Empress Nicholle, a 200-ton type A2 far trader which serves as transport for the adventurers. Its ship's locker contains the equipment shown in the table. No additional equipment is available at the moment, although some may become available in the course of the adventure.

SHIP'S LOCKER

eight **vacc suits,** each with oxygen tanks for eight hours and **medium range commo gear.**

four **shotguns,** each with ten loaded magazines (100 rounds).

two **automatic pistols,** each with ten loaded magazines (150 rds).

four **cutlasses,** each with a belt scabbard.

one **long range communicator.**

The Empress Nicholle: The starship owned by the merchant captain is a type A2 far trader, 200 tons, now fifty years old and finally without a mortgage. It has six staterooms (one for the captain, and one each for the three passengers; double occupancy for the rest of the crew) and four low berths; cargo capacity is 61 tons. The ship is streamlined, and can refuel by skimming gas giants or drawing water from planetary oceans. Armament consists of one triple turret fitted with a heterogeneous mix— one missile rack, one beam laser, and one sandcaster. The ship carries an air/raft in a fitted hull compartment. It is fuelled, provisioned, and ready to go.

Crew Briefing

The place is Regina Starport, on Regina, in Regina subsector. The far trader Empress Nicholle has just returned from a trading charter through the coreward parts of the subsector, and is now unloading its cargo of trade goods to the local broker. This is a time for the crew to hold a ship's meeting and decide just where the vessel should go next in its trading travels.

The Spinward Main: Meandering throughout the Spinward Marches is an informal trade route called the Spinward Main. This Main is a line (actually several lines, with branches) of worlds each only jump-1 from the next. The result is that long, often profitable trading journeys are possible even for lowly jump-1 ships.

From Regina, the Main extends coreward, into the subsector. It also extends spinward, beyond the Imperial borders, ultimately to Querion subsector and the Zhodani Consulate. Both of these options seem less than optimal— the first because the ship has just returned from the interior of the subsector, and the second because of growing hostilities between the Imperium and the Zhodani. The best course would seem to be a trading mission back towards the Rhylanor subsector.

PROFITS TO BE MADE!

The Empress Nicholle is paid off, but it still costs quite a lot to run. That was the reason why the ship took a charter into the Regina subsector— to make some money. Its coffers now hold Cr40,000 to buy goods for resale. With that money, and a little luck, the ship should be able to buy low and sell high, and maybe come out with a profit for everyone concerned.

The free trader has a cargo hold for 61 tons of goods, and has no room for any more passengers (except in low passage). This relatively small cargo capacity is dictated by the fact that the ship is capable of jump-2, and thus has larger drives and more fuel tankage than the ordinary type A free trader.

Unfortunately, the Empress Nicholle has a problem. It is old, and its drives are not working properly. Rated at jump-2, they have not been able to make better than jump-1 for over a year. This is one reason why a trading mission on the Spinward Main looks so attractive: the route is jump-1 all the way. Repairing the drive to make jump-2 is going to require a complete replacement of most of the insides of the jump mechanism, at a class A starport at a cost of about Cr3,500,000.

Overhead: The costs of running even a paid-off starship are (literally) astronomical. They include fuel, life support, salaries, maintenance, and

OVERHEAD

Fuel, Skimmed	0
(Fuel, Unrefined	6,000)
Life Support	12,400
Maintenance	2,000
Salaries	900
Berthing Cost	100

Total (2 weeks) Cr15-21,400

berthing costs. On this mission, the ship will be able to cut some costs, but will have to plan on paying others. Assuming salaries are cut to about Cr1000 (see shares, below) and the ship gets fuel from skimming gas giants, the cost for each jump (and a one week stay on the world looking for trade goods) will be about Cr15,400,

which figure represents a minimum cost for two weeks travel.

Computation of the Cr15,400 figure assumes Cr12,400 per trip for life support, and includes food, fresh rations, minor repairs at starports, tuning of various equipment, and other sundries. The cost may vary, but averages out to Cr12,400 per trip; if it isn't paid on one trip, it would have to be paid on the next (in addition to current costs) to make up for depletion of the ship's equipment and stores. Cr2,000 is to be saved every two weeks in anticipation of overhaul costs at the end of the year. Although a prudent captain will not touch this money, it does accumulate, and can be used in an emergency for speculation in trade goods, or for emergency costs. Berthing fees average Cr100 per starport. Salaries are pegged at Cr900 for the entire crew. A complete discussion of overhead costs is presented in **Traveller**, Book 2.

Shares: Once overhead costs are paid and the initial money put into buying trade goods is recovered, the remainder is profit to be distributed to the captain and and owner, and to some of the crew. In this case, there are 100 shares. Sixty go to the owner. The remaining forty may be divided up in any equitable manner, so long as all agree.

The proceeds of the shares must be distributed periodically by paying each shareholder his or her due. After determining an appropriate amount to remain in the fund, the remainder is distributed to each individual in accordance with the shares held. The shareholders may decide to establish a time when the fund is split up, or may vote to do so.

In return for shares, all of the crew must agree to smaller salaries. The overhead computations assume that each will accept Cr100 per two weeks as salary, plus any income that shares provide. It is assumed that the three passengers will be offered jobs on the ship, and that the captain draws the extra Cr100 as captain.

TRAVELLING

The ship is capable of jump-1 (one parsec; one hex on the starmap) and requires refuelling with 60 tons of fuel between each jump (remember, the jump drive is supposedly capable of jump-2, but doesn't work right; it has a high fuel consumption too). Jump takes one week, during which time the ship has no contact with any other ship or world. At the end of the week, the ship emerges in the new system, and must move to the world and starport within the system.

Refuelling can take place at the gas giant (if the system has one), or in an ocean on the world (if the world has a hydrographic percentage of at least 1, and a law level of less than 8). Otherwise, the refuelling must take place at a starport, and fuel will cost Cr100 per ton (unrefined).

Travel from the jump point to the world takes about a day. A starship encounter (**Traveller**, Book 2, page 36) should be rolled at this time. The remaining time of five days in system are used for routine maintenance, selling trade goods, buying new goods, finding cargos and passengers, and general touring.

Crew members in port will also encounter rumors and gossip which may lead them to cheap trade goods or to possible adventures.

Situations may also lead the characters to leave their ship locked at a starport for some period of time and to travel abroad on a world in search of adventure and riches. A ship left in such a situation costs Cr100 per week for storage and guard fees, but has no other costs.
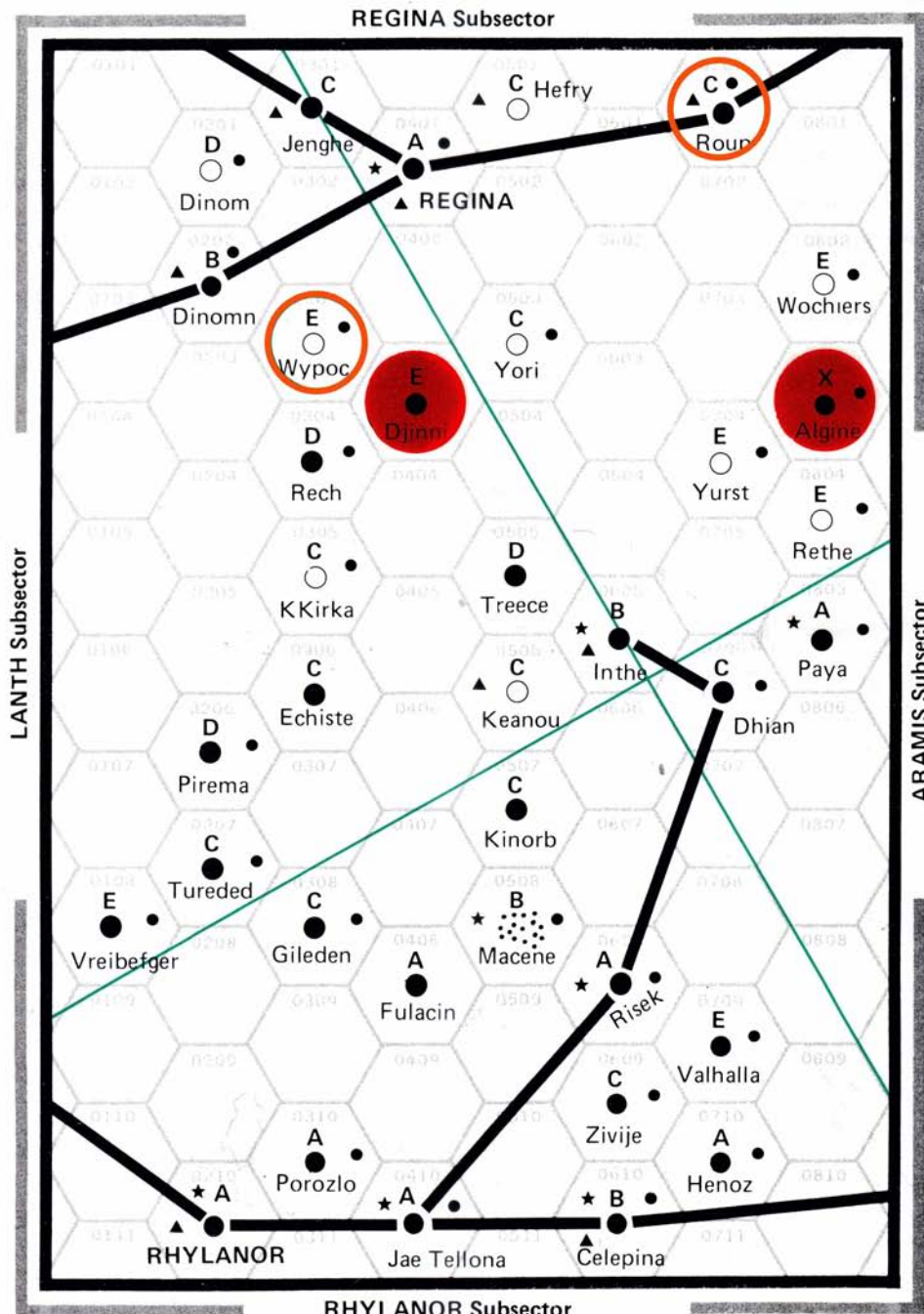
The Spinward Main

This starmap shows a section of the Spinward Main which snakes through four subsectors near Regina and Rhylanor. The listings below give world name and location on the map, world statistics (**Traveller**, Book 3), tech levels, and bases (N=naval, S=scout, 2=both). In the final column, G indicates the presence of a gas giant, A means an Amber travel zone, and R means a Red travel zone.

Name	Statistics				Remarks	
Vreibefger	0108	E481542	2		Imperial Research Station.	G
Dinom	0201	D100535	A		Non-industrial.	G
Dinomn	0202	B674632	3	S	Agricultural. Non-industrial.	G
Pirema	0206	D691142	5		Non-industrial.	G
Tureded	0207	C465540	9		Agricultural. Non-industrial.	G
Rhylanor	0210	A434934	F	2	Subsector Capital.	
Jenghe	0301	C799663	9	S	Non-industrial.	G
Wypoc	0303	E9C4547	C		Non-industrial.	A G
Rech	0304	D9957AA	6		Agricultural.	G
KKirka	0305	CAA5345	8		Non-industrial.	G
Echiste	0306	C53A313	A		Non-industrial. Water World.	
Gileden	0308	C483103	5		Non-industrial.	G
Porozlo	0310	A867A74	A			G
Regina	0401	A788899	A	2	Rich. Subsector Capital.	G
Djinni	0403	E459000	0		Non-industrial.	R G
Fulacin	0408	A674210	D		Non-industrial.	
Jae Tellona	0410	A560565	8	N	Non-industrial. Desert World.	G
Hefry	0501	C200423	7	S	Non-industrial.	
Yori	0503	C360757	D		Desert World. Imperial Research Station.	G
Treece	0505	D232866	8		Poor. Non-agricultural.	
Keanou	0506	C790348	7	S	Desert World.	G
Kinorb	0507	C449433	9		Non-industrial.	G
Macene	0508	B000453	E	N	Non-industrial. Asteroid Belt.	G
Inthe	0605	B575776	9	2	Agricultural.	G
Risek	0608	A325579	A	N	Non-industrial.	G
Zivije	0609	C6B199C	B			G
Celepina	0610	B434456	8	2	Non-industrial.	G
Roup	0701	C77A9A9	6	S	Industrial. Waterworld.	A G
Yurst	0704	E7B4643	5		Non-industrial.	G
Dhian	0706	C9A769D	4		Non-industrial.	G
Valhalla	0709	E365432	5		Non-industrial.	G
Henoz	0710	A245543	B		Agricultural. Non-industrial.	G
Wochiers	0802	EAC28CC	9			G
Algine	0803	X766977	4			R G
Rethe	0804	E230AA8	8		Poor. Non-agricultural. Desert World.	G
Paya	0805	A655241	9	N	Non-industrial.	G

C

C Hefry

C
Roun

Jenghe

A

D
Dinom

REGINA

E
Wochiers

B
Dinomn

E
Wypoc

E
Djinni

C
Yori

D
Rech

E
Yurst

X
Algine

E
Rethe

C
KKirka

D
Treece

B
Inthe

A
Paya

C
Echiste

C
Keanou

C
Dhian

D
Pirema

C
Kinorb

C
Tureded

C
Gileden

B
Macene

A
Risek

E
Vreibefger

A
Fulacin

E
Valhalla

C
Zivije

A
Porozlo

A
Henoz

A
RHYLANOR

A
Jae Tellona

B
Celepina

Naval Base — Starport Class

A — Gas Giant Present

Scout Base — Terra

● Water Present
○ No Water Present

━━ Xboat Route   ∴ Asteroids

The
Spinward Main

Rumors

The rumor is ultimately the source of all information for adventurers. Once they have been pushed by a rumor, they may look longer and harder in that direction and thus be moved closer to their goal. But without the initial impetus of the rumor the adventurers will find they have little reason for adventuring.

Rumors have three basic purposes: to direct the characters toward profitable endeavor, to misdirect the characters away from profitable endeavor, and to assist them after they have established a goal for themselves. For example, a specific clue may be utterly incomprehensible to the adventurers when they first find it. Later, they may come upon a situation where the clue's information fits perfectly, and finally the rumor's true nature comes to light.

Rumors in this adventure are of two distinct types: mandatory rumors and world rumors.

MANDATORY RUMORS

Mandatory rumors are essential to the adventure. As such, they must be provided to the adventurers without regard to chance or mischance. There are two mandatory rumors— Twilight's Peak and the Octagon Book. Twilight's Peak should be the first or second rumor received by the adventurers, regardless of other events. The ideal setting for the Twilight's Peak rumor is in a starman's bar on Regina the night before the ship leaves on its trading mission.

The Octagon Book should be provided later in the adventure; ideally much later, after the ship has visited most of the worlds on the Spinward Main. Because of the importance of these two rumors, their receipt should be a matter of some importance, and the situation should be handled to make the rumor seem casual, but potentially of great interest.

Twilight's Peak. In a starport tavern, the group can hear an argument in the far corner of the room. The noise of the inn is loud enough to make hearing difficult, but the argument continues. One man (a scout) insists that there really was a Twilight's Peak, and the epic was true; the other (a navy starman) has taken the opposite view, and says that it was all the rantings of a drug-crazed scout. After several minutes, the two spontaneously decide that while logic may not convince the other, perhaps fists might. The tavern's bouncer ejects the two, and the room is not quite as loud as it was. Referee: Ideal methods of following this information up include library data (for a broad overview of the subject), following and talking to the scout, and finding a copy of this epic (it isn't in the ship's library data; it would probably be found only in a library at a class A starport).

The Octagon Book. While casually touring the area on the edge of the starport, (perhaps looking for a bar), one of the group sees a bookshop. If any decide to go in, they will find shelf after shelf of old, hard-bound books in various states of decay. After browsing for some time, one of the group finds a water-stained and worn volume marked with an octagon on the binding. Price: Cr30.

The book is a detailed history of the Octagon Society, produced some centuries after the demise of the society. It covers, in great detail, the various octagonal

shaped buildings which the society erected for the comfort and safety of distressed space-farers throughout the Regina, Lanth, and Rhylanor subsectors. Referee: The Octagon Book is full of interesting information, of which a digest is presented in the Octagon Book section.

WORLD RUMORS

As each new world along (or near) the Spinward Main is encountered, the group of adventurers should be seeking new information and rumors. The following rumors and events are to be encountered by the travellers as they move to each new world. The referee should take pains to inflict or impose these rumors on the players in the correct setting— carefully building a situation before revealing the information to them.

Algine/Regina (0803-X766977-4). This world is interdicted. A naval task force (perhaps a Kinunir class battlecruiser and several Gazelle class close escorts) will not allow landing on Algine and are uncommunicative as to the reason for the interdiction. They will allow refuelling by skimming the local gas giant.

Celepina/Rhylanor (0610-B434456-8). Soon after landing, a local starport employee comments on the Shivva class patrol frigate in orbit above. Its gun muzzles are sealed and the ship is on a diplomatic mission carrying a Zhodani representative to Rhylanor. The locals here still hold memories of the False War and wish the ship on its way real soon.

Dhian/Aramis (0706-C9A769D-4). Oberlindes Lines has just opened a new shipping and passenger facility on Dhian. Now Tukera Lines is scrambling to open a rival shipping office.

Dinom/Lanth (0201-D100535-A). There is a revolution taking place at the moment, with each of the three cities on Dinom isolated from the others.

Dinomn/Lanth (0202-B674632-3). A visit to the scout base here produces the information that Djinni is interdicted, but that a rudimentary starport is being established. The scout base has a shipment (20 tons; crates of radio responders) for the starport-under-construction ready to go at standard rates (Cr1000 per ton per jump). Deliver to Aleem Vren.

Djinni/Lanth (0403-E459000-0). This world is interdicted; an automatic beacon says so when the ship arrives insystem. Aleem Vren is on a large island on the equator managing a team of construction robots. He insists that the group leave immediately (unless they have brought cargo from Dinomn). If approached correctly, he indicates an octagon structure out on one of the islands near here. But it is only a rough foundation, long since broken and crumbled by the storms.

Echiste/Lanth (0306-C53A313-A). A large scout xboat facility is under construction with an expected completion date of sometime in the coming year. It is intended that xboat links be established from Risek to Echiste to Yori to Regina, cutting three weeks off the long-range communication time to the core and opening up this part of the Spinward Main to commercial and business operations.

Fulacin/Rhylanor (0408-A674210-D). An official of MagnetoDynamics, Inc (the owning corporation of the world) is extremely helpful, answering questions and giving helpful hints about finding octagon buildings— on other worlds. He knows of none here. When pressed, he will give (reluctantly) a restricted license to look on Fulacin; with a provision that there be no prospecting.

Gileden/Rhylanor (0308-C483103-5). There is no one here. That is, the starport is poorly manned and ill-attended, and no one seems to know anything of any interest. The starport bar even serves an overly expensive bad whiskey.

Hefry/Regina (0501-C200423-7). Hefry holds the scout district administrative headquarters for Regina. A scout (active or retired) can look through old records for clues— and find that the recovery of the Blatant Lie at Treece/Lanth cleared the books on the Gyro Cadiz task force. The assumption is that the crash was in the Rhylanor subsector— probably Gileden, Fulacin, or Kinorb. More remotely possible sites are Tureded and Valhalla. Incidentally, berthing fees for Hefry are Cr1000 rather than Cr100.

Henoz/Rhylanor (0710-A245543-B). There is an octagon set back in the mountains and used as a hunting lodge sometimes. The octagon building is identical to the one on page 29 with the following exceptions: it is in good condition, sited in a small valley, and it has no secret inner or subterranean passages. Locals know something about it, and can comment that it was one of the last built by the Octagon Society before they dissolved.

Inthe/Regina (0605-B575776-9). The naval base has records of the discovery of the Blatant Lie at Treece in 1084. These records should be available to anyone (a naval character, active or retired, will get them faster, however). A drive analysis of the small scout indicated that it had misjumped; it could have come from any world within four parsecs of Treece.

Jae Tellona/Rhylanor (0410-A560565-8). Arriving in system, a naval system defense boat hails the ship and boards for a complete inspection of cargo and crew. This severe records check will turn up any irregularities on 9+; if it does, then a naval pilot is put aboard and the ship is sent to Jae Tellona. Irregularities call for a Cr100,000 fine and confiscation of cargo.

Jenghe/Regina (0301-C799663-9). The major starman's bar on Jenghe, just outside the gate of the starport, is the Planetfall Liberty, on the ground floor of a large octagonal-shaped building. This octagon covers the whole block and also houses offices and apartments.

The bartender at the Planetfall Liberty will discuss the building and its history as long as the group continues to buy drinks. This octagon was once a distressed spacefarer's shelter, built and operated by the Octagon Society. They built big ones like these on the major worlds (there used to be one on Regina; there still are ones on Feri and Wochiers) and smaller frontier shelters on the other worlds of this end of the Marches. They once had plans to build shelters all through the Imperium, but the society fell on hard times and dissolved about three hundred years ago).

Keanou/Lanth (0506-C790348-7). This desert world is a source of dust-spice, a powerful seasoning with mild euphoric properties. Rarely, however, is this spice available in quantity. Just today, a local broker has posted four kilograms of the spice for sale at Cr5,000 per kilo and is taking bids over that amount. An Aslan trading mission will bid against the group (to a maximum of 2D times Cr1,000).

Dust-spice can be sold at Rhylanor, Regina, Roup, Zivije, or Rethe for Cr10,000 per kilogram (plus 2D times Cr1,000).

If the group is successful in bidding, the Aslan trading mission will then attempt to buy it outright for what was paid for it plus Cr5,000.

Kinorb/Rhylanor (0507-C449433-9). A local merchant has for sale a small set of

disk-like coins of unknown origin. He says they are good-luck charms produced by the Aslan and that they come from clear across the Imperium. Each of the six he offers has a different figure engraved on it, including an aslan leader, a flame, a human, a cloud, an ice crystal, and a sine wave. They appear to be old, and fashioned of aluminum with a gold-colored wash. The merchant wants Cr600 each, or Cr3,000 for the set of six.

K Kirka/Lanth (0305-CAA5345-8). This world is a mining community concerned with extracting rare earths from the mountain ranges. One miner does remember staying the winter in an octagon shelter some years ago. He can give directions to it (for a small price).

Macene/Rhylanor (0508-B000453-E). Oberlindes Lines has taken on the monopoly held by Tukera Lines, and is now shipping locally produced ore to Risek at 10% less. Local feeling is that its about time that someone paid attention to the needs of the miners here at Macene.

Paya/Aramis (0805-A655241-9). An octagon shelter used to be situated on a small hill just north of the starport. It was torn down some years ago when this starport was built. Indeed, Paya had no starport until 980, when Tukera Lines guaranteed runs through Paya and some Regina investors put up the money for the construction.

Pirema/Lanth (0206-D691142-5). The starport at Pirema is fully automated (which isn't saying much, because the starport does little more than run a continuous beacon and furnish radio directions to the local sea for refuelling) and there are no people in sight. Looking for more than a week will finally turn up a local miner who evasively reveals that he has seen an octagon off in the mountains. He will sell the location for Cr500.

Porozlo/Rhylanor (0310-A867A74-A). Talking about the Twilight's Peak and its history will result in the name of a person who might know something. He turns out to be a local naval historian who has researched the matter of the Gyro Cadiz task force in some depth. He believes that the mutineers were actually Zhodani agents. At least, he believes Zhodani agents supplied the forged identifications and papers which got the group into the task force. Further, he believes that, after the task force called at Porozlo, it proceeded to Fulacin and that the ships crashed there. He has long pages of proof of his theory, but no one has ever found the ships.

Rech/Lanth (0304-D9957AA-6). Rech is an agricultural world known for its smoked meats and fine leathers. There simultaneously with the adventurers is a Vargr trading mission buying meat for shipment back to the Vargr Extents. They seem very stand-offish, only speaking to someone with streetwise or liaison.

If they do engage in conversation, one of them will mention an octagon shelter back in their home territory (40 parsecs to coreward), built by the Octagon Society for distressed spacefarers.

Regina/Regina (0401-A788899-A). Initially, the Twilight's Peak anecdote should be imposed as a mandatory rumor. On a second arrival at Regina, the group finds a talkative person who seems knowledgeable about the Octagon Society. He isn't really, but he does know that they still have a branch on Wochiers and it is still operational.

Rethe/Regina (0804-E230AA8-8). It is Festival on Rethe and the local law level has been reduced to zero for the next six days. The world is temporarily classified as amber until the end of the festivities.

Rhylanor/Rhylanor (0210-A434934-F). The local starport authority has complete records, including a flight plan filed by the Gyro Cadiz task force— something not in the records elsewhere. The group planned its flight to be Rhylanor - Porozlo - Deep Space - Fulacin - Deep Space - Kinorb - Deep Space - Echiste - KKirka (without refuelling) - Rech - Djinni - Deep Space - Regina.

Risek/Rhylanor (0608-A325579-A). The Octagon Society built its shelter in the Risek system in orbit— in the form of an octahedral space station orbiting Risek. The station is still in existence, although now under the management of the Risek Space Authority. Checking out the station will provide pictures of three octagon shelters along with precise location data for Fulacin, Gileden, and Kinorb.

Roup/Regina (0701-C77A9A9-6). No rumor.

Treece/Lanth (0505-D232866-8). Treece is a system without a gas giant. Landing on the world will turn up little information concerning the discovery of the Blatant Lie. However, the local broker has 15 tons of very good local liquor, at Cr6,000 per ton. It should bring at least Cr12,000 per ton at Inthe or Dhian.

Tureded/Lanth (0207-C465540-9). There are four starports at Tureded, situated equidistant along the equator. Each has full facilities for a class C starport; one of the starports also has an octagon shelter now serving as a bar for spacers. This octagon is identical to the one on page 29, but converted to a tavern.

Valhalla/Rhylanor (0709-E365432-5). No rumor.

Vreibefger/Lanth (0108-E481542-2). In 874 the Imperium purchased the assets of the Octagon Society on Vreibefger and converted the grounds of the local shelter to an Imperial Research Station which is currently engaged in stock breeding experiments as part of a long range project to improve several of the meat producing animals of the Imperium. The octagon remains as a small part of the grounds today and is used for storage.

Wochiers/Regina (0802-EAC28CC-9). At the Octagon Society's height, it was headquartered on Regina. When the society collapsed, the headquarters and most branches were dissolved. Wochiers, however, has a continuing need for just the service that the society provides; the planetary atmosphere makes local surface travel difficult and dangerous. As a result, the Octagon Society still exists and is functional on Wochiers. All records of the society have been transferred to Wochiers from the dissolved branches, and it is now concerned entirely with local affairs. There is a museum and archives which can make a great deal of information available, at a research fee of Cr100 per day. Throw 9+ per day for success; success will make all of the data on the Octagon Book available.

Wypoc/Lanth (0303-E9C4547-C). Wypoc has an insidious atmosphere; the local inhabitants live in domed cities and rarely venture outside. Recently, however, the military (Imperial Marines) has been testing protective suits which will enable personnel to operate in the insidious atmosphere for long periods. There is a large Marine contingent on the world and the local economy is doing quite well.

There is some mention that the Marines have been here longer than one would think necessary to just test vacc suits; and none of the suits are being made available to locals.

Yori/Regina (0503-C360757-D). The local Imperial Research Station is engaged in long-range communications work.

Yurst/Regina (0704-E7B4643-5). No rumor.

Zivije/Rhylanor (0609-C6B199C-B). No rumor.

World Data: Fulacin

Welcome to Fulacin! Cataloged as Fulacin/Rhylanor 0203-A674120-D on the starmaps, this world is typical of many of the backwater worlds in the Imperium. Its 9600 kilometer diameter makes it of moderate size, while seas covering 40% of its surface make water available, if not overly plentiful.

Fulacin's most important feature, its combination blessing and curse, is its standard density tainted atmosphere. Widespread taint in the form of heavy metal dust and oxides means that the atmosphere, otherwise quite ordinary, is unbreathable without a filter mask. The dust is a sufficient irritant that it triggers allergies with great frequency, causes a wide variety of respiratory illnesses, and can cause carcinoma within years of exposure. Great pains are necessary to keep food clean and uncontaminated; filter masks can be removed only for very short periods, such as when eating and drinking. At the same time, the presence of this metal dust has made the world a promising location for development by MagnetoDynamics, Inc, which holds a resource exploitation grant from the Emperor for Fulacin. The world is an ideal location for use of the corporation's several patents dealing with recovery of metal from atmospheric and oceanic suspension.

MagnetoDynamics is responsible for the population of Fulacin; local inhabitants are all employees of the corporation, dependents, or local contractors. Local government is entirely in the hands of the corporation, which enforces reasonable regulations for the protection of its exploitation grant and of the locals.

The MagnetoDynamics patents are high technology items, and the overall tech level for the corporation and its settlement at the starport is D, higher than average within the Imperium.

FULACIN STARPORT

Perhaps most puzzling, and most interesting, about Fulacin is its class A starport, complete with ship construction and repair facilities, a Travellers' Aid Society hostel, and overhaul equipment, all so far from the established trade lanes. The answer, unsurprisingly, is money. Poor economic conditions almost forced the company to bankruptcy following the Fourth Frontier War (1082 to 1084) and at the first signs of recovery, the company diversified its operations by building the starport, which opened in 1099. While ultimately the starport will support mineral export traffic, it has an interim purpose of supporting (through landing fees and other income) the company's on-going survey of the world as ultimate exploitation is carefully planned.

The starport is a profitable operation for two reasons:

First, Fulacin has no gas giant, and all refuelling must be performed on the planet. Since the company has an exploitation grant for the world, refuelling from the oceans is an infringement. The starport has a monopoly on fuel sales.

Second, Fulacin is on the Spinward Main. Jump-1 ships regularly call at Fulacin on their way to other worlds throughout the Marches. The total cash flow is not excessive, but it does help to support the company's other operations.

World Data: Fulacin

One hex = 850 kilometers.
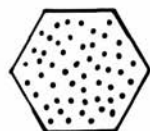
POLAR | MID-LATITUDE | EQUATORIAL | MID-LATITUDE | POLAR

SHIVVA SEA

RAIN SHADOW DESERT

METALLIN DESERT

SHALLOW SEA

Magneto Dynamics, Inc.
Starport
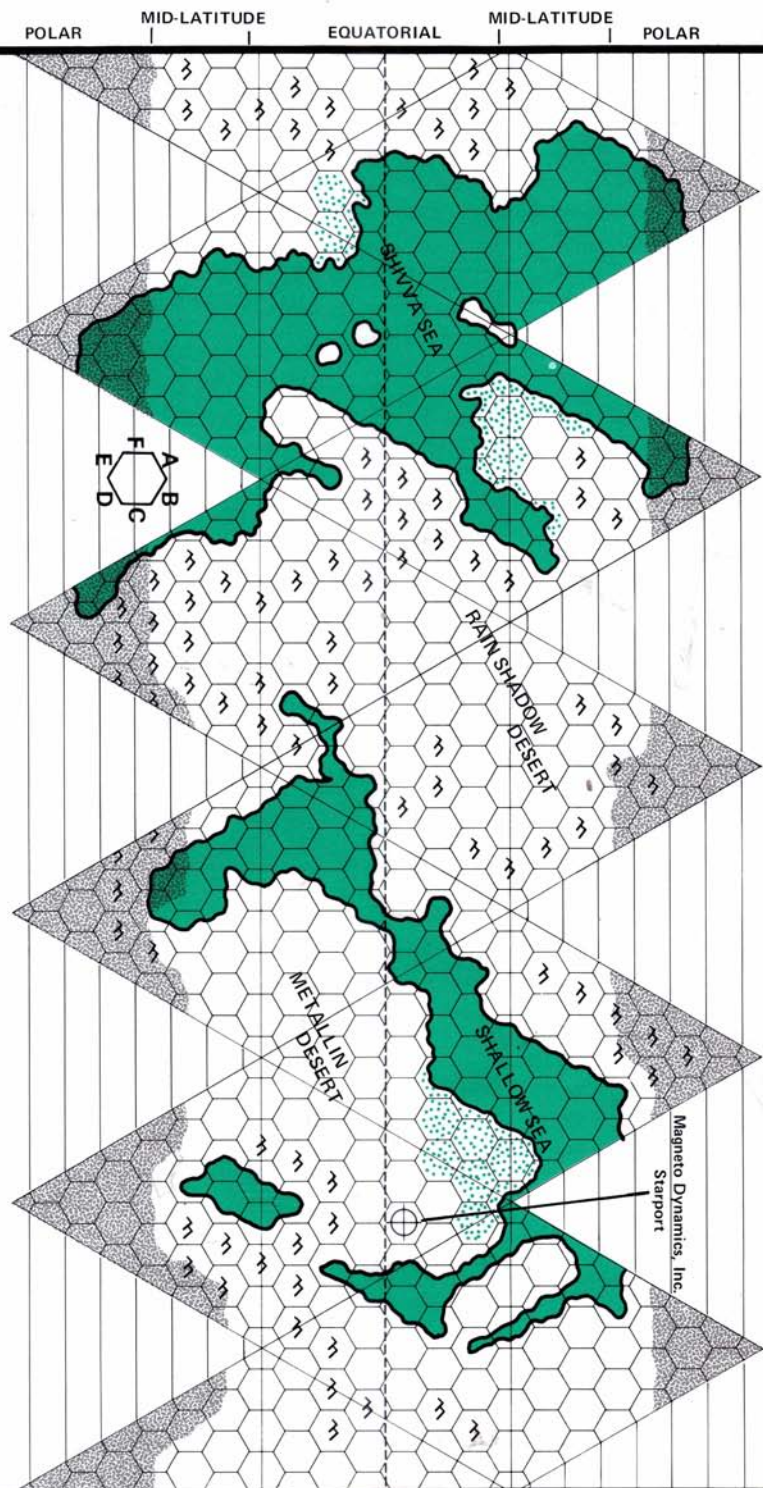
Plain Terrain 9 hours/hex
Open, undistinguished terrain with flat prairies and clear vistas.

Die	Event Type
1	Animal Encounter— Plain
2	Tall Grass
3	Animal Encounter— Plain
4	Forest
5	Storm
6	Prairie Fire
7	Deep Snow
8	Animal Encounter— Plain
9	Deep Snow
10	Concealed Gully
11	Blizzard
12	Forest

Mountain 40 hours/hex
High elevation terrain with lofty peaks and craggy valleys.

Die	Event Type
1	Storm
2	Rockslide
3	Animal Encounter— Mountain
4	Chasm
5	Storm
6	Rockslide
7	Blizzard
8	Animal Encounter— Mountain
9	Deep Snow
10	Impassible
11	Blizzard
12	Forest

Wetland 18 hours/hex
Congested, low lying terrain with plentiful water and vegetation.

Die	Event Type
1	Animal Encounter— Wetland
2	Marsh
3	Animal Encounter— Wetland
4	Storm
5	Quicksand
6	Marsh

Desert 9 hours/hex
Flat, hot, plain terrain in equatorial regions of the world.

Die	Event Type
1	Oasis
2	Animal Encounter— Desert
3	Sand Sea
4	Oasis
5	Rough Valleys and Canyons
6	Sand Storm

Ocean 170 hours/hex
Clear, unobstructed sea surface with gentle winds and slow currents.

Die	Event Type
1	Sargasso
2	Shallows
3	Animal Encounter— Ocean
4	Fog
5	Sea Storm
6	Ice Bergs
7	Thin Ice
8	Fog
9	Animal Encounter— Ice Shelf
10	Deep Snow
11	Storm
12	Thin Ice
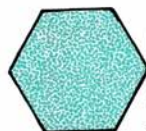
Ice Cover —
Thick, heavy ice cap overlying other terrain types. Ice does not affect speed directly, but does call for a DM of +6 on the event tables. For example, ice plus mountain makes all rolls on the mountain table results of 7 to 12.

Notes: Rolls are with one die. Roll on the event tables once per terrain hex.

Speeds: Time per hex assumes an ATV with a cruising speed in plain terrain of 100kph. Each hex is about 850 km across. An air/raft would spend about 8 hours per hex (except mountain: about 16 hours/hex).

TERRAIN EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS

Once the group begins its travels on Fulacin, they must necessarily pass through several hexes of the world as they search for the octagon. A variety of events may be called for by the events tables; the following descriptions apply to those events. Most of these events are written in terms of their effect on ATVs. Those using aircraft or air/rafts will generally be unaffected unless explicitly stated.

1. Animal Encounter. Occurs in all types of terrain. *Movement catches the eye of one of your group.* The group has encountered one or more animals. Refer to the animal encounter tables and roll for the specific type of animal present.

2. Blizzard. Occurs in plain and mountain terrain. *A winter storm is brewing. Severe winds and precipitation begin, making visibility near zero and movement impossible.* The storm continues for 1D days, with only occasional reductions in force. ATVs must stop and may not continue until the storm abates. Air/rafts roll 8+ to avoid the storm, turning back into the previous hex; otherwise, they are grounded and must spend the time on the surface. After a blizzard, treat the hex as deep snow for at least a week.

3. Chasm. Occurs in mountain terrain. *A deep chasm splits the mountains.* Throw 10+ once per hour to find a suitable path for an ATV down in to it allowing continued progress; otherwise, the party must turn back to the previous hex. Air/rafts may disregard this requirement.

4. Concealed Gully. Occurs in plain terrain. *Snow has drifted smooth in front of the group and conceals a deep gully.* Throw 2D for the effects of the impact (if in surface vehicle). DM: - ATV skill, DM -2 if moving slower than standard speed for this terrain. Less than 6 has no effect other than a severe jolt. Results of 7, 8, or 9 indicate that the vehicle has sustained minor damage and will require 30 minutes repair work (to be performed within the hour). A result of 10 or more requires that the vehicle stop immediately and will take eight hours to repair.

5. Deep Snow. Occurs in plain, ice-covered ocean, and mountain terrain. *Very deep snow covers the ground in all directions.* Ground vehicle speed must be reduced to half; time in the hex is doubled.

6. Fog. Occurs in ocean and ice-covered ocean terrain. *Fog obscures vision in all directions.* Throw two dice: on 7-, the fog disappears within an hour; on 8 to 10, the fog disappears within six hours; on 11+, the fog remains for the entire day. Forward ground progress is virtually impossible in fog; air travel requires a reduction in speed to half.

7. Forest. Occurs in plain and mountain terrain. *A dark green forest appears before the vehicle.* Throw two dice: on 6 or less, the forest is a tangled morass of trees and vegetation and is impassible; it must be detoured around at an additional ten hour cost. On 7 or more, the forest is reasonably clear, and can be driven through. Throw for animal encounter while in the forest.

8. Ice Bergs. Occurs in ocean terrain. *Ice bergs are sighted.* The group should stay clear of ice bergs. Moving near one may cause it to shift, toppling over onto a vehicle, or perhaps lifting the vehicle out of the water. Such a berg will shift naturally every 1D days.

9. Impassable. Occurs in mountain terrain. *The way ahead is completely blocked and cannot be negotiated by a surface vehicle.* The group must backtrack to the previous hex and try another path.

10. Marsh. Occurs in wetland terrain. *This area is water-soaked and low, with*

much *vegetation and many trees growing in it.* Marsh impedes surface travel, reducing it to 36 hours/hex.

11. Oasis. Occurs in desert terrain. *A patch of green is ahead of the group on the horizon.* The oasis is a source of water and shade for the group. Throw two dice: on 10+, the oasis is dying, with very little water; on 9 exactly, it is brackish, with contaminated or poison water; on 8 or less, it has plentiful water.

12. Quicksand. Occurs in wetlands terrain. *The vehicle has become mired in mud.* This mud is actually quicksand to a depth of nearly three meters. Persons leaving an ATV to work on freeing it will be trapped and sucked down unless fastened to the vehicle with ropes. Throw dexterity to avoid being trapped otherwise; DM + survival skill.

13. Rockslide. Occurs in mountain terrain. *The path ahead is blocked by an accumulation of rocks at about a 40 degree angle.* Pushing past this blockage will require excellent driving ability and a good vehicle, (throw 10+ to succeed; DM + ATV skill) or the vehicle will be disabled for 1D days while it is repaired. Or, the way can be cleared by hand (some mechanical and vehicular help) with a delay of 1D times 8 hours.

14. Rough Valleys and Canyons. Occurs in desert terrain. *Precipitous river canyons cut the desert here.* Moving through this area on the surface will require at least triple normal time.

15. Sand Sea. Occurs in desert terrain. *This portion of the desert is loose, shifting sand.* Ground vehicle progress is reduced to 18 hours per hex.

16. Sand Storm. Occurs in desert terrain. *A storm has begun, and is whipping small bits of sand to high speeds.* This storm will last for 1D time 8 hours and make forward progress by surface or air impossible. In addition, individuals must protect themselves from the sting of the sand and the danger to their eyes.

17. Sargasso. Occurs in ocean terrain. *Dense vegetation covers the surface of the ocean.* A vehicle afloat in the ocean will become entangled in this seaweed: throw six dice for the degree of entanglement. One person can remove one point of entanglement per hour in clear weather (maximum of three persons topside on an ATV or it will capsize). Throw 10+ per hour for rough weather which will force a halt to untangling, last two hours, and add 1D points of entanglement.

18. Shallows. Occurs in ocean terrain. *This part of the sea is very shallow, never more than a meter deep, and quite flat.* An ATV can proceed using its wheels or tracks to make good time: half normal transit times.

19. Storm. Occurs in plain, wetland, ice-covered ocean, and mountain terrain. *A severe rainstorm has begun.* The storm will last for 1D time eight hours, during which time no forward progress is possible. In the following three days, plain, wetland, and mountain terrain will be muddy, with speeds of surface vehicles reduced to half.

20. Sea Storm. Occurs in ocean terrain. *A strong storm (lasting 1D times eight hours), accompanied by high winds and rain, makes any air/raft or aircraft turn back to the previous hex.* Any surface vessel or vehicle is tossed by wind and wave. No forward progress is made in the period of the storm. Each person must throw endurance or less to save against seasickness which will disable the individual for the remainder of the storm plus six hours.

21. Thin Ice. Occurs in ice-covered ocean terrain. *The ice ahead is too thin to support a vehicle.* The group must detour, adding five hours to time in the hex.

Animal Encounters

Fulacin is a large, unexplored world, and its plains and deserts abound in wild-life. These animals come in all sizes and types, and may be found in all parts of the world.

ENCOUNTERS

When directed by the events table, roll on the animal encounter table for the correct type of terrain in order to determine the type of animals involved. Assume that the adventurers do not have surprise if they are in their vehicle; if on foot, roll for surprise normally.

Reactions: The final column of the tables contains codes for animal reactions. An is the throw on which the animal will attack (thus A4 means it will attack on 4+). Fn is the throw on which the animal will flee. Sn is the animal speed. Throw An and Fn in the order shown on the table.

Several Tables Provided: One animal encounter table is provided for each of the primary terrain types— ice cap, desert, plain, wetland, mountain, and ocean. Use the appropriate terrain table.

THE ANIMALS

All animals on Fulacin are native to the world (or were transported here long enough ago to adapt to its tainted atmosphere). As a result, all are contaminated by its heavy metal concentrations and are inedible. Hunting, except for protection or trophies, is probably not called for.

The following animals on the encounter tables are of special interest.

Snowcat: The name snowcat is common throughout human space; it seems that any vaguely feline pouncer which shows any affinity to snow and cold is called a snowcat, much as arctic hunters are called polar bears. Averaging 100 kilograms each, snowcats congregate in prides or packs of three (rarely more) and hunt together for their food. They are typical pouncers in that they lie in ambush and attack with a burst of speed; striking from concealment, and waiting until at close or medium range, the strongest of the group pounces first, with each of the remaining two snowcats in the pride striking at about one minute intervals.

The snowcat is well-camouflaged; its dark coat with vertical light stripes serves to conceal it in tall grass, rocky outcroppings, and even in shadows on snowfields (allows DM +2 on surprise rolls).

Snowcats are most commonly found in the mountain and ice cap regions of Fulacin, where they make their lairs and hunt the shaggy groats of the hills. Less frequently, they are also found in other regions, especially the plains and deserts where they are in pursuit of migrating groat herds.

Groat: This grazer is a native of the mountain regions of Fulacin and lives most of its life in large herds grazing on upper mountain fields. Relatively innocuous as individuals, the groat in a herd is a dangerous encounter, as the animals find strength in numbers and will attack almost any perceived danger.

The shaggy groat hair is the most obvious resource the animals can provide. At first, it appears ordinary hair, but once cleaned and groomed, it has a softness and silkiness which rivals the finest synthetic. In addition, the high concentration of heavy metals in the strands provides a two-fold advantage. First, the hair is proof against most insects and mildew; the fibers are poisonous to most off-world pests. Second, a simple chemical treatment can bring out an iridescent shimmering quality which is quite attractive.

Groats as individuals are quite capable of defending themselves. Their three-toed feet give them splendid footing on the rocky outcroppings of the mountains; in desert (especially sandy desert) these hooves are a disadvantage, and reduce their speed by half. They fight defensively with their teeth and hooves (hooves-1). Finally, they have a secret weapon. Concealed under the tail is a small gland which can expel a noxious fluid to a distance of nearly three meters. Somewhat like tear gas, it makes an enemy or attacker concentrate on getting away rather than continuing the attack. Strangely, the fluid seems to work on anything except snowcats. A human who is sprayed with this fluid will be unwelcome company to any companions for at least a day, and will be required to take great efforts to remove the smell (baths, keep in a vacc suit for hours, physical separation).

The groats are also subject to a migration instinct. At irregular times, herds of groats make a long migration from their mountain meadows to some specific oasis in the desert for mating and for the old ones to die. After combat between the older males to determine the new leaders within the herd, the groats then return the way they came to spend the rest of the year in the mountains.

CLIMATE

The weather on Fulacin depends on latitude and terrain. It is unremarkable and requires little attention from the referee. Obviously, it is cold in polar areas and hot in deserts. In addition, the following factors should be considered.

Mountains: Mountains are routinely swept by storms (throw 8+ for a storm) which will stop all air travel and reduce surface travel to one quarter. Throw 8+ for a snowstorm lasting 1D days; otherwise it is rain lasting 1D hours.

Deserts: The equatorial regions of Fulacin are desert, hot and dry. Air travel over them is usually routine, but throw 11+ for a turbulent updraft which will then ground the craft (throw 8+ to avoid; DM of operator skill). Repairs will take 3 to 18 hours of hard work. Surface vehicles are subject to overheating and to damage from dust and sand.

Oceans: Oceans present a hazard from weather because storms at sea can bring down even the best of aircraft. Throw 10+ daily for a storm which may crash the craft (on 8+; DM of operator skill). Surface craft caught in a storm are subject to random directional movement (being blown off course) from the storm.

Animal Encounter Tables: The six tables on these two pages provide animal encounters for all of the terrain shown on the Fulacin map. Throws are modified based on the latitude regions (polar, mid-latitudes, and equatorial) and terrain type.

PLAIN TERRAIN   Fulacin A674120-D

Die		Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor		Wounds & Weapons		
1	5	Grazers	400kg	20/14	jack	5	hooves	F8 A4 S2
2	1	Intimidator	100kg	10/10	none	8	as blade	A6 F5 S1
3	88	Grazers	100kg	12/ 6	jack	5	hooves	F7 A8 S2
4	3	Pouncers	50kg	8/ 9	none	12	claws	A8 F6 S3
5	20	Grazers	400kg	8/16	none	8	hooves	F7 A8 S1
6	1	Intermittent	200kg	18/ 2	jack	6	claws	F7 A8 S1
7	3	Flying Intermittents	12kg	3/ 5	none	6	claws	F8 A2 S1
8	3	Pouncers	50kg	8/ 9	none	12	claws	A8 F6 S3
9	4	Gatherers	100kg	10/ 2	mesh-1	8	horns	A9 F4 S1
10	1	Killer	400kg	20/10	none	13	teeth	A0 F9 S2

Note: In mid-latitudes, throw on this table without modification. In ice-covered plain terrain, DM +4.

DESERT TERRAIN   Fulacin A674120-D

Die		Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor		Wounds & Weapons		
1	1	Reducer	100kg	21/ 9	cloth+1	6	teeth	A9 F7 S2
2	1	Hijacker	25kg	7/ 3	cloth	3	blade	A4 F6 S2
3	11	Grazers	6kg	5/ 2	mesh	3	as foil	F3 A6 S1
4	18	Grazers	100kg	12/ 6	jack	5	hooves	F7 A8 S2
5	3	Pouncers	50kg	8/ 9	none	12	claws	A8 F6 S3
6	72	Eaters	1kg	1/ 1	none	1	teeth	A0 F9 S1
7	18	Amphibious Grazers	25kg	8/ 7	none	4	teeth	F6 A8 S2
8	2	Swimming Eaters	100kg	18/ 2	jack	12	teeth	A3 F9 S2
9	1	Hunter	200kg	20/10	cloth	9	claws	A6 F8 S2
10	1	Pouncer	400kg	15/ 8	none	11	teeth	A0 F0 S2

Note: Desert terrain is plain terrain occurring in equatorial regions. If the hex is a shore hex (adjacent to ocean), DM +4.

WETLAND TERRAIN   Fulacin A674120-D

Die		Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor		Wounds & Weapons		
1	1	Pouncer	25kg	5/ 8	none	6	claws	A0 F6 S2
2	2	Amphibious Eaters	400kg	16/12	cloth	18	teeth	A5 F8 S2
3	3	Amphib Intermittent	200kg	20/ 5	none	12	claws	F9 A6 S2
4	2	Carrion-Eaters	3kg	3/ 3	cloth	6	teeth	A7 F7 S2
5	18	Flying Grazers	3kg	6/ 0	cloth-1	8	claws	F6 A8 S3
6	1	Intermittent	1200kg	23/18	none	30	thrasher	F9 A9 S1
7	8	Filters	25kg	12/12	none	8	teeth	F9 A0 S1
8	1	Killer	1200kg	32/16	jack	13	teeth+1	A1 F8 S2
9	1	Chaser	50kg	16/ 8	cloth	5	teeth	A0 F8 S2
10	1	Siren	25kg	14/ 4	mesh	2	teeth	A0 F9 S0

Note: In mid-latitudes, throw on this table without modification. In equatorial regions, DM +4.

Use the animal encounter table called for by the event from page 17. Animal reactions (the A9 F9 S1 column) on the tables are explained on page 20.

Other animal encounters are possible using Supplement 2— *Animal Encounters.*

MOUNTAIN TERRAIN   Fulacin A674120-D

Die		Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor		Wounds & Weapons	
1	16	Reducers	12kg	2/ 2	cloth	4	teeth	A9 F6 S1
2	8	flying Intermittents	6kg	3/ 0	none	6	as blade	A7 F4 S3
3	1	Chaser	50kg	12/17	jack	8	claws	A0 F7 S3
4	23	Grazers	100kg	12/ 6	jack	5	hooves	F7 A8 S2
5	1	Trapper	3200kg	22/20	jack	42	teeth	A0 F9 S1
6	1	Gatherer	400kg	27/ 7	cloth	14	teeth	A9 F8 S1
7	12	Intermittents	1200kg	12/ 6	none	12	teeth	F8 A6 S1
8	2	Gatherers	100kg	8/ 4	mesh	6	claws	A6 F8 S1
9	1	Chaser	50kg	12/10	jack	7	claws	A0 F7 S2
10	1	Hunter	800kg	20/ 8	cloth	7	claws	A6 F5 S1

Note: In equatorial and mid-latitudes, throw on this table without modification. If ice-covered or polar mountains, DM +4.

OCEAN TERRAIN   Fulacin A674120-D

Die		Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor		Wounds & Weapons	
1	1	Swimming Eater	25kg	8/ 3	mesh	6	teeth	A3 F8 S2
2	6	Swimming Hunters	50kg	9/ 0	none	6	teeth	A7 F6 S1
3	18	Swimming Grazers	25kg	10/ 1	cloth	3	stinger	F8 A5 S1
4	8	Flying Intermittents	3kg	3/ 0	none	2	as blade	F7 A4 S1
5	1	Swimming Chaser	100kg	10/ 6	none	5	teeth	A0 F6 S2
6	1	Swimming Killer	200kg	8/ 8	none	7	teeth	A4 F6 S2
7	1	Amphibious Hunter	400kg	13/ 6	jack	8	claws	A6 F9 S1
8	14	Swimming Grazers	3kg	1/ 1	none	1	teeth	F8 A8 S1
9	5	Swimming Reducers	25kg	2/ 8	jack	4	teeth	A3 F7 S2
10	1	Flying Hunter	6kg	1/ 1	cloth	3	claws	A9 F4 S1

Note: In equatorial regions, throw on this table without modification. In mid-latitudes, DM +4.

ICE SHELF TERRAIN   Fulacin A674120-D

Die		Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor		Wounds & Weapons	
1	1	Hunter	800kg	30/10	cloth	8	teeth	A6 F6 S1
2	3	Chasers	50kg	10/ 8	none	7	claws	A8 F8 S2
3	1	Carrion-Eater	12kg	6/ 8	none	7	teeth	A7 F4 S2
4	3	Hunters	50kg	9/ 5	cloth	8	claws	A9 F4 S2
5	1	Amphibious Hunter	50kg	10/ 3	mesh	9	claws	A8 F6 S2
6	1	Amphibious Trapper	200kg	21/ 4	cloth	10	teeth	A7 F5 S1
7	9	Grazers	25kg	8/ 5	none	3	teeth	F6 A5 S2
8	1	Pouncer	100kg	19/10	cloth	8	teeth	A0 F6 S1
9	1	Amphibious Chaser	100kg	12/ 8	none	7	claws	A6 F6 S2
10	1	Chaser	50kg	6/ 5	jack	8	teeth	A7 F5 S1

Note: Ice shelf terrain is ice-covered ocean. If in a full ocean hex, throw on this table without modification. If in an edge hex (part ocean, part ice shelf), DM +4.

Twilight's Peak

The ultimate goal of adventurers on Fulacin is the wreck of the Gyro Cadiz and the Octagon tower, supposedly the present site of the cargo from the wrecked ships.

Searching: The referee should select a specific mountain hex on the Fulacin map and note it as the site of the octagon tower. Another site about three hexes away should be noted as the crash site of the Carlisle. These locations should be kept secret from the adventurers.

Before beginning a meticulous search, the adventurers may ask for an orbital survey from the starport or from MagnetoDynamics, or they may conduct one of their own. Such a survey will produce indications of metal enough that several will be promising leads. The referee should specify those locations as likely ones on the map (they should number between 3 and 10 and all must be in mountain hexes; the true locations should be included).

Trip times in various hexes are given on the event tables; such times cover a simple transit through the hex, not a detailed search. In order to search a hex, the group must spend time in periods equal to the transit time through the hex. For each such period of time, one roll for success in the search is permitted: throw 12+ for success. DMs are allowed. For each period in the hex searching, DM +1. If searching by air, DM +1. If storm or blizzard, -6. Of course, the object of the search must be present for the search to be a success.

Adventurers must remember to stop for food, rest, sleep, and recreation from time to time. Penalize those who do not with extreme negative DMs as well as chances for mishap or accident.

In addition, for each period spent in a hex in search, throw for an event. If the event is chasm, allow a DM on search of +2. In any event, if the search is successful, impose an event of chasm, and then proceed to the search for a way to the bottom of the chasm. It should produce the road, described next.

THE ROAD

Winding up the side of the mountain valley is a small, one-lane road cutting into the side of the sheer rock wall. In places, it nearly tunnels into the rock, and in others it spans small crevasses with single arch bridges. All of the road is masonry, finely cut stone set neatly into place.

Weathering has taken its toll in the course of the years, and the road has lengths of broken or buckled paving. Local vegetation has grown through the masonry seams in spots. In places, nearly the entire width has been carried away by rock slides and ice-weathering. The road is usable by an ATV to about half-way down the mountainside; thereafter, progress must be on foot.

The Other Direction: If the group cares to investigate, it may follow the road off in the other direction. That way, it follows the top of the chasm wall until it joins a promontory jutting out into valley. The road then becomes a broad avenue which, on extension, directs the eye to an octagonal building in a crag in the center of the chasm below— the Octagon! A light is visible in the window.

Not very obviously, the rock face immediately below this observation level is of some interest. Close examination will show that this rock is polished smooth, and artificially; this fact is not obvious, and the rock face is cloaked in shadow most of the time, due to its location and the surrounding mountain walls.

THE OCTAGON

Sited on the top of a granite crag nestled in a valley, the octagon is an intriguing structure, if only because it is incongruous in the otherwise natural setting. A light shines brightly in the single window visible from afar. Watching for any period of time (especially at night) will reveal shadows moving about within. Once at the bottom of the chasm (via the road), climbing the crag is a relatively easy task, taking about an hour on foot or several minutes by air/raft. An ATV will be unable to make the journey, but it probably couldn't make the trip to the bottom of the chasm anyway.

Approaching the building, the top of the peak can be seen to be covered with a light blue-green moss, similar to ground cover previously discovered. The building is set on a stone terrace which provides a flat base. In the approach, the rock of the crag blends easily into the terrace.

Just before reaching the terrace itself, five cairns of rock can be seen all in a row. These are graves, and should be recognizable as such. If not, or if they are dug up anyway, each holds a single skeleton.

Approaching the terrace, the octagon looms large before the group, and can be seen to be constructed from native rock, with strong ribs or columns of stone forming the corners of the eight-sided building. The window with the light is on the second story, and cannot be entered from ground level. Looking closer at the building itself, a band of light-colored stone rings the structure at about head height; carved on this band of stone is a continuous string of runes or characters which are completely unintelligible. However, if any character has in his possession a coyn (from *Shadows,* from *Research Station Gamma,* or even the counterfeit ones purchased from the merchant on Kinorb), a connection may be made (perhaps now, perhaps later) and one or more runes will match the engraving on the coyn.

The terrace leads around the building, presenting a path about two meters wide. There is no railing or curbing on the terrace, and most people are at least a little cautious in the presence of such a situation. Looking over the building from these locations, it can be seen that the south side of the octagon also has a window. There is no danger unless the terrace is slick with ice or rain (throw dexterity plus 3 to fall; DM for safety rope or other precaution). If someone does fall, the drop from the lip of the terrace is enough to cause severe injury (2D hits).

Beyond the narrow path, the terrace again presents a large area and reveals a single entrance to the structure. Up a small flight of three steps, a broad double door in the center of one face of the building is closed by stout wooden doors. Knocking gives no response; pushing on either gives some resistance, as if locked or barred within. The doors can be forced with relative ease: any energy weapon will burn through them, as will any explosive. Applying a combined strength of 10+ will force the doors open; if that strength is 13 or greater, the door being pushed will come off its hinges and clatter to the floor. An explosion will destroy the doors; any other method of entry will show what was holding them closed: a single skeleton slumped behind them both.

Ground Level: Once within the octagon, the building can be seen to be of at least two stories, of which this is the ground floor. Flooring is of wood strongly built. Above, a ceiling of timbers stands at about three meters; the center is cut out to show a balcony above. A pale light illuminates the upper level from a source not readily apparent. Enough light filters down through the opening to make vision easy.

1. Entrance. Aside from the doors and the skeleton, the doorway area has one other item of note: crude iron (rusty) brackets and a massive wooden beam. The beam is obviously intended to bar the doorway. If it had been in place, those doors would not have opened for anything short of an energy weapon or a heavy explosion.

2. Fireplace. The masonry of the walls extends beyond their normal thickness at this location to create a large fireplace with a masonry floor and vents to a chimney.

The floor of the fireplace still has wood ash and partially-burnt logs in place, although water drippage from the chimney vent has reduced some of the ash to a black stain on the floor.

Cut into the masonry are toesteps leading up, while solidly fixed to the stone is a single iron bar for a hand grip. This ladder leads upward to the second floor of the octagon. *Referee:* Actually, the iron bar is not that solidly in place, and will slowly come loose. Count the total strength points that climb the ladder, and when the total reaches 40, the bar suddenly gives way. The person on the ladder must throw dexterity or less to avoid a nasty fall. If unsuccessful, inflict 2D hits on the person.

Very close examination (perhaps an hour of detailed scrutiny) of the fireplace will reveal a loose stone which can be removed to reveal a narrow shaft leading down. It is very black and forbidding below, and the shaft mouth is covered with webs.

3. Bedding. Scattered around this area are several sleeping bags, all in reasonably good condition (sheltered from sunlight and weather, they have not deteriorated), although there appear to be some small bugs crawling around in them. Additional equipment includes a small campstove, several metal bottles of water, and some heavy climbing rope marked with red dirt.

Markings on the equipment include the name Gyro Cadiz and IISS Blatant Lie. Some (but not all) of the equipment is old style standard scout service issue.

4. Equipment and Crates. This area contains perhaps twenty crates (with shipping numbers and addresses indicating the Regina system) containing a wide variety of contents. Looking at just the surface boxes, contents listings indicate radiation treatment drugs and radiation diagnostic equipment. Looking through this group of boxes completely will take at least two hours. Such a search will show that four additional items are also present in crates: one crate of combat drug (1440 doses), one crate of truth drug (1440 doses), two crates of medical literature, primarily brochures detailing the hazards and benefits of radiation treatment drugs, and one crate of binary glue— fourteen pairs of half-liter bottles which, when the two parts are combined, make a strong (500 kilogram) bond. In addition, one crate has been opened, and does not contain radiation therapy drugs; instead, it has been used to carry a large quantity of greasy mechanical components. Someone with engineering expertise will see that they are parts to a power plant for a starship— the fusion regulator.

Upper Level: The second floor, pierced in its center by the open area, is constructed of timber beams and wood planking. The level has a very high (perhaps 7 to 10 meter) ceiling, and stone walls as on the ground level. Hanging from the rafters are long ropes supporting wooden platforms at just about waist level: their purpose is not immediately obvious.

5. Entry Passage. The footholds leading up come out in this location, next to the fireplace. Close examination of the fireplace shows that the chimney vent for this fireplace is not connected to any other vent (like the vent from the fireplace below). The fireplace, it may be noted, is much smaller than the one on the ground level. The masonry contains several small holes (about ten centimeters across) scattered throughout its face. These holes, if examined, have an air flow and may be ventilation holes.

6. Window. This window is the one visible from a distance. It is about one meter wide, and two meters high, with the sill very close to the floor. There is a large lantern placed on the floor near it. If the area is dark, the lantern is on and produces a strong glow; if the area is not dark, the lantern is not on.

This lantern, marked with Imperial Navy identifications and stock numbers, is a fusion emergency light, stands about 40cm high, and weighs about six kilograms. A photoelectric cell activates the lamp when darkness falls unless overridden by a switch. This type of lantern is normally functional for a maximum of three years, much longer than this one has apparently operated. Close examination will reveal a small (6 by 4 by 10 cm) box attached which is feeding power to the lamp.

The lantern is placed so that at least one suspended platform is between it and the window. Slight movement of the platform will cast moving shadows through the window and may give the appearance of someone being on this level.

7. Window. This window, facing south, is nearly identical to the one facing west. The major difference is the presence of some iron bar stubs on the lower sill. Their purpose cannot be ascertained with certainty; they may be the remnants of barred grillework, or they may have supported some sort of rope or chain.

8. Open Area. This area is relatively unfeatured, and is free even of the suspended platforms.

Top Level: The roof is a very strong wooden structure, with a double thickness and waterproofing. A single trap door is present, accessible from rungs cut into the masonry along the chimney inside.

9. Chimney. The masonry chimney is close set to the top of the roof, and contains three smoke vents. The trap door is placed close to the chimney.

10. Patch. The wood of the roof has either deteriorated or been broken through at some time in the far past, and the area has been patched with sheet metal from a ship's streamlined skin. In places the workmanship is rather crude, but the patch is serviceable, and there was no evidence of leakage below.

11. Ring Link. Attached to the masonry of the roof edge is a single large ring (30cm in diameter) in a universal joint to allow movement. There is no rope attached, but there probably used to be. The positioning of the ring link is directly over the window on the south edge.

12. Notch. A deep notch has been cut into the masonry lip of the building, deep enough to allow a gunner to lie on the roof and aim to the terrace and front doors below without being seen. This notch is not original to the building. Close examination will give an insight into the construction techniques used in the

structure. No mortar is used; instead, the stones are close set, with an interlocking ridge and groove being carved laboriously in each one. If this technique is used throughout, the entire building should be very strong, and must have taken a large amount of labor to construct.

Lower Level: This level is entered through the shaft near the fireplace. It is entirely dark. The floor is wood, similar to that of the ground level. Ceiling height is approximately three meters, so there is a lot of headroom.

13. Shaft and Fireplace. This location gives evidence that it was used for cooking (or at least eating— there are bones scattered about).

14. Sand. The floor here is covered with gritty sand. Little is here, but there is enough to reveal an air current blowing through the wall on this edge. The sand also slowly disappears through the flooring— a clue that there is another floor below.

15. Trap Door. Once there is some light, it is quite obvious that there is a trap door in this area. It can be seen set into the floor. It leads down, but there are no stairs or ladder.

16. Seeping Water. A small fissure in the foundation is seeping water into this area. The water, if checked, smells and tastes slightly sulfurous.

Lowest Level: This level is entered through the trap door at location 15. The floor is solid masonry similar to that of the walls and terrace. This area is dark, and no details are visible without assistance.

The ceiling is one meter in height, which requires that humans crouch while standing within.

Set in the center of the floor is a large, eight-pointed star. This star is formed of pearly white stone set flush with the masonry of the floor. Each spike from the star points to the center of one of the eight walls of the octagon; one spike (the one pointing north) is noticeably larger than the others.

17. Spike. The north-pointing spike extends to nearly touch the wall on this side. It can be recognized as the supports on this level for the fireplaces above.
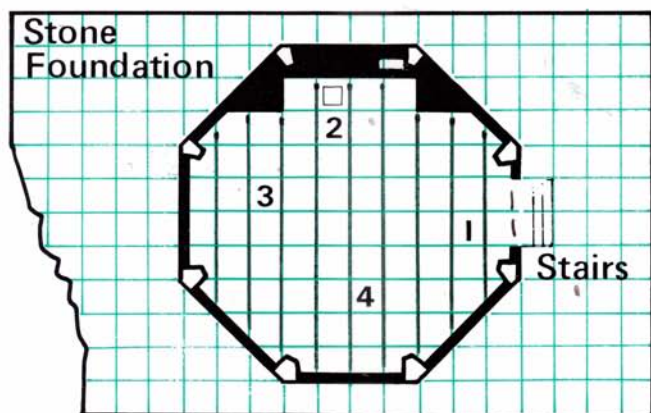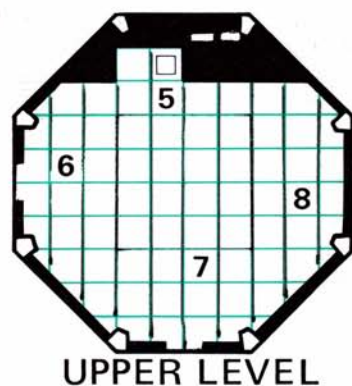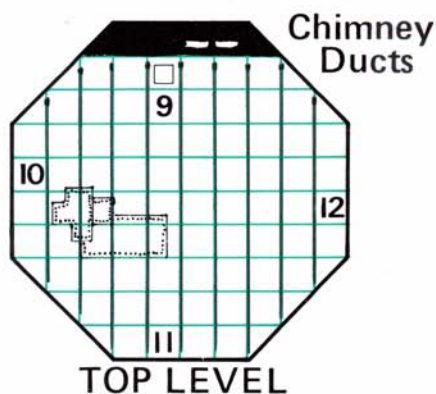
18. Chair. A single wooden chair featuring excellent craftsmanship is placed on a small raised area of stone at the spike facing west. The chair is massive and well-constructed.

19. Shelves. This entire wall is covered from floor to ceiling with small shelves with a wide variety of items. Searching through them shows most to be small jars filled with liquids and powders, all of which appear to be unidentifiable. One jar, however, is clearly labeled as radiation therapy drug, and appears to be from the shipment in the crates on ground level. Checking will confirm from label and lot number that it is.

20. Chair. A single massive stone bench is placed on a small raised area of stone at the spike facing east. The bench is adorned with inscriptions similar to those on the outside of the octagon.

Cut into the seat of the bench are several circular indentations, each engraved with a symbol (such as flame, crystal, droyne, and cloud). If anyone has a coyn and thinks to try, the small disk will be found to fit the indentation perfectly. Doing so does not cause anything to happen, but it does bring the subject of the coyns to mind for the adventurers.
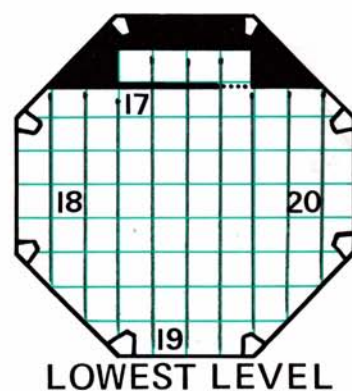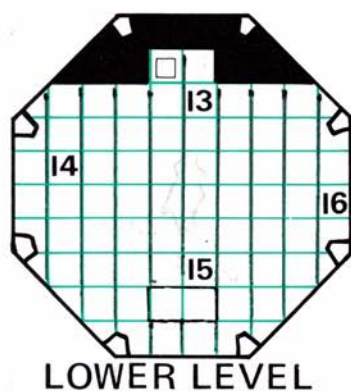
Hidden beneath the bench is a small compartment with a stone lid; it contains three coyns, all three of them engraved with a droyne.

Chimney Ducts

TOP LEVEL

UPPER LEVEL

Stone Foundation

Stairs

Scale in Meters

Sheer Drop

LOWER LEVEL

LOWEST LEVEL

The Octagon

THE CATACOMBS

The eight-pointed star in the center of the lowest level conceals a stairway leading down still further. The concealment is excellent; a counter-weighted stone hinged to swing down at a touch, but only after one of the symbols on the large star is depressed. Anyone randomly walking on this level within the star may accidentally push the right piece (apparently the people who built this never thought someone would be walking around within their star figure). Throw 9+ for each ten minutes on the lowest level for someone to hit the right piece. The stairway leads down to chamber 1 in the catacombs.

The entire nature of the rock within the catacombs is different from that of the octagon. The octagon is built of close-fitted, fine masonry; the rooms and corridors of the catacombs are of rough cut rock with occasional timbers to shore up ceilings and places with crumbled rock on the floor, as if from partially collapsed roofs.

Each of the chambers is a stairway leading down to a landing. That landing may have a corridor leading off from it and does have a stairway leading still further down into the crag of the octagon.

1. Chamber 1. The stairs lead to this landing and a corridor branches to the east. As the first of the many rooms, it should be noted as dark and damp.

A. This large square room is empty.

2. Chamber 2. The stairs leading down pause at this landing and then continue. It appears that a corridor once lead west from the landing, but it is now blocked with masonry. This is not actually the case: the wall needed shoring and masonry was used. There is no corridor.

3. Chamber 3. The landing for chamber 3 leads to the east, to two rooms.

B. This room, located on a branch of the larger corridor, has a floor covered with thick dust, probably from a loose ceiling. Looking closely, an individual with good light can see small footprints (as if from scavengers or reducers) criss-crossing the dust.

C. This room has a lowered floor and raised ceiling, making it larger in volume than other rooms of the same area. The first step, however, is tricky; throw dexterity plus 3 or less to trip entering the room. Throw strength plus endurance or less for 1D injury from the fall. In any case, instruct the first to enter the room that he or she almost tripped.

Room C is directly below A, and its ceiling comes within three meters of the floor of A. Looking through the room closely (throw 9+ per ten minutes until successful) will reveal footholds in the wall leading to a concealed hatch leading to room A. This hatch is not detectable from room A.

4. Chamber 4. The stairway leading down to this chamber is exceptionally long and seems to continue endlessly. Finally, it arrives at a landing. With the height of the stairs, this landing is quite long, and is bordered on the north by the stairs up and on the south by the depression into which the further stairs lead.

5. Chamber 5. This chamber is more ordinary, and similar to the previous ones. A corridor leads to the east. Several meters down the corridor, it turns from rough cut rock to natural cave or water-worn rock and widens perceptibly. The corridor wall has some narrow fissures in loose stone; brushing against them hard will knock some loose, revealing wider fissures behind. These fissures connect with those within room D, allowing the grillwork of bars to be bypassed in about 5 minutes of crawling and climbing.

D. A series of vertical metal rods, closely set at about 5 centimeter intervals, bar the way. They are easily cut with a metal saw or an energy weapon. The room itself is large and an apparently natural cave; its wall is marked with some natural fissures which apparently lead deeper into the rock. Following them will require leaving behind any packs and equipment except for perhaps a pistol or knife.

Following the fissures will take at least an hour of crawling and exploring. Roll 8+ for the group to become lost (unless marking their trail. After the hour of exploring, roll one die; if not lost, add 2 to the die roll. On a result of 1 or 2, the group exits in the fissures at H. On a result of 3, 4, or 5, the group exits at point 1 on the alien base map. On a result of 6, 7, or 8, the group returns to the fissures at D.

6. Chamber 6. The stairs leading down to this landing pause and then continue. Coming down the stairs, there are small rocks and gravel on the individual steps which make the footing perilous: throw dexterity plus 3 to fall and take 1D hits.

E. This portion of the landing is cluttered with rocks and debris. Looking around, it is apparent that the ceiling is loose at this point.

7. Chamber 7. The stairs leading down to this landing are blocked by a large dry web with strands the thickness and strength of heavy string. Further, although the web looks dry, each strand is coated with a strong adhesive; strength 9+ is required to pull the strand off what it is attached to on the first try; otherwise two tries are required.

F. Wrapped in webbing at this point on the landing are several small dead animals.

8. Chamber 8. The stairs lead down into the middle of a large room. There are no railings to the stairs, and there is a severe drop to the right and left of the stairs.

G. This room has a low ceiling at its edges, but it rises to a high vaulted arch toward the center. In the center of the floor is a raised wall (about a half-meter in height) surrounding a deep hole. Call this feature a well— it is filled with water to a point about ten meters down.

The northeast corner of the room is cluttered with scattered rubble, mostly rocks and stones. Near this rubble is a collapsed section of wall with fissures leading into the rock.

Just about opposite the stairway is a doorway blocked by masonry. An attempt to dismantle this masonry will show that the blockage continues for several meters at least. Tearing down the masonry will take about 36 hours of work and the rubble from the job will fill nearly half of room G.

H. These fissures, similar to those at D, lead deeper into the rock. Following the main path will lead directly to the masonry blockage. Deeper exploration will require about an hour. Roll 8+ for the group to become lost (unless marking their trail). After an hour of exploring, roll one die. if not lost, add 2 to the die roll. On a result of 1 or 2, the group exits the fissures at D. On a result of 3, 4, or 5, the group exits the fissures at point 1 on the alien base map. On a result of 6, 7, or 8, the group returns to the fissures at H.

I. Beyond the masonry blockage is a small group of corridors with floors covered with rubble. These corridors are obviously long unused and in poor repair. Passing a section of rubble requires some clearing (perhaps ten minutes) and crawling over large stones. At I, a stairway leads down.

9. Chamber 9. Down the well from chamber 8 is a large room. The room appears ordinary with a low ceiling.

J. The floor is covered with about 25 centimeters of water, making the entire room a very shallow pool. The well, positioned in the center, is considerably deeper and probably leads to an underground stream.

On the east wall is a solid door of heavy wood, barred from within. It can be easily opened from this room.

K. This long corridor is barred at its west end by a large, solid wood door. The door is barred from the other side, and must be broken in from this side.

L. The corridor from K and the stairway from I both lead to a large room with a high ceiling. One end of the room is dominated by a gleaming metal door, hinged at the bottom and looking very much like a large bank vault door. A depression in the floor of about the same size and shape as the vault door obviously accepts the door when it swings open. A small panel to the right of the door has several solid state lights which blink at random intervals; there is no hint of buttons to push or controls for the door itself. Although the group may try any number of methods to open the door, it will not open (well, maybe a tactical nuke would open it, but that would destroy the entire area; rock tunnelling would get around the door, but that requires mining equipment and would take several days of set-up and boring).

In a niche under the stairway leading from I to L is a 100 kg trapper, the one which made the web in chamber 7. The trapper is completely concealed, and will not be visible until it springs out in an attack. There is no clue that the trapper is hidden under the stair, and there are no webs visible in this room.

The Trapper: The hidden animal is a warm-blooded analogue of a spider, complete with eight legs and a segmented body. It is, however, a vertebrate, and is very similar to most mammals of similar size and weight. It will attack perhaps ten or fifteen minutes after the group arrives in the room, generally after they have seen the vault door and looked it over. The trapper will fight fiercely until killed; if rendered unconscious, it will regain consciousness within five minutes and then continue to fight until killed. Looking into its small lair will show the reason for this ferocity: it was protecting its kitten.

Before the kitten is killed by the adventurers, note that it is cute and cuddly, and that there is no indication of poison in use by the mother.

The statistics for the trapper and the kitten are given below.

Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds & Weapons		
Trapper	100kg	12/ 8	jack	8	teeth	A0 F0 S2
Trapper Kitten	12kg	8/ 2	jack	4	teeth	A0 F0 S2

The Vault Door: The door will not open to the normal efforts of the group; it does respond to the psionic aura associated with acute fear, opening for a period of about three minutes before closing again. The attack by the trapper should provide the acute fear required; after the attack, the group should see the open door.

Chamber 1

A

Lantern   Beam

Illumination
Circles

0   3   6
meters

Chamber 2

B

C

Chamber 3

Chamber 4

Chamber 5

D

Fissures

Chamber 6

E

Chamber 7

F

Chamber 8

H

I

G

Masonry
Blockage

Chamber 9

L

K

J

The Catacombs

The alien base is a small complex of corridors, rooms, and equipment lying on the other side of the vault door. It may be entered in two different ways. The vault door itself is the most obvious way, provided it can be opened. The second entry method is through the fissures which originate at D and H on the catacombs map. In either case, entry places the individuals beyond the vault door, but across the river cavern from the base itself.

Entry Point 1. Entering through the fissures to point 1 will reveal a large cavern to the group. Below, the sound of running water from an underground river can be heard. Throw two dice: on 9 or less, the cavern is illuminated by a brilliant white (red if exactly 9) light coming from a bridge spanning the cavern. Rock climbing is required to move out of the fissures at this entry point to the end of the bridge on this side of the cavern. Throw dexterity or less to avoid falling to the river below; throw three times before arriving at the bridge footing. If rock climbing to the other side of the cavern (across the cavern ceiling) throw eight times.

Falling to the river below inflicts 1D hits and the individual is swept away by the current and out of sight. Throw endurance or less to survive (survival expertise is allowed as a DM); if the person does survive, he or she emerges to the surface several kilometers away from the octagon.

The rocks of the cavern are sharp; throw 10+ for a connecting rope to fray or break in the process of a fall.

L. The Vault Door. The bridge footing on the near side of the cavern is entered directly from the vault door. Normally, the door is closed, and it opens only as indicated on page 32; acute fear is required. The bridge itself is present and glowing white on 8 or less; it is glowing red on exactly 9. Visible across the cavern is another bridge footing: a room with gleaming silver walls.

M. The Bridge. The bridge itself appears to be insubstantial, at times transparent, although the strength of its glow makes it hard to determine this unless it is closely examined. It seems to be a form of energy, rather than of matter. As an adventurer steps on it, his foot will sink into the bridge surface about two centimeters giving a feel like soft rubber over hard rubber. The bridge is, however, safe to walk on.

The bridge turns itself on and off at irregular intervals; when doing so it first glows red for about two minutes. It then abruptly clicks off, plunging the cavern into total darkness, and its load into the river. At any specific time, throw two dice for the condition of the bridge: on a result of 8-, it is on, on exactly 9, it is glowing red, and on a result of 10+, it is off. From this point, continue the cycle as noted above.

The Base: The corridors and rooms of the base are constructed with shiny, silver-colored walls; apparently at random, some portions of the walls are splotched with gold or metallic green. Corridors are of a vaulted cross-section, with the side walls angling in toward the ceiling; in rooms, the walls angle out, giving the ceiling greater area than the floor. There are no stairs present anywhere. Instead, shallow ramps occur where floors change levels. Wall joints are slightly rounded, making the metal of the walls less likely to injure or cut with a casual bump.

Lighting of rooms and corridors comes from a single tube of brilliant white light (similar to the glow of the bridge) which comes on when individuals enter a room. These tubes are centered in the ceiling of each corridor, and are plentifully arrayed throughout the various rooms. The strength of the light is hard on human eyes, and

tinted visors or sunglasses can help vision in these locations.

Doors in various locations marked on the map are of the automatic sliding type. When an individual approaches a door, it opens by sliding into a slot in the wall; it does this automatically, closing again after the individual has passed through. An automatic door will not close on an object which remains in its path; even a small book or package is sufficient to keep the door fully open.

N. Bridge Landing. This is the base side of the bridge. The room is a balcony overlooking the cavern below, but is otherwise featureless. Two doors lead from the room.

O. Circular Room. This large circular chamber is spanned by a cantilever bridge overlooking the floor below. Situated on the floor are six ovoidal structures constructed of a milky-white translucent plastic; dark shapes are visible within.

This room is a barracks holding thirty-six Droyne warriors in suspended animation. When triggered or alerted, the ovoids dissolve (in about 45 seconds) releasing the warriors for combat. When no longer needed, the warriors are returned to storage with newly constructed ovoids.

Tampering with the ovoids will release the warriors; firing weapons within the chamber will also trigger their release.

P. Rectangular Room. This room is bare and devoid of any features save an array of dish-shaped surfaces on the far wall. Waving a hand in front of one causes a circular section of floor (diameter: about 3 meters) to rise to a height of one die times 25 centimeters.

Although there is no apparent reason for this phenomenon, the room is actually a meeting room; the circular sections are seating for individuals. Seating height is related to caste within the group.

The sliding doors at the far ends of the room are arranged to interact with each other; one door will not open until the other is closed. Blocking one open will prevent the other from opening.

Q. Rectangular Room. This large open room has no doors; instead, it is entered through a large portal off a corridor. Its ceiling is very high (perhaps thirty meters) and the area is studded with several columns capped with circular platforms. No platform is less than ten meters off the floor.

This is a flying room. Training and exercise in flying takes place here. The nearness of some columns forms an obstacle course for flyers, and the platforms above serve as resting places.

R. Irregular Room. This large room connects to corridors, doors, and rooms in an irregular manner. The floor of the area is clean and clear of any equipment or furniture. In the center, however (about where the R is on the map), a single five-fingered glove can be seen. It is marked with the Imperial Scout Service insignia (apparently lost by a member of the shipwrecked task force some centuries ago).

S. Chairs. Overlooking the globe of Fulacin are four chairs, each with a control panel or box with several dished depressions. Behind the chairs is a large panel of controls and meters similar to those found in other areas of the base.

T. Power Room. This small room contains a vertical shaft leading down at least two hundred meters. At the bottom, a strong white glow pulses regularly. Leading up the shaft, over the lip, and into a wall connection are two heavy conduits (about 300mm in diameter). Some wall controls are present near the door. If tampered with, throw two dice: on 5-, the power source is turned off (and the entire base

goes dark), on 6-8, a spiral bridge (like the one in the cavern) turns on and leads down to the bottom of the shaft, on 9+, no effect (unless the power plant is off, in which case, it is turned on. The spiral bridge will not come on if the power plant is off.

The power plant at the bottom of the shaft is entirely self-contained and little (if any) clue to its operation can be gotten by examining it.

U. Environment Center. This room contains a complex of air circulation and purification machinery. There is a slight underpressure in this room, and air from other locations is forced here; it is then pumped through the the ventilation shaft at Y to other rooms.

V. Rectangular Room. This room is honey-combed with many small compartments, each large enough to hold a single person. Their interiors appear empty, and feeling their surface will show that they are resilient. A further sensation also becomes apparent; within each compartment, gravity is zero.

This room contains sleeping accomodations for residents of the base, especially those of the lower castes. Compartments vary in size, and are assigned based on individual size.

A ventilation grating similar to that in X is present.

W. Rectangular Room. This room contains several large compartments similar in nature to those in V. Interiors of the compartments are in zero-G, and are covered with a resilient material.

This is the sleeping compartment for those of higher caste; they merit larger and more luxurious quarters.

X. Cavern Room. This large room has walls of metallic green. Dominating the floor is a circular dais (about a half-meter above floor level) with many cushions and pillows scattered about on it. One entire wall appears to be missing, and it opens out onto the cavern. Moving closer, one can see that there is a wall there, but it is transparent (exceptionally so), forming a large picture window. On the other wall is a grillework of vertical bars preventing entry into a hallway. These bars (if tried) may be bent with hand pressure, and will slowly return to their original shape when released. They can be bent enough to allow entry into the hallway.

Y. Ventilation Tunnel and Access Shaft. This walls of this entire corridor are covered with dish-shaped plaques and glowing registers or meters, all of extremely sophisticated design. They are obviously controls for various parts of this installation. Playing with them will produce no effect; occasionally, they will produce random effects (such as lights brightening or dimming, changes in background noises, or other minor events).

Z. Hemispherical Dome. A half-sphere is set on the floor at this point. Closer examination shows that it is a full sphere set into the floor. Obviously, this is a representation of Fulacin itself, complete with continents and seas, cloud cover and weather, and all of the other details necessary to show a world as it looks from space.

The world is up to date: weather features look recent, and they are changing as the group looks on. Even the darkness of night and the brightness of day are visible, but without any corresponding light source or shadow within the room.

Many facilities within the base appear to be missing, such as sanitary facilities, computer links, and repair shops or maintenance arrangements. All are normally
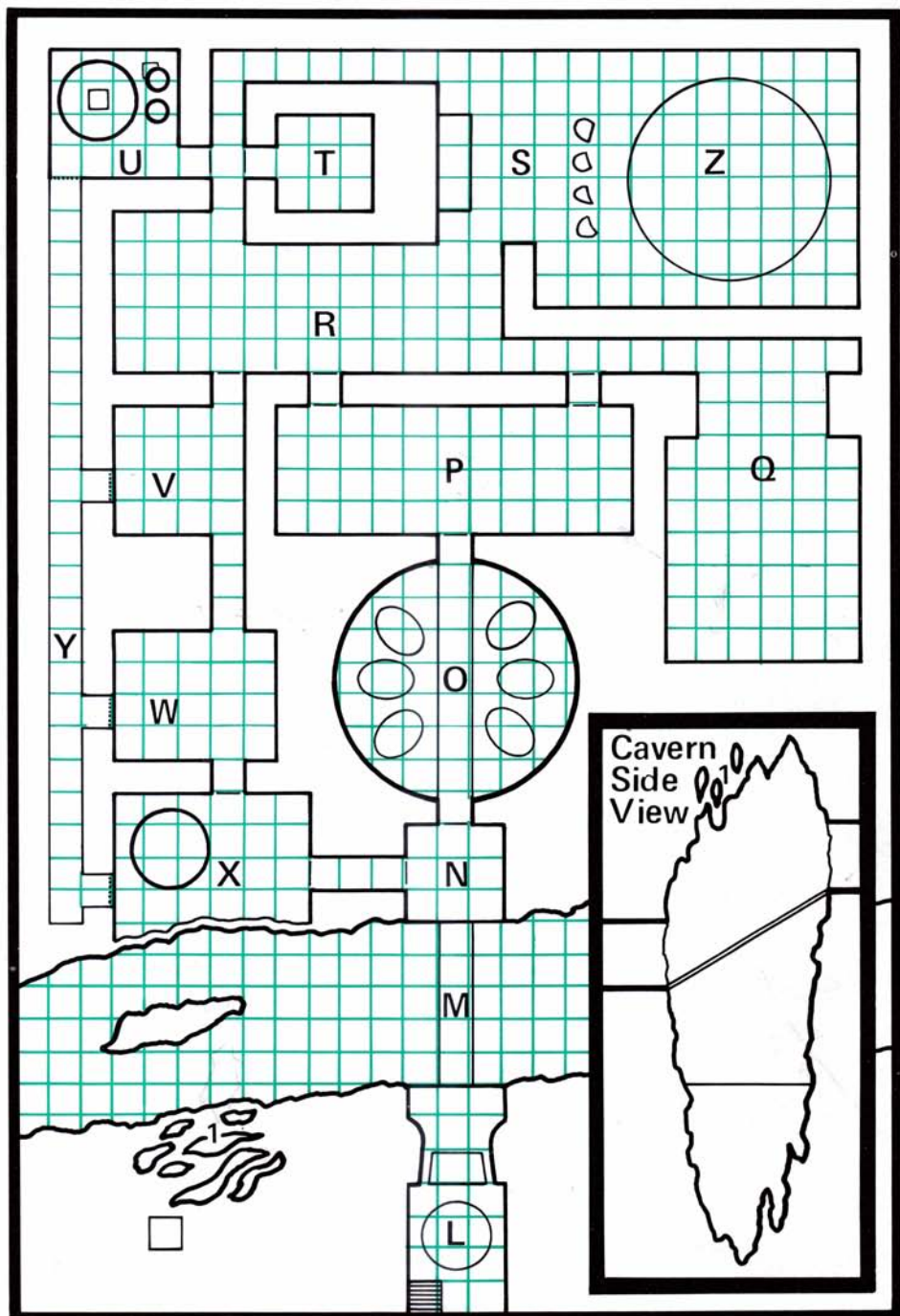
The Alien Base

concealed within the walls and floors of the structure and are called upon when needed. The gold sections on the wall indicate the locations of food dispensers and sanitary facilities.

Bathrooms: Every room has a sanitary disposal facility. Looking closely at the walls will show apparently random patches of gold. Patches in the rough shape of a four-lobed clover mark sanitary facilities (no two patches are exactly the same, but all have the same rough shape). Touching such a patch three times in rapid succession will cause a section of floor to glow dull orange; this section disposes of anything placed on it with a slow, pulsed rhythm. Stepping on such a patch will slowly disintegrate the bottom of a shoe or boot, and will ultimately begin destroying the sole of a foot.

The orange patch is turned off with three rapid touches on the gold patch.

This mechanism is a phased teleportation device; it teleports any matter on the patch (to a height of one millimeter) away with each pulse. Additional matter then settles down into position for the next teleport.

Food: Gold patches in roughly circular shape mark food dispensers and appear only in rooms R, V, W, and X. Touching a circular gold patch three times in rapid succession causes a wall section to open, revealing a holographic display of three types of food— generally a meat dish, a vegetable dish, and a beverage. Reaching into the display and grasping one of the choices causes a heavy vibration within the hologram and the choice materializes in the hand.

This facility involves teleportation of the selected dish into the location shown by the hologram. If it is not grasped, it will fall to the floor; if the individual is not careful or is inattentive, a portion of the dish will coincide with the hand and force safety interlocks to function— the dish will not appear, and the hand will receive a sharp sting. The sting is painful but causes no real injury.

Computer: Computer links are not immediately obvious because they worked directly with the base personnel. Each individual was tracked at all times by a psionic link to the computer that provided information and calculations on the spot.

The Fulacin Globe: The large globe representation of Fulacin at Z is a detailed model of the world. It can be touched, and is solid. Pushing against it reveals that it is massive and responds to pushes only slowly. While it cannot be moved from its depression, it can be rotated and turned with some effort.

Turning the globe will soon swing it around to show the site of Twilight's Peak, which is marked on the surface with a single spark of white light. Looking further will reveal two additional sparks placed randomly about the surface of the world and a spark near each of the poles. Visible in miniature (the scale of the globe is about 1:600,000; one meter equals 600 kilometers on the real surface) is the MagnetoDynamics starport. Very close inspection will also show minute detail. While a discrimination effect is obviously in operation and nothing smaller than 60 meters in length (scale size: one-tenth millimeter) is reproduced, even items that small are easily missed unless assisted by lenses or magnifiers.

Sitting in one of the chairs (at S) facing the globe will activate more information from the globe display. Orbital traces will appear showing any satellites or ships in orbit around the world to an altitude of about 100,000 kilometers. These traces will trail the satellite for approximately a meter (like a comet tail) in green glow; they also project ahead of the object for about a meter in a much lighter green,

showing a predicted trajectory for the object. There are six satellites— three ships and three small chunks of rock.

Sitting in one of the two central chairs will cause an even greater display of information. Ships and other moving objects not actually on the surface will be projected at 100 times their normal size (a 60 meter ship just at the limits of resolution is projected as 10 millimeters long; just large enough to allow details to be seen).

The controls near the seats at S can be played with; doing so involves placing a finger opposite a dished depression. One stops the entire display, freezing it in place until countermanded. When countermanded, it immediately jumps to a representation of the current situation. Another control rotates the globe in the vertical plane; a companion rotates it in the horizontal plane. Together, the two controls make the entire surface of the globe visible with only a touch. Finally, a single control creates a floating holographic projection of a shiny sphere. The sphere originates at one of the white sparks near the poles and drifts slowly out of that location. Wiggling a finger within the depression control causes it to maneuver, and it can be steered with ease to any point within one meter of the surface of the globe. When the finger in the control is removed, the sphere disappears from the presentation. Reinserting the finger creates a new shiny sphere from one of the polar sparks.

If a small shiny globe is moved to cover a ship or satellite nothing happens— unless the finger is removed from the depression. Then the globe disappears, taking with it the satellite or ship. No trace remains and there is no indication that there is any debris or hulk left.

The control console behind the seats at S is more elaborate, but the individual dished controls appear to have no real effect on any aspect of the display. After some interaction with the controls, a single metal plate will rise from the floor near the console and float at a height of about 50 centimeters. It has four handles around its circular rim, and it appears to be a self-powered grav platform. About a minute after it appears, an identical companion platform will also appear. No others are forthcoming.

These grav platforms are more than they appear. They can be controlled by pulling or pushing and will carry up to 600 kilograms without effort (they resist gravity; inertia still provides resistance to movement). In addition, each has a small resilient spot on the underside near one of the handles. Pressing that spot (which can occur accidentally) converts the plate to a teleportation disk. Anything on the plate is transferred to the other plate, and anything on that plate is transferred to this plate. Range appears to be about one kilometer, provided there is no height differential of greater than ten meters.

Operating the controls for the console at S may also open several small doors close to the floor, revealing a cabinet containing a variety of small items, most of which are unrecognizable. The one object which does show some potential is a small box finished in grey metal, with two gold colored contacts on its upper surface. It looks like a battery, and it is; the two contacts will provide almost unlimited current.

The device is an anti-matter battery, and operates by a controlled flow of anti-matter against an ordinary matter core. Flow is metered in response to demand, and very high levels of current are available. Anti-matter batteries have a

potential problem; if all the anti-matter is released at once, a large quantity of energy is released. Instead, this type of battery is constructed to bleed energy slowly if broken or cracked. As a result, the battery will flash brightly for up to twenty minutes with very bright light and intense heat. Anyone closer than six meters is subject to burns inflicting 1D hits per combat round; DM to the hit die roll of +2 per square (1.5 meters) closer.

Anti-matter batteries are quite resistant to damage, but are not armored or impervious. Achieving 12+ hits on a battery casing will fracture it and the energy release will begin.

Batteries measure 6cm by 4cm by 10cm, and weigh about two kilograms.

The Coyns: Concealed under one of the cushions on the raised platform at X is a small bag containing 36 gold disks, each marked with a different symbol. These coyns are more fully described in the section covering the Droyne and their ceremony for establishment of caste.

Library Data

Library data is information obtainable from any ship's computer (or starport library) in response to the correct keywords. Only the specific information requested should be given to the players; care should be taken not to reveal additional data or to allow indiscriminate browsing through the library records.

Air/Raft: Also known as a flier, the air/raft relies on solid state anti-grav modules for lift and propulsion. Four independent, individually replaceable modules insure a maximum of safety, in that each provides one-quarter of the vehicle's total lift. A standard air/raft masses about four tons, and can carry a payload of about four tons, including pilot and 3 passengers. Cruising speed is usually 100kph, with unlimited range and endurance. The normal air/raft is open-topped and subject to the effects of weather and climate.

The major drawbacks to the air/raft are its low load capacity, its relatively slow speed, and its susceptibility to weather (both the negative effects of bad weather on passengers and the slowing effects of high winds and buffeting).

Most air/rafts are capable of reaching orbit (occupants should wear vacc suits) but the trip will take several (6 to 12) hours). Most air/rafts can also be overloaded with passengers (a maximum of eight can fit with minimal comfort) so long as tonnage maximum is not exceeded.

All Terrain Vehicle: The All Terrain Vehicle is designed to provide high quality transportation on any number of worlds. It can traverse all but the most forbidding terrain and is fully amphibious. The pressurized interior allows up to eight passengers to live in relative comfort for long periods of time.

The standard ATV masses 10 tons and allows a payload of 6 tons (including passengers and driver). It can cruise on roads at 100kph; obviously, speeds will be reduced in less than ideal circumstances: an ATV would be lucky to make 50kph over broken ground and 20kph in mountain terrain.

The major drawbacks for the ATV are its refuelling requirement (with water or hydrogen, generally every 24 hours or so), its slowness in some terrain, and its bulk.

Amber Zone: Travellers' Aid Society classification for a nation, world, or system which presents a need for caution in dealings and activity. Less severe than a Red Zone, which indicates interdiction, war, or quarantine.

Ancients: A race of non-human beings who inhabited the general region of the Spinward Marches approximately -300,000. Archeological evidence recovered from excavations of the few known Ancient cities indicates that the race died out during a 2000 year period of intense warfare which left only ruined cities and shattered planets.

The Ancients were responsible for several major features within the general Imperial region. They created the multi-world rosette at Tireen (in the Vargr Extents), and their warfare resulted in a large proportion of asteroid belts through-

out this spiral arm.

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

The Ancients were also responsible for the creation of the Vargr through genetic manipulation of carnivore/chaser stock.

Artifact: Any manufactured object.

The term artifact is commonly used to refer to any object, item, or group of related items produced by the Ancients.

Aslan: Intelligent major race evolved from carnivore/pouncers on the world Kuzu, situated 135 parsecs rimward from Capital. Physi-

cally, the typical adult Aslan masses 100 kilograms, stands upright to a height of 2 meters, and is similar in needs and preferences to humaniti. They have good night vision, a heightened sense of smell, and retractable claws (vestiges of earlier days) which can still prove useful in brawls. Socially, Aslan group themselves in voluntary families (containing two to twelve adults and a varying number of children) for most purposes, including commerce and recreation.

Major contacts with the Aslan in the Spinward Marches are the result of trading missions which gather rare or valuable goods for shipment to the Aslan Hierate.

The Aslan have been Imperial allies (although rather passive) in the wars against the Solomani.

Bloodwell: Merchant trader in the 1000 ton class belonging to the Oberlindes Lines and generally assigned to the Regina/Regina to Pandrin/Uthe run. Lost with all hands and passengers to Imperial naval action 347-1105 when mistakenly identified as hostile.

Capital (Capital/Core 0508-A586A98-F): Central world of the Imperium and seat of government since its founding. Situated in the center of the Imperium, Capital's 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.

Coyns: Of the rare artifacts recovered from Ancient sites, the most common are coyns; small disks of metal engraved with various symbols. Their specific purpose is unknown. It may be that the objects served as money, jewelry, psionic focuses, or for some other unknown purpose.

Original coyns have been found in various precious metals such as gold, silver, platinum, iridium, and even uranium. Sets range in size from six to thirty-eight pieces, and are considered desirable to museums throughout the Imperium. Each coyn has a scrap value of Cr400 (if gold); to a museum, the value is closer to Cr4000.

Copies of sets of coyns are made of aluminum, lead, or zinc, and are more fre-

quently encountered from unscrupulous merchants or traders. Such fake coyns have a value of about Cr20 each.

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 encountered 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 ascendance. 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 (using a 496 day year) 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).

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 counting 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.

EQUIVALENT DATES

Terran	Vilani	Imperial
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.

Droyne: Major race concentrated in the spinward regions of the Imperium. See separate section.

Dust-Spice: Rare euphoric spice used for seasoning food, especially fruit. Harvested from the bark of desert scrub-plants, this seasoning is popular with humans as a mild recreational spice with effects slighter than, but similar to, alcohol.

Certain non-human races (notably Aslan and Vargr) find dust-spice a much more powerful euphoric, and it is in constant demand by those peoples.

Express Boats: The primary means of interstellar communication within the Imperium is the express boat— a small, fast, information carrying ship. Outlying worlds of the Imperium stand nearly four years from the capital, and express boat links have been 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 xboats on their communications runs. As an xboat arrives in a system, it beams its recorded messages to the express station, which then retransmits them 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.

Far Trader. Variant designation of an independent merchant starship. While such ships are traditionally called free traders, vessels with jump-2 capability (twice the normal rating) are called far traders.

Fourth Frontier War (1082 to 1084): The fourth of the frontier wars in the Spinward Marches was over almost before it began. Initial Zhodani and Vargr attacks against the Jewell and Regina subsectors were stalled at the borders. The armistice was actually signed before instructions had been received from Capital.

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. 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.

Groatle: Cloth made from the hair of groats, noted especially for its shimmering iridescence after chemical treatment. This cloth (and the raw material for such cloth) is in great demand in the Imperial Core.

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

Kirur (Kirur/Thirty 0505-B863A03-F): Homeworld and capital of the Two Thousand Worlds— the empire of the Centaurs. The planet's oceans are extremely shallow and the world exhibits almost no volcanic activity, very unusual for a world of its size. Kirur has one large continent, which was conquered in pre-historic

times by the current ruling clan; Kirur is one of the most politically stable planets known.

Kuzu (Kuzu/Kilane 0406-A876986-E): Home world of the Aslan race and capital of the Aslan Hierate.

Lair (Lair/Grnrouf 0802-A8859B9-F): "Homeworld" and capital of the Vargr Extents. Unusually enough for the capital of a star-spanning empire, several sections of the planet still boasted independence from central control until only a few years ago.

MagnetoDynamics, Inc: Established in 1040 with an Imperial charter and a mineral exploitation grant for Fulacin (Fulacin/Rhylanor 0203-A674120-D). The corporation holds several patents for the recovery of precious and heavy metals from atmospheric and oceanic suspension, and originally obtained its position on Fulacin for the use of these properties.

Following the severe economic downturn associated with the False War (1082 to 1084), the company encountered a cash slowdown, and suspended operations for a period. In 1089, an influx of capital allowed the company to resume operations. In partial support of this new era, the company also established a large starport facility (currently typed as class A, minus) with construction and overhaul facilities to 10,000 tons. Completed in 1099.

The starport facility, envisioned as ultimately supporting mineral export traffic, has served an interim purpose of supporting (through landing fees and other income) the on-going survey of the world for ultimate exploitation.

MagnetoDynamics' exploitation grant expires in 1199, with a renewability clause for an additional 100 years upon demonstration of efficient and profitable operations.

Stock ownership in the company is divided approximately as follows: spinward nobility— 8%, Imperial Family— 2%, large corporations— 34%, investment trusts— 46%, public (individuals)— 8%.

Major Race: An arbitrary distinction based on technological achievement by a specific intelligent race. Any race which achieves interstellar travel (jump drive) through its own efforts is classified as major; one which does not is classified as 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.

Minor Race: An intelligent race which has not achieved jump drive through its own efforts. For most races, this is the appropriate classification, but many feel that they are deliberately held down by the major races through this arbitrary but all-pervasive classification system.

Oberlindes Lines: Established in 1084 with an Imperial charter specifying trade and commerce within the Spinward Marches and supporting distant trade with states bordering the Imperium. Oberlindes is one of the major shipping lines within the Regina subsector, with feeder routes to all major starports; Oberlindes ex-

pansion into neighboring subsectors has improved star service but alienated many of the older and more conservative lines.

The Oberlindes name is an old one in the trade and commerce business in the Marches. Roxanne Oberlindes established the first line to bear the name in 487 and built a family business which thrived between each of the several wars which have wracked the Marches in the past half-millenium. The first major increase in Oberlindes' size came in 1049, with the acquisition of Emissary, a surplus cruiser declared excess by the Imperial Navy. This ship, armaments intact, served as the flagship for Oberlindes' excursions into the Vargr Extents on trade expeditions; the venture proved highly successful. A base for Oberlindes was established just beyond the Imperial border (some irregularities in the ship transfer made it impractical to bring the ship into the Imperium) and served as a clearing house for trade good shipments between Regina and the Vargr worlds.

In the years following the False War, Oberlindes Lines obtained an Imperial charter and began operations with a large fleet composed almost entirely of navy surplus ships— now numbering in the hundreds. The organization concentrates on the smaller feeder routes, but has recently expanded into main line service, in direct competition with Tukera Lines and other more established major shipping lines.

Sergei hault-Oberlindes, patriarch and controller of the line, was awarded a baronial patent, complete with estates on Feri (Feri/Regina 0405-B384879-B), by direction of the Emperor in 1101 for his contribution to the economic recovery in the Marches following the Fourth Frontier War.

Oberlindes Lines is a family company with stock ownership divided approximately as follows: Oberlindes family— 78%, investment trusts— 10%, corporate employees— 8%, Imperial family— 2%, and public (individuals)— 2%.

Octagon Society: Established in 342, the Octagon Society was the first major distressed spacefarer assistance operation to appear in the Spinward Marches. The group thrived on public contributions and some tax revenues for 150 years; it collapsed in the late 400's when scandals emerged over quality of shelter construction and the disposition of certain funds.

Society shelters were generally of an octagonal shape. Large hostels were established on major worlds, while smaller weather shelters were placed on frontier or unsettled worlds. The characteristic octagon shaped buildings are still visible on various worlds, although none are still in use as shelters for distressed space-farers.

The Octagon Society was dissolved in 499 and its assets were sold at auction.

Porozlo, Battle of (980): The Zhodani thrust (in the Third Frontier War) through Vilis and Lanth subsectors toward Rhylanor met a not unexpected problem— Rhylanor has no gas giant, although it does have a strong naval base to defend it. Neighboring Porozlo (Porozlo/Rhylanor 0305-867A74-A) not only had a gas giant for quick refuelling, but also possessed a naval base of potentially great use to invading naval forces.

The battle began with the appearance of a single large Zhodani task force off Porozlo's primary; it proceeded directly to the larger of two gas giants in the system. The local naval base reacted immediately, even admirably, considering that there was no warning of Zhodani approaches this far from the front lines. However, as the first Zhodani task force refuelled, portions of it engaged the local defenses,

preoccupying them as a second task force appeared and drove straight for Porozlo. The threat of action against the planetary defenses and facilities prompted the world organization to declare Porozlo an open world. Naval forces either surrendered or jumped to safety at Rhylanor.

The fall of Porozlo provided the Zhodani with a supporting base for their seige of Rhylanor. Ships could easily refuel at the gas giant, jump-1 to Rhylanor for raids, attacks, or blockade patrols, and still have enough fuel for jump-1 back to Porozlo, where a class A starport and the captured naval base stood ready to repair any damage immediately.

The naval defenses of Porozlo have been increased considerably since 986.

Red Zone. Travellers' Aid Society classification for a nation, world, or system which is quarantined, interdicted, or at war. Red indicates entry into that location is prohibited or strongly advised against. More severe than an Amber Zone, which merely advises caution.

Second Frontier War (615 to 620): Fought between the Outworld Coalition (Zhodani, Vargr, and Sword Worlds) and the Imperium during the period of the Barracks Emperors. Arbellatra (587 to 666) was named Grand-Admiral of the Marches and led the combined local and Imperial forces to defeat the Coalition, and then proceeded to reestablish the central Imperial authority. She was named regent in 622 as a result, and Empress in 629.

Six Races: Traditional term for the intelligent races which dominate this region of the galaxy. It appears independently in Aslan, Vargr, and Centaur literature.

There is some disagreement as to the meaning of the term and the identity of the races involved. Most commentators agree that all of the six races must be major races; the candidates are Aslan, Centaurs, Droyne, Hive, Solomani, Vargr, Vilani, and Zhodani. Various racially based hypotheses have emerged, but none has gained ascendency.

Solomani Hypothesis: A generally accepted theory that all Humaniti originated on Terra, and that all other native human races arise from stock transported there by the Ancients. The theory explains the large number of independent human races within the Imperium without requiring a farfetched concept of "parallel evolution".

Solomani Rim War (990 to 1002): The culmination of centuries of disagreement between the Imperium and the Solomani Sphere. Following rifts at court, the Imperium established the Solomani Autonomous Region (or Solomani Sphere) in 704, and then ignored the region, allowing it to develop independently while the central government paid closer attention to the Spinward Marches and the Gateway. By 900, reports that the Solomani rule of many client-worlds within the sphere was over-bearing and heavy-handed forced Empress Margaret to reassess the situation, and she (by proclamation in 940) dissolved the Solomani Sphere and reintegrated it into the Imperium. The Solomani resisted, ultimately to be crushed in the Solomani Rim War.

In 1002, Sol was recaptured by a massive invasion, and the capital of the Solomani was lost to them. At that point, the war for the Imperium effectively ended.

Solomani sentiments differ, and there is still a strong anti-Imperial faction along the Imperium's rimward border.

Spinward Main: Within the Spinward Marches, a grouping of worlds, planets, and systems each within jump-1 of another. Together, this grouping (called the Spinward Main) forms a corridor of jump points which allow simple jump-1 ships to travel to 15 of the 16 March subsectors and to 223 of the 440 worlds.

Third Frontier War (979 to 986): The long period of uneasy peace between the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate erupted into war in 979 with simultaneous blows in the Querion and Jewell subsectors. Imperial reaction was deficient, and the hostilities continued for nearly six years with little to show for it. The armistice finally signed in 986 give each side little, and brought about the abdication of Emperor Styryx in 989.

Travel Zone. As a service to spacefarers, the Travellers' Aid Society determines and publishes travel zones which indicate the degree of danger presented by a world to travellers. All worlds within the Imperium are coded green unless otherwise noted. Other codes are amber (caution) and red (prohibited).

Tukera Lines: The Imperium-spanning Tukera Lines actually predates the formation of the Imperium. The original corporation held a charter from the Sylean Federation; with the establishment of the Imperium in the holiday year zero, all such charters were automatically recognized by the Imperium.

Tukera Lines concentrates on the main communications links within the Imperium, and operates a vast fleet of jump-3 and jump-4 liners and transports which follow the established xboat routes. In some subsectors (especially the older, more established regions of the Imperium) Tukera has a virtual monopoly on long distance shipping and travel.

Stock ownership in Tukera Lines is divided approximately as follows: Tukera family— 6%, Imperial family— 32%, large corporations— 6%, public (individuals)— 31%, investment trusts— 25%.

Twilight's Peak: Legendary or apocryphal story of lost starfarers on an unknown world who discovered fantastic structures and devices while surviving a terrifying winter. Phrased as an epic poem of execreble quality, the story is most notable only in that it is based in fact— a task force was lost in the time period specified, and it has not been recovered or accounted for.

Two Thousand Worlds:. The Centaur Empire, situated (at its closest point) eighty parsecs trailing the Imperium. Its capital is Kirur, the Centaur homeworld.

Vargr: Intelligent race derived from Ancient genetic manipulations of common carnivore/chaser stock. Vargr have long suffered from an inability to organize themselves (to any degree or for any length of time) beyond the star system level, and their empires rise and fall with unsurprising regularity. In addition, Vargr suffer from a racial inferiority complex based on the knowledge that they are not products of evolution; instead, they were manipulated into intelligence by someone

else— the Ancients.

The Vargr are scattered across most of the coreward edge of the Imperium in many splinter empires collectively called the Extents. These states war with each other as much as with non-Vargr, and there is a constant strife as each tries to establish a position superior to the others. Some Vargr have been more-or-less allied with the Zhodani for several centuries, and have participated in the Frontier Wars. Others have maintained a strict neutrality, or even allied with the Imperium.

Xboat: See Express Boat.

Zhodane (Zhodane/Gaval 0309-A6547C8-F): Capital of the Zhodani Consulate and traditional homeworld for the Zhodani people. Unlike the capitals of other empires, Zhodane is largely divided into the estates of the members of the ruling Zhodani Council, making the world's population unusually low.

Zhodani: One of many human races and one of three known major human races. Zhodani inhabit the Zhodani Consulate, a large (and growing) interstellar empire to spinward of the Imperium; clashes and conflicts between them and the Imperium have recurred for the last six hundred years, with each engagement becoming more intense.

A major source of conflict with the Zhodani is their acceptance and practice of psionics— all Zhodani of noble birth (social class A or higher) receive psionic training as a matter of course.
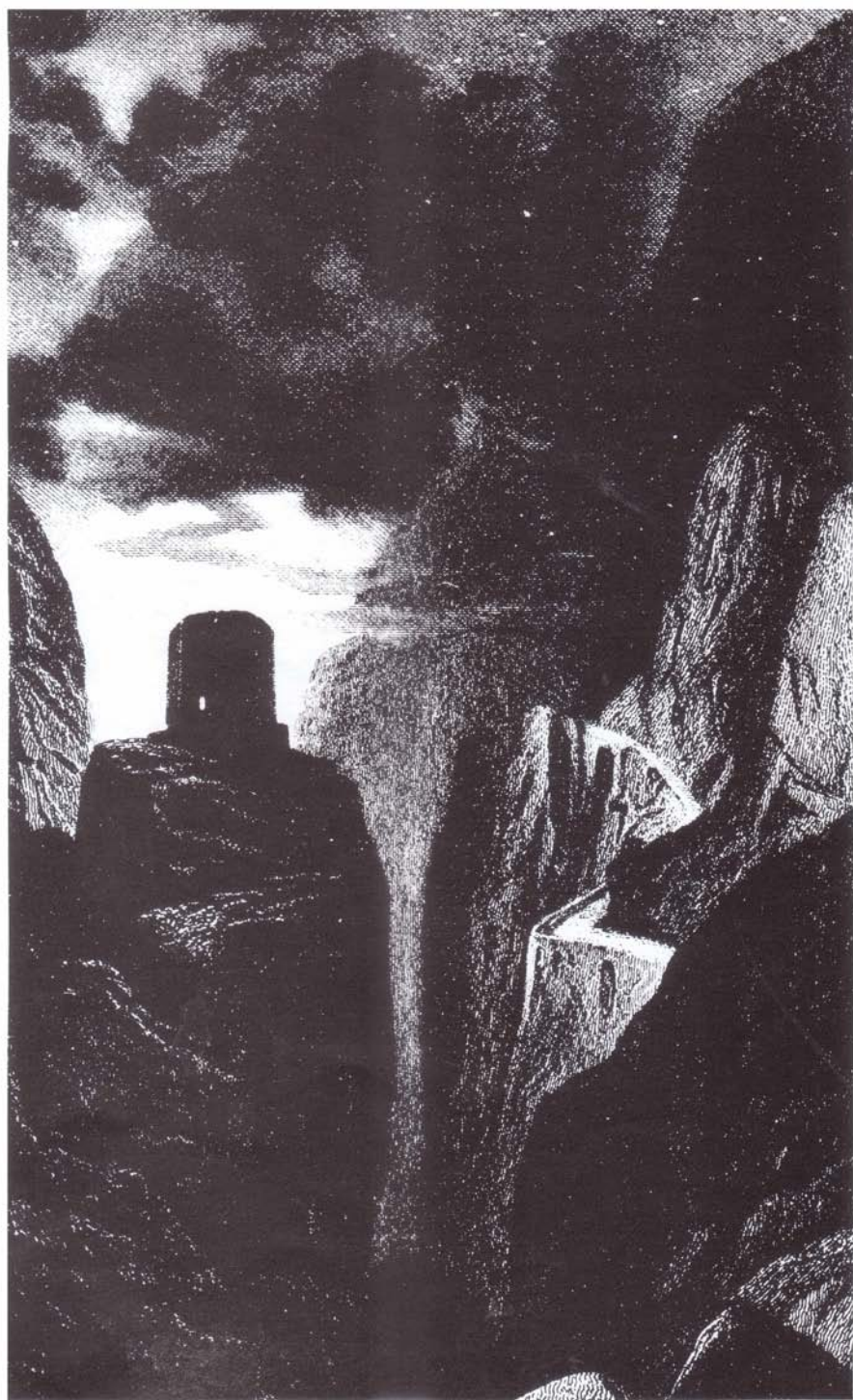
The Octagon Book

In 872 a history of the Octagon Society was published by Lent Publishers of Wochiers. The following is a precis of what that book contained.

In 326, early on in the colonization of the Spinward Marches, many (if not most) of the worlds in the sector stood at low tech levels, and travel between the few high technology (and well-settled) worlds was a dangerous undertaking.

One traveller, Foren Caliphren Doon, an employee of Halloran Surveys and engaged in a preliminary reconnaissance of several worlds for the company, met with trouble. The free trader on which he took passage developed engine trouble in the Frisini system (it became Beck's World/Regina later, during the Civil War); he was marooned for nearly ten years.

With rescue, Doon was a changed man, obsessed with a new-found purpose: to stop such a fate from happening to anyone else. His tool was almost a church, but with a purpose very clear at the practical level. The group's continuing activities centered on fund-raising and on building shelters for spacefarers on all possible worlds.

The Octagon Society, headquartered at Regina, and with major branches at Feri, Wochiers, and Alell, actively solicited funds for the construction of shelters out the Marches. Video programs of progressively higher quality struck a responsive chord in the audiences on high-population worlds, and cash flow synergized with a competent organization to make the various octagon projects viable. Regina subsector was furnished with shelters on all worlds in the course of forty years (338 to 378). Most notable is the current Travellers' Aid Society hostel on Regina— a large, now only vaguely octagonal building obscured by additions and renovations. Less populated frontier worlds received stone, concrete, or metal octagonal shaped buildings which served as shelters for marooned or distressed travellers, and were furnished with radios, survival equipment, and food.

In 410, the group expanded its efforts to adjacent subsectors and even sent construction teams into Vargr territory. The entire movement fell apart in the late 400s when scandal surfaced. Embezzlement had diverted much of the funds pouring into the society's coffers, and substandard shelters were being produced.

Shelter Locations: As an appendix to the book, a complete list of all octagon shelters constructed or planned is included. Locations on worlds are not given, but it does indicate that there was at least one octagon constructed on each world in the Regina, Lanth, Rhylanor and Aramis subsectors.

No shelter was produced, however, in the Macene Belt, on Dinom, or on Roup. The shelters on Regina, Dinomn, Jenghe, Rhylanor, Jae Tellona, Celepina, Risek, and Inthe were staffed and operated as hotels and actually turned a profit.

An illustration of the octagon of Fulacin is shown on page 50.
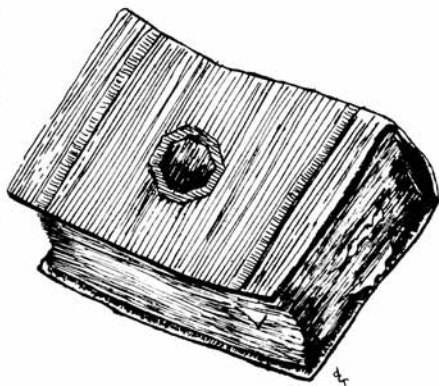
The Epic

The Third Frontier War (979 to 986) began in much the same manner as the previous two wars had, with Zhodani attacks in the coreward regions of the Spinward Marches. The initial Zhodani attacks against the Imperium concentrated on Boughene, Pixie, and Efate in an attempt to cut off the Jewell subsector. These opening moves were essential duplicates of Zhodani actions in previous wars; only after the hostilities had continued for several months did the enemy introduce a new strategy to parallel the action in Regina. A subordinate drive, supported only by a narrow string of makeshift bases, pushed through both Vilis and Lanth subsectors straight at Rhylanor. Major forces then took Porozlo and began a siege of Rhylanor, hoping to reduce the world and establish a major stronghold before the Imperium could respond.

During the siege, imperial forces from Regina were diverted to reinforce Rhylanor, even though they were sorely needed elsewhere. Rhylanor was ultimately the scene of several battles, and only the insertion of fleet assets from the neighboring Sabine subsector finally turned the tide of the war.

By 981, the war was back on a more even footing, with actions concentrating in the Regina and Vilis subsectors. Nevertheless, enemy raids were frequent throughout the area for several years.

In 984, a routine request for radiation treatment pharmaceuticals for Regina was routed through Rhylanor to the navy base at Vanejen, which routinely filled the order. Dredging up a 400-ton type R subsidized merchant named the Gyro Cadiz, the navy fitted the ship with a 40-ton interior fuel tank in the cargo hold, filled the remainder of the ship with cargo modules loaded with drugs and other medical equipment, and sent it on its way. As escort, three mobilized type S scout/couriers were sent along. Because the Gyro Cadiz was capable of only jump-1, it was forced to make several jumps to deep space, and then jump again to a world destination; its auxiliary fuel tank provided this capability.

Being streamlined, the ship and its scout escorts were capable of refuelling on worlds with oceans as well as at gas giants. This ocean refuelling capability was perhaps a safer method, if only because enemy ships were less likely to be in a system without a gas giant.

In any case, Gyro Cadiz left Vanejen on 101-984. Twenty-four weeks later, the ship was routinely posted as overdue, and earned the official designation of missing after thirty-two weeks, on 326-984. Further word was not forthcoming.

The answer came a hundred years later, in the aftermath of a fringe skirmish of the False War (1082 to 1084). Naval patrol ships reconning the Treece system (Lanth subsector) found, and destroyed, a Shivva class patrol frigate (Zhodani, obviously) in the process of refuelling. Afterwards, while checking out the rest of the system, the navy found a single scout/courier in a cometary orbit.

It proved to be one of the scouts from the Gyro Cadiz task force, its crew dead, its power cells long since drained. Its entire memory banks were contaminated and unreadable, with the only clue to the fate of the task force contained in the diary of a crewmember.

The second officer of the ship, a scout named Wen Livern, fancied himself an epic poet, and transcribed the entire history of the task force, from its formation on Vanejen in 984, in the form of a long, amateurish epic.

The work runs 9000 lines, about 100,000 words. Such statistics, however, do not describe it. Arranged in seven chapters, the lines are further divided into groups of three to ten (typically four) lines each, expressed in thought rhyme, also known as parallelism. The effect is amateurish, the style didactic. There is little meter, and no word or tone rhyme. The poem is terrible reading, and few ever have.

A few samples from the epic will serve to illustrate the style, construction, and quality.

We fought to save the Imperium, / and struggled to vanquish the mutineers.

The lines are synonomous parallelism, also known as thought rhyme. The second line is a thought rhyme of the first, repeating in synonyms the thought of the first. To the uninformed, the lines may simply sound redundant.

The choking dust was our bane, / but our lone ship fed our lungs.

These lines are antithetic parallelism, where the second thought is in contrast to the first.

The wolves and bears clawed at the roof, / and drove us deeper into the cata-combs of mystery.

This third form is climactic parallelism, where the the second line amplifies and expands the thought of the first.

ADMINISTERING THE EPIC

Assuming that the concerned adventurers wish to examine the manuscript of the epic, they may do so, and can be informed of some of the basic details of the poem. However, all attempts to read and study the poem should meet with failure, probably through sheer boredom. After starting any portion of the epic, the individual will stop within fifteen minutes and express a desire to do almost anything other than read this epic.

Two readily obvious answers to the problem can help through this process.

First, a scholar can be hired to give his ideas or thoughts on the matter. Cost may be high, and the person's silence is not assured. Assume at least Cr10,000 for the basic analysis of the manuscript. In addition, the person will want to publish the findings (in the local computer net) immediately.

Second, the manuscript can be fed into the computer (optical scan makes it non-boring), and it can be synopsized for easier reading. For impact, assume that the first run of the program is set for maximum reduction: the print-out result is two words— "We died."

Fiddling with the program parameters (specifying synopsization percentage, word count, reading level, and other factors) should eventually produce the epic synopsis presented on the next few pages. The text should be made available to the characters for perusal at their leisure.

THE TEXT OF THE EPIC

The following is a computer-synopsized text of the epic of Twilight's Peak.

The task force left Vanejen with a cargo of pharmaceuticals for Regina.
It consisted of four ships: three scouts and a transport.
The transport Gyro Cadiz was a remade subsidized merchant, fitted with long range tanks.
One scout, the Blatant Lie, was a mobilized half-pay courier with a crew of three.
Another, the Carlisle, was a sleek new ship with a freshly trained crew.
The last, Black Gold, was a ringer; a courier with a crew of malice and mold.
The route we took was circuitous, intended to avoid Zhodani patrols.
A few times, the group even jumped to deep space and then again to a world beyond.
I fell sick at Rhylanor, and laid in bunk through weeks of suffering.
When I recovered, we were stepping out of jump space to refuel at a world below.
It was safer to refuel from an ocean; fewer Zhodani would be there, if they were anywhere.
And there we still met disaster. An ion storm from the star flared as we came in.
The Gyro Cadiz was forced to land, and it landed badly.
The other ships scattered across many kilometers, with only the traitors near.
Carlisle crashed, and Blatant Lie went to its aid. In that time, the blackguards made their move.
When Blatant Lie reappeared with Carlisle's crew aboard, Gyro was under fire from Black Gold.
The battle ensued, for hours.
Ultimately, the battle was too intense, and Blatant Lie landed behind a hill, damaged.
Black Gold had further crippled Gyro Cadiz, and was killing her,
However, the hero crew had a plan.
While Gyro drew the traitors' fire (already doing so admirably),
the crew of Carlisle dragged four missiles to the hilltop,
and the crew of Blatant Lie maneuvered around the crags.
In coordinated action, they blasted the traitors and saved their comrades.
One traitor survived, and recounted their story.
They were impostors, with a hijacked scout and false identities.
They had sabotaged the transport, and were in it for the black-market money.
He died as he spoke, painfully and slowly.
Surveying the results, the crews found that nothing would now fly,
Not Gyro, not Blatant Lie, not Black Gold.
Certainly not Carlisle, lying 600 kilometers distant.
They were marooned.

A ray of hope emerged.
Salvage of parts form some ships could make at least one work.
Parts from Black Gold, from Gyro Cadiz, even from Carlisle could make Blatant Lie fly again.
They mounted an expedition to Carlisle, overland, covering 600 kilometers.
They first installed a crew in Gryo Cadiz to guard it; the rest trekked overland, 600 kilometers.
One died along the way.
Another died on the way back.
But they carried some parts back. Not enough.
The Gyro crew computer-predicted a long, bad, winter season.
Not enough time to make another trip. They had to hole up.
Together they had glimpsed a structure momentarily along the way.
On a high peak, viewed in twilight, it promised shelter.
Trekking to it, they found a tall octagon built of fine-hewn stones.
High on a crag in a valley.
Moving the fusion heater and crates of rations to it, they settled in for winter.
Snow and ice hemmed them in.
Water was easy to get, melted from snow.
Wolves growled at the doors, and even at the windows from atop the snow drifts.
But they survived. They even killed wolves and ate them for food.
Almost, they went crazy. Tempers flared.

And the wolves beat at the doors and windows.
Once, snow on the roof threatened to collapse it.
But they shovelled it away to save their lives, and patched the holes.
Late in the winter, the wolves attacked again,
And the group retreated, leaving the second floor to wolves streaming in through the windows.
They blocked the shaft of the fireplace, and held them off for a while.
They moved the fusion heater to hold them back, and discovered the passage leading down.
Two floors stood below; large octagonal rooms with buttresses at the eight corners.
They hid there at night, trusting to stone to protect them from wolves.
On the lowest floor, they found mystic writing, to a base number eight.
And a central altar with human bones.
Magically, a passage down appeared, with stairs leading to the bowels of the world.
They followed the stairs down.
Down countless flights of stairs, past rooms of mystery, finally to a well of running water.
Past that well to a long corridor, to another level, to a huge vault door.
As they stood, a quake shook the chamber; as they cowered, the door swung open,
To reveal a magic bridge of light across a vast underground river cavern.
Beyond stood a warren of rooms of silver and gold, each different, each with fantastic artifacts.
Leaning against the wall, a hidden switch was apparently tripped,
And suddenly, the floor glowed orange.
One person lost a finger-tip when he touched it.
Another hidden switch was tripped— and holographic visions of food appeared as mirages to
Tantalize the famished crews.
One gave in to temptation, and clawed his way into the vision.
Whereupon it materialized, as real meat, real fruit, and real drink.
Other rooms held null-G sleeping berths, areas with mystic columns for no apparent purpose,
Or fabulous crystal eggs larger than six people.
In the farthest back room, a huge globe of the world stood and revolved in real-time.
It responded to their touch, and (by looking close) they could see where they had landed.
The stayed in the rooms, warm and away from the wolves and cold of the surface, for days.
But nowhere was there anything to carry away, nor to help in their plight.
They turned back, only to find the magic bridge of light gone and the vault door closed.
They rigged ropes and slings and swung four of their six across before the bridge clicked on,
To allow the remaining two to just walk across the chasm.
As they did, the bridge turned red, and turned off again just as the last stepped off it.
As they sighed relief, the vault door swung open, and they left hurriedly.
Many times they came back, but never again did the door open.

In spring, they mounted another expedition to the crashed Carlisle, and salvaged parts.
They fixed Blatant Lie enough to jump, and three were chosen to make the voyage.
It jumped and stuttered through the system and finally made a single hop.
And came out in the wrong place.
A battle raged in the system, and as the ships fought,
The Blatant Lie hid, hoping its side would win.
One torpedo from the fighting never hit a target, and streamed on alone, until it caught
Blatant Lie in its sensors and moved closer, exploding to blank the scout's screens,
And disable its drives.
Without drives, the ship could not maneuver, and no one heard its calls for help.
The belligerents left, first one side retreating, then the other pursuing.
Left alone, the scout and its heroic crew settled into the vacuous night and died.

Referee's Notes

This adventure is written to play like a novel or a story. It begins innocently enough, and slowly builds to several different climaxes. Each should be carefully handled, and each requires some active involvement on the part of the referee.

The Search. Starting at Regina, the group of adventurers is involved in merchant trading (with Cr3,500,000 needed to fix their ship) and also casually looking for more information on Twilight's Peak— a potential source of the money they need.

This period of search is the time to implant much of the information that will be useful in the later portions of the adventure, such things as the history of the Spinward Marches and the continuing Zhodani threat to the Imperium, the competition between Tukera and Oberlindes (actually a red herring for this adventure), the Shivva class Zhodani patrol frigate, and the fact that the Zhodani invaded this part of the Marches and were thrown back in the last war.

All of this information, interspersed between the facts of the Octagon Society, should make the search an interesting one, and set the stage for the next step.

The Octagon. Once the group has settled upon Fulacin as the site of Twilight's Peak, the group must move there, and they must deal with the company that runs the starport and controls the planet. These dealings are crucial, because they make what follows realistic. First, note that one sea on Fulacin is named the Shivva Sea. Next, make sure that the group realizes that the local authorities do not want anyone poking around on Fulacin, but that they reluctantly grant licenses so as not not make a fuss. Finally, some areas (especially near the starport) should be off limits to travellers, with armed guards and big fences, enough to make people suspicious, but not enough to attract the Imperial authorities.

The Zhodani Base. The starport has enough clues to indicate (at least in hindsight) that it is a secret Zhodani base, established some years ago after the last war. At that time, the Zhodani realized that they needed an advanced base to support the reduction of Rhylanor— their attempt to use Porozlo will not work again. They bought into MagnetoDynamics through some dummy companies, and have placed their own personnel in key positions. They have also placed Zhodani troops at the starport as security guards; it would be easy enough to conceal their identities by calling them mercenaries.

Some time after the group leaves to search for Twilight's Peak, the local officials will have second thoughts and send troops after them, to silence them permanently.

Twilight's Peak. Meanwhile, the group will have found the Octagon shelter and begun exploration. The Octagon itself has many of the elements of a haunted house and should be treated like one, milking it for cheap thrills and scare tactics.

When everyone is down on the lower levels, a platoon of 40 Zhodani troops should appear, arriving in grav vehicles. They consist of 35 men with gauss rifles and cloth armor, 4 men in battledress with PGMP-13s, and one officer with a laser carbine. The officer is psionically trained to medium strength in telepathy and clairvoyance. The arrival of these troops should drive the adventurers down deeper into the catacombs, the troops right on their heels in a running gunbattle.

The Alien Base. Once at the vault door (if the atmosphere of fear is not enough

already), the trapper can attack, creating enough fear to open the vault door. The alien base is the key— it is a planetary defense installation. Its weaponry is enough to destroy any Zhodani ships (the three ships visible in orbit can be recognized by anyone familiar with the class as Shivva patrol frigates), the Zhodani installations at the starport (including three more frigates, not visible from the ground but revealed through the power of the globe), and even the troops who are above ground. In addition, the local Droyne in the base can (if handled correctly) assist in driving off the troops outside.

If things work out successfully, the group will have destroyed a major Zhodani base intended to support the seige of Rhylanor in the upcoming Fifth Frontier War. Their exploits may not be believable to the authorities, but there are several rewards that are possible for the group.

First, there is the cargo of drugs (if it is not destroyed in the fighting). Truth drug sells for Cr5000 per dose and Combat Drug for Cr750. Assuming sale of the goods at 50% (for quick sale of all of them) that is still a tidy profit. The radiation therapy drugs are all out of date and worthless.

Second, such artifacts of high technology as can be grabbed from the Ancient base could be of great value: the anti-matter battery alone is priceless. Against this is balanced the fact that most objects will be incomprehensible to humans.

The Ancients. One last point should be made clear. The evidence is in after the discovery of Droyne in an Ancient base. The Droyne are the Ancients. The Droyne in the base are true Ancients, and date from that era 300,000 years ago. Somehow, this base escaped destruction in their wide-ranging war. The Droyne that are to be encountered within and outside the Imperium are degenerate descendents of the Ancients, although that fact is not widely known.

The warriors, if revived, will be able to read the intent, if not the thoughts, of the adventurers and the pursuing Zhodani, and will base their reactions on their assessment of the situation, their motive being to protect the base from damage. Each warrior is armed with a disintegrator pistol (using the same principal as the nuclear damper in *Mercenary*). The pistol's targetting mechanism is complex and telepathic: to fire, the warrior looks at the target and imagines it gone. Control is sufficiently precise to vanish one man from a crowd or destroy a party's weapons while leaving everything else intact. The only limitation is that the warrior must see his target while firing; the pistol never misses and there is no defense. If a human comes into possession of one of these pistols, he will be unable to fire it (or figure out how it is fired) unless he is a trained telepath of at least level 10.

The Droyne warriors know very little of the technology of the base, being able to work only their pistols and those installations described in detail in this book, such as the food and waste disposal systems.

After the immediate task of defending the base is over, the Droyne warriors will quickly discover that there are no members of the leader caste available to issue commands to them. Bereft of purpose, they will initiate a self-destruct sequence, with a few hours delay to enable the adventurers to get clear, which will destroy the base, its polar companions, and the warriors.

More Adventures. Fulacin has more potential for adventure for any group. There are groat herds to harvest, the other alien bases at the poles to investigate (maybe not for long, though), and even a long trek overland if the battle at Twilight's Peak destroys the group's air/raft.

The Droyne

Droyne characters are similar to human **Traveller** characters, but with notable exceptions: they are aliens, derived from a totally different culture and society, and physically configured differently from humans.

Droyne are intelligent creatures derived from omnivore/gatherer stock. They form groups based on an extended family structure, and differentiate individuals in castes which determine their individual purposes in life. This caste assignment is not hereditary, but is instead assigned in a ritual performed when the individual reaches adulthood, at age 12.

INITIAL CHARACTER GENERATION

Characters are generated through a series of five single-die rolls which determine the basic characteristics affecting abilities and reactions. Roll one die for each of the characteristics given in the characteristic table, except caste. Caste is determined later in the sequence. Record the results.

CHARACTERISTICS

Strength is both a general evaluation of the character's physical ability, and a specific measure of force which may be applied.

Dexterity measures physical coordination.

Endurance measures physical determination and stamina.

Intelligence corresponds to IQ.

Sense indicates personal common sense and understanding.

Caste indicates the specific caste (of the six possible) in which the individual functions.

Values for the generated characteristics may range initially from 1 to 6 (and averaging around 3 or 4). As a result of various modifications, characteristic values may ultimately range from 1 to 15. For player-characters (those manipulated by players) the values of characteristics may not exceed 15; they do not go below 1 except for the results of calamitous injury or aging.

The Universal Personality Profile: Droyne characters in **Traveller** use the same Universal Personality Profile that human characters utilize. The UPP expresses the basic characteristics in a specific sequence using hexidecimal (base 16) numbers. In hexidecimal notation, the digits 0 through 9 are represented by the common arabic numbers; the digits 10 through 15 are represented by the letters A through F. The highest single digit in base 16 notation is 15 (F). Characteristics are listed as a string of six digits, in the order originally rolled: strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, sense, and caste. An uncasted individual has a caste of zero.

Caste: The single most important part of a droyne personality is caste, which determines the types of skills and experiences which the individual may acquire. there are three distinct methods for determining caste, any of which may be determined by the referee.

System One— Selection. Some castes are more useful in an adventuring setting than others. For example, the worker is not especially useful, but a sport may well be ideal. The player may select that caste which most appeals to him or

her. This method should be used at the discretion of the referee.

System Two— Assignment. As in system one, this method allows the specific caste to be selected, but by the referee, based on the caste which will prove most useful for the current adventure.

System Three— Random. Caste may be rolled on a single die by the referee or by the player. This method removes any volition from the part of the player, but may be useful for random non-player characters.

System Four— The Coyns. Caste may be assigned through a simulation of the process used by the Droyne themselves, by selecting small engraved gold disks from a pile until an appropriate assignment disk is drawn. This system is explained in the next section, titled Coyns.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">CASTES</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Worker</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Warrior</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Drone</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Technician</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Sport</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Leader</td></tr>
</table>

COYNS

The ritual which determines caste among the droyne is a seemingly random drawing similar to the tarot, but utilizing small gold disks. These disks, called coyns, are thirty-six in number, each engraved with a symbol. Individual disks are drawn from a randomized pile by a leader and the symbol announced; this process continues until a disk with a caste type engraved on it is drawn. Supposedly, the sooner the caste disk is drawn, the more powerful the individual will be in that caste. Any coyns drawn prior to the caste coyn are taken to modify or enhance the final caste designation.

For example, when a particular uncasted droyne juvenile comes of age, it is prepared for the ceremony, and finally taken to a leader. The individual coyns are prepared, and then single coyns are drawn from the available pile, each being read as it is drawn. The sequence might proceed: Heat, Light, Death, Voyages, Leader. This individual has been assigned to the leader caste, and the preceding coyns indicate what its future as a leader might be like; they are subject to interpretation. Heat and light are both positive energy, death can mean violence, voyages means transportation. Perhaps the individual will be a dangerous energy transportation supervisor, or a crematory hearse driver, or perhaps a power generation executive. Other interpretations are also possible; the key is to use the attributes given as a starting point.

Procedure: Throw two dice and cross reference on the coyns table for each result. Note the result, and if it is not one of the castes, roll again. If the result duplicates a previous result, ignore and re-roll.

THE COYNS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader	1
2	Void	Soil	Air	Gas	Water	Fire	2
3	Darkness	Cold	Noise	Signal	Heat	Light	3
4	Humaniti	Vargr	Aslan	Droyne	Hive	Centaur	4
5	Genesis	Aspiration	Sacrifice	Defeat	Death	Achievement	5
6	Beast	Mercenary	Voyages	Justice	Chance	Phoenix	6

The designations given here are single word descriptions of the engravings on the coyns used in the casting ceremony.

DROYNE PRIOR SERVICE TABLE

	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
Survival	5+	7+	5+	5+	6+	5+
DM+2 if	Endur 5+	Stren 6+	Sense 5+	Intel 4+	any 6+	Intel 5+
Distinction	10+	8+	7+	8+	9+	8+
DM+1 if	Sense 5+	Intel 5+	Intel 4+	Sense 6+	Intel 5+	Intel 5+
Continue	6+	6+	5+	5+	6+	5+

Characters cycle through this table during each term of service. Note that the *continue* die throw is required even if the character does not intend to continue.

If a character earns distinction, he receives one extra skill during that term. There is no other effect.

END OF SERVICE TABLE

	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
1	—	+2 Stren	+2 Sense	+2 Intel	+2 Intel	+2 Intel
2	—	+1 Dext	+1 Dext	+1 Intel	+2 Stren	Weapon
3	—	Weapon	Weapon	Weapon	Mid Psg	Vacc Suit
4	—	Weapon	Low Psg	Low Psg	Weapon	Weapon
5	—	Vacc Suit	Mid Psg	Tool Kit	Vacc Suit	High Psg
6	—	Wings	36 Coyns	Tool Kit	Wings	Ship

Weapon gives the character choice of any hand weapon from Book 1.

Tool Kit gives the character choice of a mechanical or electronic tool kit as described in Book 3.

Wings gives the character a mechanical wings set. Additional receipt of wings may be taken as flying skill instead.

Ship gives the character a ship of his own design up to 200 tons, constructed in accordance with Book 2. Sufficient crew to man the ship, of the proper castes, will follow the character at no pay.

AGING TABLE

Term of Service	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
Age	20	24	28	32	34	38	42	46	50	54	58
Strength	. . . .-1 (9+). . . .					. . . -1 (8+). . . .			. . . -3 (7+). . . .		
Dexterity	. . . .-1 (8+). . . .					. . . -2 (7+). . . .			. . . -3 (7+). . . .		
Endurance	. . . .-1 (8+). . . .					. . . -2 (8+). . . .			. . . -3 (7+). . . .		
Intelligence	. . . . . . no effect before age 50								. . . -3 (9+). . . .		
Sense	. . . . unaffected by aging										
Caste	. . . . unaffected by aging										

The negative number is the potential reduction in characteristic if the saving throw (on two dice; throw shown in parenthesis) is not made. Term of service refers to the end of that numbered term; age refers to the first day of the personal (physical, not chronological) year.

Leaders and sports are allowed a DM of +3 on all aging throws.

DROYNE ACQUIRED SKILLS TABLES

Personal Development Table

	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
1	+2 Stren	+2 Stren	- 1 Stren	+1 Stren	+1 Stren	+1 Stren
2	+1 Dext	+2 Dext	- 1 Dext	+1 Dext	+2 Dext	+1 Dext
3	+2 Stren	+2 Endur	- 1 Endur	+1 Endur	+2 Endur	+1 Endur
4	+2 Endur	+3 Stren	+1 Intel	+3 Intel	+3 Intel	+3 Intel
5	+1 Endur	Flying	+2 Sense	+2 Sense	+1 Sense	+2 Sense
6	Brawling	Brawling	Flying	Flying	Flying	Flying

Technical Skills Table

	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
1	+1 Stren	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle	Vehicle
2	+1 Dext	Weapon-2	Commo	Mechanical	Brawling	Leader
3	+1 Endur	Demolition	Mechanical	Electronic	Hunting	Weapon-2
4	+1 Intel	Hunting	Electronics	Gravitics	Weapon-2	Weapon-2
5	+1 Sense	Recon	+2 Sense	+1 Sense	Vehicle	Misc Skill
6	Brawling	Flying	Misc Skill	Flying	Flying	Flying

Education Table

	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
1	Mechanical	Weapon-2	Appeal	Mechanical	Unarm Cbt	Leader
2	Electronic	Weapon-2	Admin	Electronics	Liaison	Leader
3	Gravitics	Weapon-2	Admin	Gravitics	Leader	Leader
4	Vacc Suit	Weapon-2	Liaison	Commo	Recon	Liaison
5	Vehicle	Fwd Obsvr	Computer	Engineering	Prospecting	Interrogation
6	Vehicle	Survival	Misc Skill	Computer	Interrogation	Appeal

Advanced Education

	Worker	Warrior	Drone	Technician	Sport	Leader
1	—	Gunnery-2	—	Medical	Weapon-1	Ship's Boat
2	—	Tactics	—	Computer	Black Skill	Pilot
3	—	Leader	—	Leader	Space Skill	Navigation
4	—	Zero-G Cbt	—	Vehicle	Misc Skill	Appeal
5	—	Unarm Cbt	—	Cross-train	Cross-train	Special Skill
6	—	Recon	—	Admin	Jack-o-T	Black Skill

Misc Skill	Space Skill	Vehicle Skill	Special Skill	Weapon Skill	Black Skill
Medical	Ship's Boat	ATV	Survival	Gun Cbt	Forgery
Computer	Pilot	Air/Raft	Recon	Blade Cbt	Streetwise
Liaison	Navigation	Water Craft	Medical	Unarm Cbt	Bribery
Appeal	Engineering	ATV	Computer	Zero-G Cbt	Brawling
Jack-o-T	Gunnery	Air/Raft	Appeal	Battle Dress	Survival
Admin	Ship Tactics	Water Craft	+1 Sense	Tactics	Interrogation

Characters receiving Misc, Space, Vehicle, Special, Weapon, and Black Skills may select from the tables (without die rolls) at the bottom of the page. A skill listed as dash-2 indicate the receipt of two levels of the selected skill.

Weapons must be selected immediately upon eligibility.

Droyne have no automatic skills.

ACQUIRING SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Once caste is selected, the character generation procedure continues in much the same manner as described in **Traveller** Book 1. This includes undertaking four-year terms of service in the selected or designated caste, rolling for survival, rolling for achievement of distinction, and receiving skills and expertise after each term. If the continuance throw is not successful, the individual may not continue in the procedure, and must instead begin adventuring or participation in the campaign.

Skill Eligibility: Skill eligibility is similar to Book 1. Two skills are allowed for each term of service. One skill is allowed when a distinction is earned.

Distinction: There is no rank. It is possible to attain distinction, which carries a skill as a reward.

Ending the Procedure: In a process similar to mustering out, the droyne character is eligible for a number of benefits when it decides (or is forced to decide) to end the procedure. Droyne are eligible for benefits only; the equivalent of the mustering out tables has no cash table. Some benefits may be converted to cash.

Aging: Droyne are subject to an aging process similar in nature to human aging, but different in result. Some Droyne (particularly leaders and sports) are capable of very long lives; other are relatively short lived.

SKILLS

The skills that most Droyne can achieve are similar to those for humans; after all, both races live in the same universe. Unless otherwise noted, skills are defined in Book 1 of **Traveller**. Battle Dress, Demolition, Interrogation, Recon, Survival, and Zero-G Combat are defined in **Mercenary**, Book 4. Gravitics and Ship Tactics are defined in **High Guard**, Book 5. Hunting and Water Craft are defined in **Citizens of the Imperium**, Supplement 4.

Special Droyne Skills: Appeal, Cross-Train, Flying, and Unarmed Combat are special skills only available to the Droyne.

Appeal— The ability to address persons within the Droyne caste system with requests or suggestions, and to attempt to have them implemented. Given the fact that there is a rigid caste system for the Droyne, there must be some provision for inter-caste communication. Appeal is that provision. Generally, appeal allows the individual to present a case to a leader or caste superior and to be listened to. The request is taken on its merits, with some DM based on skill for reaction and receptiveness.

Cross-Train— The ability to acquire skills in castes other than the basic caste assigned at maturity. The individual may select any single other caste (or the referee may assign such a caste), and all future skills may be drawn from either the Droyne's original caste or the alternate caste. Successive acquisitions of this skill allow the determination of additional alternate castes. At the point that cross-train is received, the individual may also receive one skill from the alternate caste.

Flying— The ability to use the wings which all Droyne have, for transportation, movement, and recreation. Although all Droyne have vestigial wings, they are not developed in many of the individuals due to lack of ability or training. To be able to fly, the Droyne must meet several requirements, one of which is flying skill. Others include strength, possible mechanical assistance, and possible drug assistance.

Unarmed Combat— The ability to fight in close quarters with opponents and to inflict severe bodily harm while taking little to oneself.

This special skill is the result of training which instructs the individual Droyne in the use of his claws and of his strength, while avoiding enemy blows. Each level of unarmed combat skill allows a DM of +2 to the throw to hit with claws, fist, or club, and doubles the hits inflicted. Each level of skill is also used as a defense against any brawling or blade weapon; allow DM -2 to hit for each level of skill, and reduce all hits received to half.

FLYING

Droyne have wings, but can fly only under certain specific conditions.

First, personal strength must be at least 4. Flying drug may be used to increase personal strength in order to achieve the required strength; one dose doubles strength (for flying purposes only) for about an hour.

Second, flying skill is required.

Third, local gravity must not exceed world size 5 (if a standard atmosphere) or 7 (if a dense atmosphere). If it does, a larger wing span— available as a mechanical wing set— will allow flight on worlds up to two sizes larger.

Flying allows movement of about 30 kph in open areas (125 meters; 83 squares per 15 second combat round), but is considerably lessened in crowded areas such as the base interior. Within the base, allow a maximum of 12 squares per combat round.

Endurance restricts flight. A droyne may fly for a number of combat rounds equal to its endurance, after which time it must stop and rest its wing muscles for an equal number of turns. Such resting does not affect other activity.

A Droyne may carry any normal load (unencumbered) while flying.

FIGHTING

Droyne fight like humans, and can use guns, blades, and brawling. They have fragile, hollow bones, however, and are at a severe disadvantage in close combat. For any fighting Droyne who does not have unarmed combat skill, double all hits received from blow weapons (hands, hooves, thrasher, club, cutlass, broadsword).

Weapons: Droyne have access to all weapons which humans have (their home-world tech levels average 9 to 10). Although many have low dexterity, they can make up for the negative DMs through high levels of skill. In most cases, they will be carrying laser rifles, since Droyne have difficulty firing weapons with high recoil.

PSIONICS

The characteristic called sense is misleading— in actuality, sense is psionic ability. Leaders, sports, and drones have received psionic training, and will know how to use their particular talents.

In addition, all Droyne have the same talent, also described in *Research Station Gamma*. They can cloud the minds of beings around them to render themselves *invisible*, to a range of about 400 meters. Cameras, image intensifiers, robots, and psionics shields are unaffected. Otherwise, the Droyne are invisible and inaudible, if they decide to be.

THE DROYNE

After caste selection, individuals develop pronounced physical and mental differences as different genetic programs are awakened by diet and environment stimuli.

Young leaders, for instance, experience a nearly 30% increase in brain size in the first year after casting; drones develop sexual organs; and so on. The following are descriptions and definitions of the castes.

The Worker. Manual labor and mundane ordinary activity are the province of the worker. Workers are not too smart, and are temperamentally suited to contentment with ordinary labor and subservient tasks.

The Warrior. Trained for combat and possessing comparatively well developed muscles and reflexes, the warrior is the security troop, the soldier, the marine, and the policeman of the Droyne culture. They are common in frontier bases, and less numerous in civilized areas.

The Drone. Drones have a variety of purposes in Droyne society. They perform a reproductive role which makes them both fathers and mothers to Droyne young, and they have a role in the ceremonies which determine caste for maturing young. In addition, drones comprise a sort of middle management caste, responsible for many of the routine functions in business, trade, and administration.

The Technician. This caste is the science-oriented portion of Droyne society and is concerned with both research and practical implementation of technology.

The Sport. Although the caste system of the Droyne is rather rigid, the sport is the deliberately accepted exception to caste structure. Sports are special individuals who cross caste lines to become individual scouts, messengers, representatives, hunters, prospectors, and other occupations that require individual initiative or separation from Droyne society for long periods of time. A sport is the most probably encountered Droyne away from a Droyne world.

The Leader. Leaders are required to manage and direct society. They are ultimately responsible for everything that the Droyne as a whole do.

Warrior   Technician   Leader

Drone   Worker   Sport

From a clue in an old worn book, from a rumor in a starport bar . . . the adventurers are led across the sector in pursuit of a century-old treasure worth millions.

Meanwhile, unknown to anyone, the secret of Twilight's Peak is not a fortune, but death, and death in unexpected ways.