

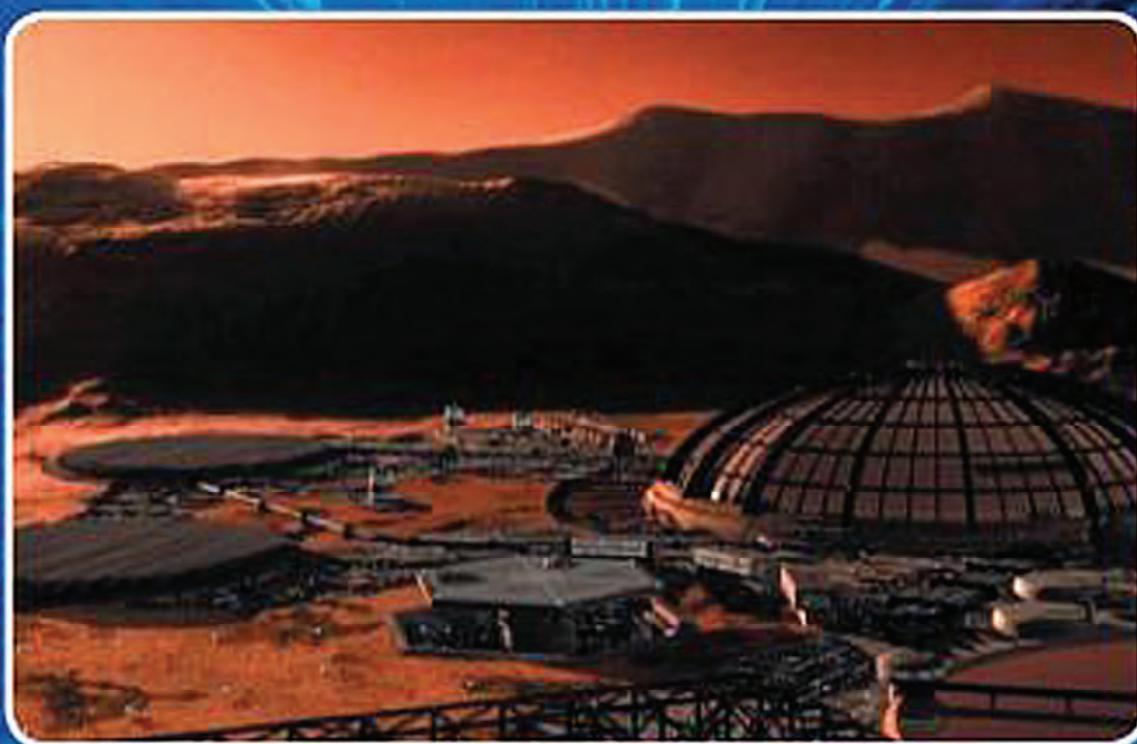
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The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition



The Lurker's Guide to Starports

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THE LURKER'S GUIDE TO STARPORTS

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INTRODUCTION

Although Babylon 5's action has centred mostly on the eponymous space station and the space battles fought with the Shadows and others, very little mention has ever been made of the central installations that are so crucial to interstellar travel: spaceports. The various military powers obviously operate their own installations but the universe of Babylon 5 involves more than just military endeavours; it encompasses human stories too and for countless people in the Babylon 5 galaxy, their stories begin (and sometimes end) with spaceports.

Spaceports come in all shapes, sizes and many dispositions. From the enormous Wisconsin Hub through to ethereal – possibly even sentient – Minbari Thorolost. Some are planet-bound whilst others are orbital facilities serving both shuttles and jump-capable liners and also military fleets. What counts the most is the way each spaceport operates and how it prepares those who pass through its corridors for the journey ahead. Spaceports also reveal a great deal about the character of those who operate them. As a cultural nexus they speak volumes for the way one species treats others and the lengths gone to, to accommodate their requirements. No two spaceports are alike, just as no two species, or members of a species, are truly identical.

This book details seven spaceports from the universe of Babylon 5. Each spaceport is described in terms of its physical layout, facilities, amenities, protocols, staff and denizens. Each is a self-contained hub for adventure with fully detailed NPCs and a host of ideas for launching new stories.

Each of the major races, is accommodated. The descriptions follow a similar template although, of course, there are distinct differences between races that are summarised in the introduction to each race and then explored in more detail for the starports. The format is as follows:

Introduction

General background on spaceport logistics for the race concerned. Common aspects of governance, ownership and operation.

Location and Function

The location of the spaceport detailed and notes concerning its main and ancillary functions.

Schematic

Plan schematic of the spaceport

Arrival and Transit

Arrival and transit systems in and around the installation

General Usage Procedures

How the spaceport is used as an embarkation and disembarkation point.

Security

The security measures in force for the installation, along with NPC statistics for the key security personnel

Operations

The operational measures for the installation, including details of the key Ops NPCs

Cargo and Commerce

The commercial facilities and procedures for the installation, including details on the various crews involved.

Facilities

Land-side and Gate-side facilities, both public and private, again with NPC details.

High Life and Low Life

A gazetteer of the spaceport's regular denizens, local power bases and criminal syndicates.

Throughout this book are certain 'voices', stories recounted by those involved in a spaceport's operation. These are intended to show, from an internal and individual perspective, certain workings of the facility.

WHAT ELSE IS REQUIRED?

In using this book, the following additional Babylon 5 titles may prove useful; *Earth Alliance Fact Book*, *Galactic Guide*, *League of Non-Aligned Worlds Fact Book*, *Ships of the Galaxy*

So, book your ticket, grab your identity chip and make your way to the transit hub of your choice to catch your shuttle or transport to the stars.

ABBAI

The Abbai Matriarchy is one of the oldest spacefaring races but it is unusually (for the founding member of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds) self-contained within its core system. The Abbai experienced profound challenges in developing their spacefaring capabilities given the harshness of the homeworld, Abba but this has not prevented them from developing some of the most unique spaceport installations in the galaxy. With typical resolve and an innovative approach, the Abbai have utilised the abundant natural resources of their homeworld to craft some singularly beautiful facilities found nowhere else in Known Space.

THE QUI'TAIN HABITAT

The fierce atmospheric conditions of Abba forced the Matriarchy to develop orbital facilities in order to progress their deep-space exploration. They accomplished this by establishing small shuttle bases and then growing structural sections for larger installations, which were then ferried into orbit and assembled. 'Growing' is no misnomer, the Abbai utilised the vast and prolific coral beds found along

the equatorial plains of Abba to literally grow habitats, which once they had reached the end of their lifecycle and atrophied, could be detached, chemically treated to withstand vacuum and then be carved into the desired internal shapes. The first, and largest, was the Qui'Tain Habitat, which still serves as the major orbital spaceport for the Abbai Matriarchy.

LOCATION AND FUNCTION

Qui'Tain (pronounced KEE-tayn) occupies a geosynchronous orbit above the city of Ssumsh'r, the city where it was grown and carved but it serves most of the Abban surface dwellings. It is a passenger and cargo hub with no military base but is equipped with a typically stalwart Abbai defence grid allowing it to withstand attack. In fact, the defences of Qui'Tain reflect the natural defences of some of the corals used in its architecture: a dense array of defence spines carrying various beam lasers, anti-laser chaff and a large network of weapons platforms positioned at strategic intervals and distances around the main installation.



Qui'Tain resembles a cluster of immense sea urchins, threaded with seams of pale blue, pink and deep crimson. The countless lights providing internal and external illumination give Qui'Tain an ethereal glow that is truly awe-inspiring for those approaching it for the first time, making its sea-bound, organic origins evident from the start. It has been carefully sculpted to afford the optimum docking space for its size, whilst still retaining its innate beauty.

The facility is served by a constant stream of shuttles from the smaller, island bases on the surface, as well as acting as a port for its own, strangely designed deep space vessels and the visiting ships from other League worlds. The Abbai's welcoming approach for all visitors to their homeworld means that facilities for foreign vessels are excellent, with genuine consideration being given to the needs of other races. The key worlds have their own docking sectors, each tailored to the relevant species and sympathetically located across Qui'Tain to take into account existing racial tensions; the docking centres for Centauri and Narn, for example, are positioned on opposite arcs of the main structure and docking procedures are carefully co-ordinated to ensure that Centauri and Narn vessels do not occupy similar approach lanes.

ARRIVAL AND TRANSIT

Upon emerging from the Abba Jump Gate, all vessels must slow and beam full identification protocols to Qui'Tain before they are allowed to continue their approach towards Abba. Aligned several kilometres out from the Jump Gate is an automated defence grid, comprised of over one hundred defence platforms, designed to repel any craft that attempts to pass without signalling the unique entry code beamed to them from Qui'Tain, once identification and intent have been established and cleared.

The defences stage through three levels, invoked according to the perceived threat. The first is disablement; a cluster of defence platforms direct an intense, laser-guided, electromagnetic pulse (EMP) at the intruder, intending to disable key ship systems (motive power, weapon systems and so on) whilst leaving life support uninjured. The second stage is a beam-laser network designed to target key sections of the intruding vessel, whilst still preserving life. The third stage – one that has never been invoked – is a cloud of micro-mines that are launched from a third platform cluster. These micro-mines number to hundreds of thousands, spreading in a directed cloud around the intruder, exploding on impact. Here, there emphasis is on deterrence rather than destruction, because the mines are designed, once more, to disable. Furthermore the mines emit their own, narrow-wave EMPs to fully disrupt navigational systems. Naturally Qui'Tain issues clear and precise warnings to any vessel attempting to approach without due security clearance and first and second level defences have only been activated a few times in the Abbai's spacefaring history.

Once cleared to approach, Qui'Tain keys low-intensity directional lasers to the clearance code of the ship, creating a distinct approach path that is fully under Qui'Tain's control. As the vessels nears Qui'Tain itself, automated, AI-controlled landing drones are despatched to guide the ship to the correct docking terminal. The process is flawless and safe. The Abbai attention to detail ensures that all space traffic is controlled effortlessly and experienced pilots enjoy the precision of the Qui'Tain system, which provides quite a contrast to the often haphazard docking procedures of installations such as Babylon 5.

GENERAL USAGE PROCEDURES

Because Qui'Tain serves both direct deep space traffic and surface shuttle transits, there are discrete procedures for the installation's usage.

Shuttle Exchange

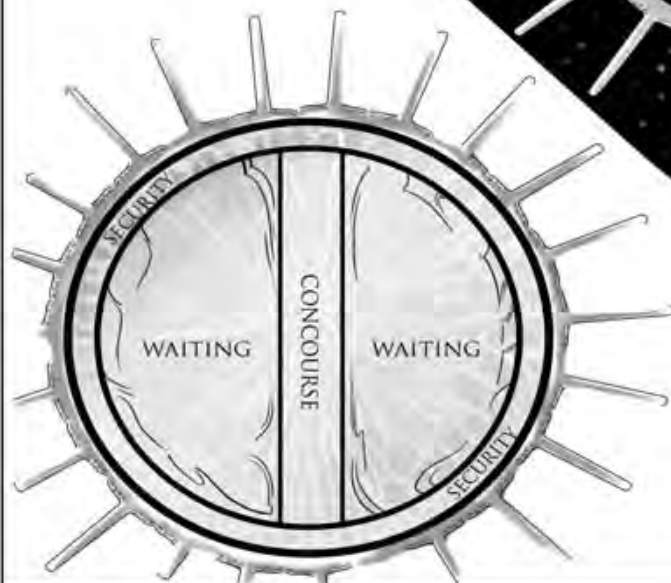
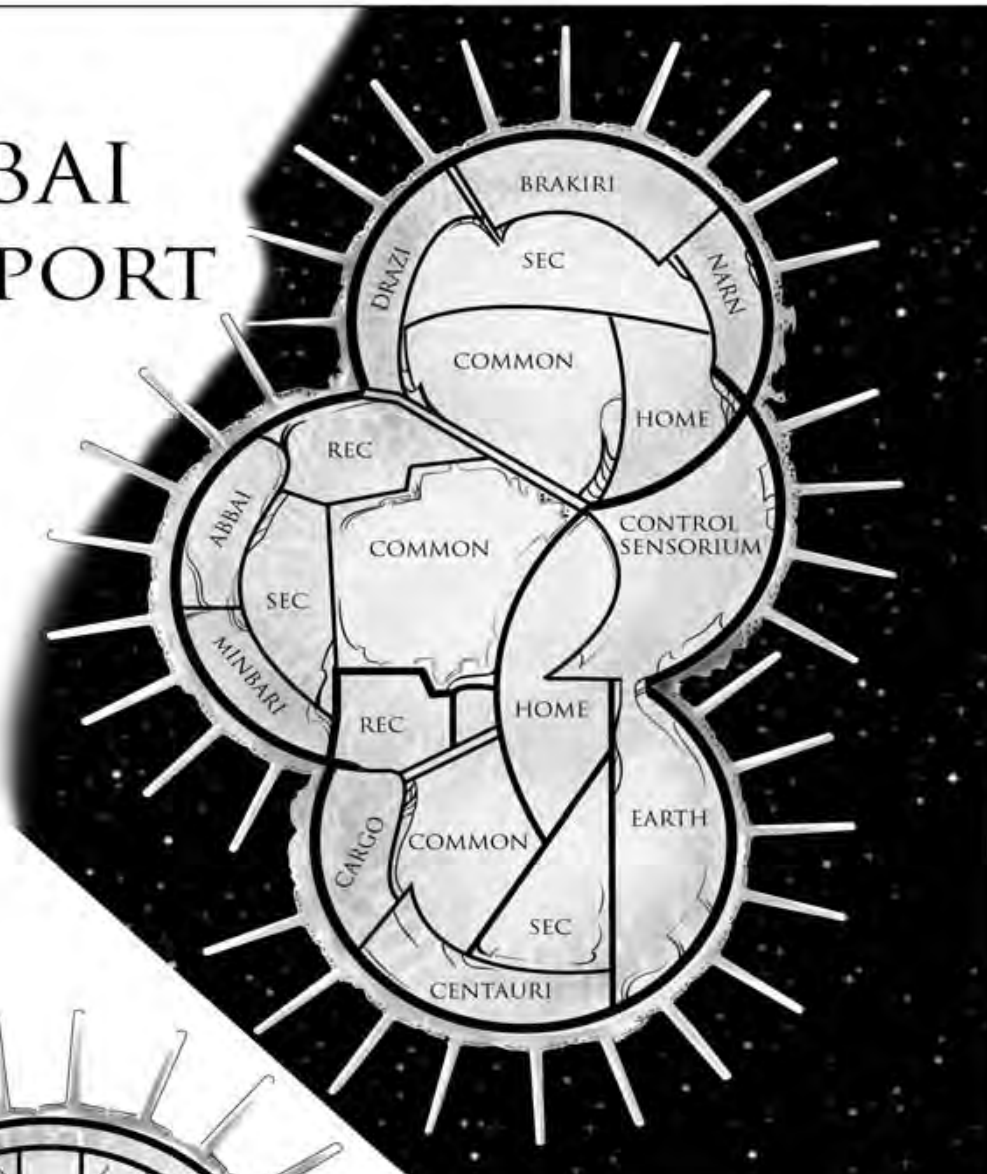
Passengers arriving via shuttle, either from Abba or any of the other orbital habitats, arrive at the Shuttle Exchange terminal, located beneath the main accretion of the spaceport. This vast, inverted dome area, is bathed in a peaceful pink and orange warmth and soothing directional messages are piped through the whole area, directing people to the correct part of Qui'Tain for the next stage of their passage.

Twenty two docking arms serve the shuttle exchange, with each docking arm capable of supporting up to three shuttle transports depending on size, although most are of the standard Fesmoola design, maximising passenger numbers and comfort. Baggage exchange is handled by space-side drones that take all luggage directly to the ship for the next stage of the journey or to a central holding area if the connection has not yet docked or unloaded. For the rest, the Security hall processes all arrivals and departures with a biometric scan, followed by a few brief, friendly questions and then the issuing of a clearance pass permitting those who will be using Qui'Tain for any length of time access to the public areas and acts as a micro database of Qui'Tain's facilities. Beyond the Security ring are large, comfortable waiting areas served by bars, small eateries and a few shops. The Exchange Boulevard runs across the centre of the Exchange, allowing elevator access to the main spaceport areas above.

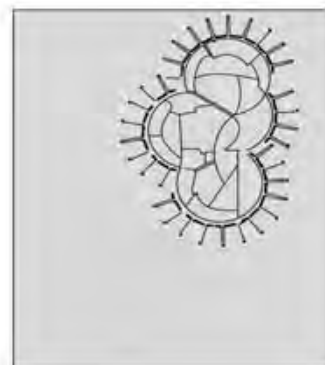
Spaceside

Spaceside operations are handled from the main Qui'Tain facility above the Shuttle Exchange. This area is known as the Accretion because it is an enormous accretion of coral later carved into the Qui'Tain habitat. Elevators run from the Shuttle Exchange boulevard up to the Common Chambers of the Accretion.

ABBAI STARPORT



BELOW
MAIN



The Common Chambers provide access to the various docking areas and of course, Qui'Tain's public facilities which, given the confinements of the habitat are not extensive.

Flight information is displayed throughout the Common Chambers on the large, membrane-like display screens. Like other Abbai technology these screens are grown, rather than built, and then treated with a variety of chemical process to make them image-sensitive and highly responsive. Images appear almost organically, seeming to grow out of the membrane which itself quivers with each new change or flow of information. To those used to traditional electronic displays, this is almost disconcerting to watch, as though data is being displayed on pale, thin stretched out flesh but to the Abbai, it is perfectly normal and they find traditional displays harsh and painful to watch for any length of time.

On either side of the larger of the two Common Chambers are the Recreation tanks. These are for Abbai use and are water-filled environments allowing the semi-aquatic Abbai to hydrate as their body chemistry dictates. Non-Abbai are allowed to use the tanks too but few choose to do so, more out of respect for Abbai requirements than for other reasons.

Security

The Abbai are naturally security conscious but not aggressively so and this is reflected in the approach by the security personnel, most of whom are female, although some male Abbai do occupy security posts. The three Abbai tenets of *Preservation*, *Respect* and *Community* mean that security personnel appear almost complacent in their duties, lacking the hard edge found in most other spaceport facilities; however this is to underestimate the Abbai preoccupation with defence. Qui'Tain security personnel are highly trained in the psychological arts as well as the usual defensive ones. They know that co-operation produces more effective results than aggravation and bend their security procedures to fit the co-operative model. A friendly smile and engaging question gain more than a steely scowl and barked interrogation. For the occasional belligerent who might try to take advantage of Qui'Tain security's good nature, a swift response with a kemjaa burst can be expected, followed by several hours in a cold, uncomfortable coral cell.

The security service functioning within Qui'Tain is self-contained and unique to the facility. However, it works in partnership with the Paatar (see *The League of Non-Aligned Worlds Factbook*, page 47) which has a section dedicated to each Abbai spaceport. The Qui'Paatar operate throughout the installation, mingling with travellers, watching their comings and goings and acting on specific intelligence when called upon to do so. The

Qui'Tain Security Armour

The Qui' Tain security service are noted for their pale green, coral-like body armour and helmets. The armour is ornate and uniquely sculpted to the individual wearer with no two suits the same. The distinctive pale green colouration is found nowhere else amongst Abbai military or law enforcement services and is derived from naturally occurring dyes found within the Qui'Tan coral. It is tough, light and flexible, providing a DR of 3 and weighing no more than 8lbs.

Qui'Paatar are known to the security teams, who accord them with the levels of respect the Paatar enjoy throughout the Matriarchate. They are tireless and diligent servants of the Matriarchate, both male and female, watching Qui'Tain for those undesirables who have somehow slipped beneath the installations extensive security networks.

Automated security measures include the biometric scanning of personal identity chips and of course, the permissions set by the Qui'Tain passkey issued to all those who wish or need, to access the public facilities of the spaceport. The passkey is a single sliver of laminated, triangular, wafer-thin coral. It is encoded with a fingerprint, retina print, a DNA profile, plus a unique identifier code issued by the central security computer and akin to the pass key apportioned to approaching spacecraft. The coral laminate makes the passkey exceedingly difficult to replicate, since it contains its own DNA structure. The security centre is made aware of anyone attempting to access a restricted area and transmits a trace code to the passkey itself. The Paatar are then alerted and may, depending on the profile of the passkey holder, keep the holder under surveillance or approach them for polite, yet firm, questioning.

OPERATIONS

All Qui'Tain operations are handled from the Operations Community in the Control Sensorium. Sensorium is the right word: the entire habitat uses the minute natural veins and fissures in the coral superstructure as the conduits for microelectronics, power circuitry and field sensors. The whole of Qui'Tain is visible to the Operations Community in ways unavailable to other species. The operations staff maintain neurological links with the facility, literally sensing what is happening throughout the entire installation. The Operations Community of Qui'Tain, though made from dead coral, functions as a living

entity and they are in tune with it completely. There is thus an absence of dials and read-outs in the Operations Centre; instead there are rows and rows of Abbai Operations Personnel, reclining in their sensorial couches, being fed the sensorial information of the facility. This network extends throughout everything, including ship docking procedures. Sub-communities handle different elements of Qui'Tain: docking and launch, security monitoring, life support, engineering facilities and defence, to name but a few. Each member of the community is trained in two specific areas and they develop these to high levels of specialisation and co-operate with their fellows seamlessly, as though part of a wider, quasi-telepathic commune.

The resulting experience for the habitat's users is one of seamless, personal efficiency. Everything runs to time and schedule; malfunctions are unheard of and there is a constant sense, especially to telepaths, that one is being watched over and looked after by Qui'Tain itself. Though made of dead coral, this spaceport genuinely does behave as though alive and that life is perceptible to everyone who steps aboard.

CARGO AND COMMERCE

Qui'Tain is a busy commercial hub. Spaceships bearing freight are docked in the appropriate species section and the cargo unloaded by remote drones directly into waiting

shuttles for transport elsewhere. The use of living agents to process cargo is frowned upon by the Abbai; the work is far more efficiently handled through the drone network and the close control of the Operations Community, sensing exactly what is happening every step of the way, ensures constant levels of efficiency without fatigue.

All cargo must be declared in advance and the manifest submitted before the ship is allowed to approach Qui'Tain. Discrepancies between a manifest and what is found in a cargo hold are subject to immediate investigation by the Qui'Paatar and can result in the confiscation of the entire cargo if adequate explanations cannot be offered.

Smuggling is therefore a rare occurrence in Qui'tain and known smugglers are already in the Qui'Paatar radar. The drone network is centrally controlled from the Control Sensorium leaving little opportunity for last-minute subterfuges and the only way to achieve truly fool-proof smuggling would be to infiltrate the Control Sensorium somehow – as illustrated by The Bellhouse Incident.

The cargo drones carry a forward sensor array used to scan all cargo elements they deal with. The sensor array includes olfactory capabilities as well as temperature, radiation, vibration and chemical analysis probes. Drones come in a variety of sizes for different cargo bulks and where massive cargo needs to be moved around, three or four drones can



The Bellhouse Incident

In 2251 Johan Bellhouse, a Martian smuggler of some repute, sought to extract a large cargo of the Abbai-produced drug, Lash, through Qui'Tain. Lash, derived from an Abbai seaweed protein, is extremely addictive but is said to offer profound enhancement of telepathic abilities.

Discovering that some of the Control Sensorium staff use a very weak form of Lash to assist with their neural interface capabilities, Bellhouse and one of his Abbai associates targeted a member of the Operations Community and managed to get her addicted to the stronger version of the drug. As she was a cargo specialist, she was then able to arrange the cargo handling facilities to move Bellhouse's full Lash cargo from its shuttle transit onto the Martian freighter 'Mister K'.

The scam would have been foolproof had the Paatar on Abbai not been monitoring the entire operation beforehand. They passed on the information to the Qui'Paatar who subsequently apprehended and arrested Bellhouse and his associates as they prepared to make their way from the Shuttle Exchange up to the 'Mister K'. A brief fire-fight ensued, but Bellhouse was taken alive and the full details of his plan exposed. The poor sensorium operative was treated for acute Lash addiction but never recovered.

Bellhouse was sentenced to a life-term in the Abbai deep-sea penal colony of Ssu'dha'kar, where the extreme deep water pressures and vicious currents make escape simply impossible. Since then, all Qui'Tain personnel are regularly screened for Lash and anyone exhibiting even the most minute trace is removed from duty.

combine to achieve the task. Treat Qui'Tain drones as Earth Alliance Maintenance Pods (*Babylon 5 second edition rules, page 221*) although they are remote operated and have no onboard crew. In terms of appearance, they share the coral structure of Qui'Tain and with the forward sensor array and retractable lifting arms, resemble spaceborn cuttlefish.

Once cargo has been cleared, checked and moved, its owner is notified via their passkey. Any irregularities are handled by either security or Qui'Paatar, depending on the severity of the problem.

FACILITIES

Qui'Tain consists of five roughly spherical habitats joined together by complex Abbai molecular engineering. It is completely sealed against vacuum and the coral structure has been treated with a complex chemical laminate that gives the structure a similar strength to traditional composite spacecraft hulls but at a fraction of the density. The spheres are divided into the following functions.

Spheres One, Two and Three (The Accretion): Docking and service facilities

Sphere Four: Shuttle Exchange

Sphere Five: Control Sensorium and vital systems (air and water processors), crew quarters

A sixth, smaller sphere, occupies a similar position and orbit to Qui'Tain and is used for drone storage and maintenance.

The Accretion

The central area for just about everyone visiting Qui'Tain, the Accretion is a marvel of Abbai artifice and artistry. The vast inner spaces are carved from the unique corals of Abba's oceans and resemble nothing less than an immense, soothing, fairy grotto. The air is cool and crisp but the uneven coral walls, curving gently upwards, are warm and welcoming. Despite the physical confines of the environment, the Accretion does not feel cramped or restrictive, although this is partly an illusion created by clever lighting, carefully arranged acoustics and an efficient air conditioning system.

Each sphere of the Accretion contains up to three dedicated environments for the major races using the spaceport, with environment processors and regulators ensuring that when passengers disembark from their flight or are preparing to join it, they are greeted by a close approximation of their home world. Thus, the Narn quarter is bathed in gentle reds and oranges, with a dry atmosphere and the subtle, spicy scents characterising Nar'shal.

Each environment section of the Accretion is controlled from the Sensorium but has its own representative from one of the named species. Employees

of the Qui'Tain administrators on Abba they are expected to act as liaison between visitors to the spaceport and the spaceport executive officers. In this role they are both ambassadors and Qui'Tain representatives, with a slight emphasis on the latter function. Each representative is expected to abide by the Honraati (see *League of Non-Aligned Worlds Factbook*, pages 16-17) and to uphold the sanctity of Qui'Tain, ostensibly putting both ahead of personal and racial interests. This is easier for some than others, as discussed later.

Common Environment Elements

Although the layout and character of the environments differ, they share some elements in common:

- ⑤ **Boarding Locks.** These flexible passageways form an airlocked conduit between the boarding gate and the spacecraft. The passageways are telescopic and can extend up to a hundred metres outwards to meet the airlock of a docked spacecraft. Each boarding lock has its own series of pressure-sensitive iris valves allowing sections of the passage to be closed off at one metre intervals in the event of a breach causing decompression. The boarding gate system is controlled from the Sensorium where a small team of Abbai controlled personnel dedicated to the environment monitor the status of the docking facilities. Where a large spacecraft has docked, several Boarding Locks may be used to assist with passenger transit.
- ⑤ **Arrivals/Departure suite.** Each environment has such a suite for each docking arm. Security scans perform full security verification as passengers make their way through the suite, even though the full Security hall awaits them beyond the environment's confines.
- ⑤ **Representative's Suite.** A small suite of rooms occupied by the environment's Representative, when on duty. The suite is used for general administration duties but includes facilities for entertaining VIPs or other honoured passengers, depending on the circumstances. The Qui'Tain Abbai respect the privacy of these suites and do not operate any kind of security surveillance within them, holding each Representative on trust.

Abbai

Naturally enough the Abbai do not need to make any special concessions in their own environment but maintain a representative nonetheless. Her name is Nashan Olyoth, an ex-military pilot who now finds deep fulfilment in assisting others and has lost the will to travel the stars. She adores Qui'Tain, rarely leaving it on the occasions when she has shore-leave and treats the spaceport with the utmost reverence, believing the place to be spiritually graced with an emotional intelligence that has established itself in ways quite distinct from the interactions

of the Abbai control operatives. This otherworldiness is not considered odd by the Abbai but is somewhat disconcerting to some of the other representatives, not least Wanda Greene, who is one of Nashan's closest friends. Nashan's reverence for Qui'Tain extends to steely disapproval towards those who behave disrespectfully of the place and some have speculated that Nashan is actually bordering on madness.

Brakiri

The Brakiri environment is utilitarian and decorated throughout with the corporate emblems of the Mh'Thass Combine, the corporation that rents the environment (in their eyes) from the Abbai. The atmosphere processors keep the air warm and dry, as enjoyed by the Children of Brakir, and everything is functional and in its place; well-ordered, clean but spartan. Signage is frequent and logical and at pains to explain Qui'Tain security procedures; no Brakiri likes to walk into something, especially something of the Abbai, without full and fair warning.

Ukrith Mh'Thass is the representative here. Whilst technically an employee of Qui'Tain, his loyalties are very much with the Mh'Thass Combine, which specialises in freight and passenger services. He is a middle-ranking member of the Combine and has only been in the representative role for three years. He seeks to improve his position constantly and is keen to impress the officers

of Qui'Tain with his efficiency in the hope that a good word will be sent back to his superiors in the Mh'Thass boardroom, thereby securing him a promotion and a way off Qui'Tain. Like all Brakiri, Ukrith is commercially astute and is extremely happy to arrange all manner of services on behalf of Qui'Tain passengers, whatever their species, for a modest fee. He has spent his time building up contacts and favours to be drawn on as circumstances suit. The Abbai are fully aware of his network of contacts and countless scams (the Qui'Paatar are always watching him) but tolerate his activities because they actually assist the smooth running of Qui'Tain rather than hinder it. Ukrith enjoys good relations with the Abbai even though other species consider him mendacious and grasping.

Centauri

The Centauri environment is traditional Imperial opulence with silk drapes, bas reliefs of Centauri greatness hanging on the walls and the House colours and standards of the environment's representative, Kor Maray, displayed prominently.

Kor Moray is a sullen individual who can turn on the charm when he wishes. He refuses to explain why he occupies this position but occasionally mutters dark words about the Molari house. He does not enjoy meeting and greeting, enjoying resolving issues even less but does it anyway because there is little else to occupy his time. In fact, he





is very good at getting things done, when the mood takes him and if he senses an intrigue in the making, becomes super efficient. Generally, though, he is content to force a smile, wave politely, suffer the fools and answer one inane question after another as quickly as possible.

Drazi

Typically bordering on the chaotic and aggressive, the Drazi environment makes few special concessions to its own people although the environment's décor reflects the utilitarian approach the Drazi take to most things. The corridors and access points are wide to minimise the chances of conflict emerging between passengers but other than that, the organisation is haphazard and not especially welcoming.

Kakran is the Drazi representative. His attempts at courtesy cannot mask his naturally pugnacious disposition and like most of his species, he is quick to take offence although he is steadily learning a modicum of patience and is able to resist the impulse to argue or fight when faced with a complaint or problem. Like Kor Maray, he considers his position as meeter and greeter as something of a punishment but has so far upheld the finer points of the Honraati. The Abbai in charge

of Qui'Tain consider this something of a success, given Drazi nature, although Kakran would much prefer being able to settle things *his* way, without having to be act so respectfully all the time.

Earth Environment

The look and feel of the environment mirrors that of a traditional human spaceport such as the Wisconsin Hub. The lights are bright and the floors and walls are panelled rather than being of the standard coral texture as found throughout the rest of Qui'Tain. Displays and other visual information use standard Earth Alliance technology instead of Abbai. Signage is in English and although the personnel are Abbai, the immediate surroundings are highly familiar to any human stepping from a spacecraft.

The environment's representative is Wanda Greene. An ex-diplomat with a murky past, Wanda has nevertheless found a place for herself on Qui'Tain. She makes herself available to greet any new vessels landing, especially any important dignitaries and is highly approachable and personable. She seems to enjoy steadfast relations with the Abbai and genuinely supports and upholds the Honraati.

Abbai

Minbari

As one might expect, the Minbari environment is serene, quiet and understated. The walls and floors are lined with crystals imported from Minbar, with cool, dry air and gentle music playing throughout, as all arrivals and departures are divided into their caste distinctions with separate access points and corridors. The atmosphere is formal, reverential and courteous.

The representative is Odurin Life Meeter, a Worker Caste Minbari who has lived amongst the Abbai for over twenty five years and knows their ways well. He was one of the first representatives brought to Qui'Tain and helped to establish the position. As one might expect, he is hard working, honest and deeply spiritual, with a high regard for the Honraati and only too happy to embrace its principles. However it is strange for a Worker to be so far from Minbar and he has refused to let on how he arrived amongst the Abbai, something that intrigues Kor Maray no end

Narn

Lit with deep red and orange, the Narn environment seeks to soothe the soul of those who pass through it. The history and culture of the Narn is represented throughout the environment, especially their struggle to shake-off Centauri tyranny and their mourning for the rape of their homeworld. The environment is suffused with the spiced incense that burns constantly in the reverential sconces positioned throughout the area and traditional Narn travelling dirges are played constantly.

The representative, Ja'Shir, is a devotee of the philosophies of G'Quan and has taken this position on Qui'Tain to advance her understanding of other beliefs, as written in the scriptures of G'Quan. Quotes from the scriptures are inscribed on the walls throughout the environment and Ja'Shir is fond of quoting whole sections of them to any who will listen or in cryptic response to questions posed. She believes that G'Quan's enlightened philosophy is accessible to all and considers anyone who cannot interpret its meanings as either a lost child or a fool. Sometimes the quotes she uses are straightforward and can be interpreted literally but when a question such as 'Where do I find the Shuttle Exchange?' is met with a response such as 'The true meaning of exchange lies in the tolerance of the heart, G'Quan, Epigraph Four, Third Canto', it becomes easy to see why Ja'Shir may have been distanced from the Narn homeworld.

Despite this mystical nature and over-reliance on scripture, she is helpful and tolerant, even towards the Centauri – although they often find that her most cryptic and impenetrable quotations are offered in response to exceedingly simple requests.

Security Hall

Each sphere of the Accretion includes a Security Hall used for processing arriving and departing passengers. Security arrangements are stringent and diligently enforced, with an impressive array of Abbai Security officers scanning (visually and electronically) everyone passing from or to an environment. Almost nothing escapes their attention and the slightest suspicious act usually results in one or two security officers politely asking the individual to step to one side for further questioning and scrutiny.

Each hall has a suite of private officers containing advanced surveillance and sensory equipment, plus interview and holding rooms. Whilst Abbai hate to act violently, all the security personnel are armed with kemjaa and will not hesitate to use them in self defence or if the lives of others are being threatened. At least one Qui'Paatar is always on duty within any Security Hall and they are trained to go to greater lengths in the defence of Abba and its institutions, if necessary.

Common Areas

Beyond the Security Halls are the Common Areas of the Accretion, where in-transit passengers can mingle, trade, gain information from the many membrane screens or just wait for their next flight. Each common area is a hive of activity with different species milling around and a constant chatter of languages, accents and dialects filling the vast, coral-cave halls with high-domed ceilings shimmering with mother of pearl and multicoloured petrified coral shapes.

In sphere two, close to the Abbai environment, are two Recreation pools which are used primarily by Abbai needing to hydrate themselves but other species can use the pools too. The pool closest to the Minbari Environment includes a sauna and massage facility where Hosholst Jagas and her expert team pummel and soothe tired muscles and flesh using the ancient Abbai *Ghlist* technique of massage, originally developed for use underwater but equally effective when dry. The expertise of Hosholst and her talented masseurs is legendary throughout Qui'Tain and especially enjoyed by both Narn and Drazi. Experiencing Hosholst's *Ghlist* massage is considered a high point for both races and Narn aficionados refuse to engage in spaceflight before having their muscles thumped, squeezed and then tenderly caressed into tingling rejuvenation.

Small booths and stalls offer a variety of things for sale from snacks and drinks through to small, personal items of technology. The Brakiri dominate proceedings - something Mh'Thass Combine has engendered - much to the consternation of other, native traders. The Brakiri traders ruthlessly undercut their competitors and the quality of

The Qui'Tain Community and the Cult of Qui'Tain

To the Abbai, community is everything. It permeates their souls and psyche and is the universal expression of harmony. All Abbai love to create and preserve communities and Qui'Tain is no exception. Those living and working aboard the installation enjoy and engender a deep and tangible community spirit that even non-Abbai residents can readily agree is inclusive and supportive. Whilst there is a formality to most things the Abbai do, the Honraati principles mean that it is a relaxed formality, yet never complacent. Consequently the people who run Qui'Tain are close-knit, even if some of the Representatives do not like to admit it and innately supportive and defensive of one another.

An interesting development aboard Qui'Tain in recent years is the Cult of Qui'Tain. This small sect has reached the conclusion that Qui'Tain is on the verge of gaining or regaining life. The fact that it is built largely of once living material and is suffused with the Sensorium network, reinforces this belief and the Cult of Qui'Tain actively believes that, under the right conditions, the spaceport will develop a singular intelligence of its own that combines the spiritual essences of the coral, the Sensorium operatives and those who regularly use the facility.

The sect meets regularly in a disused maintenance cave below the Sensorium dome to meditate and reflect on what Qui'Tain is becoming. One has to be invited to join the cult and those who are invited have displayed a growing love and respect for the installation, reflected in a growing devotion to its existence. As the Cult grows in devotion, it is beginning to establish rites and rituals designed to assist Qui'Tain establish its sentience. Certain people within the Cult have been tasked with researching all they can on such rituals, even going as far as researching ancient magical teachings from a variety of worlds. One, a young a particularly devout Sensorium operator, recently met a human traveller who claims to have access to a number of mystical works related to channelling latent sentience and will, at some stage, be prepared to discuss these matters with her. His name? A Mister Morden.

merchandise can be variable. In the eateries, Brakiri chefs have perfected the art of replicating the dishes of other races, not always as successfully as they believe and the results can be questionable. The smaller traders fear that the Mh'Thass Combine is seeking to franchise all trade in the Accretion, although this is something the Abbai are aware of and subtly control through licencing arrangements.

Hotel Accommodation

The hotel accommodation, due to space limitations, is comfortable but basic. Rooms are utilitarian cabin-like affairs with a single, comfortable bed, cleansing facilities (different styles for different races) and a small amount of space for luggage storage. Rooms can be rented by the Abbaian hour or day using a credit chip but there are no special concessions for particular needs or desires; double rooms are available but

there are no VIP suites, room service or other, typical hotel luxuries. Some cabins are reserved for Qui'Tain crew, who use the communal facilities in the same way as passengers but otherwise there are no advanced reservations and it is strictly first-come-first-served. This ensures that passengers do not linger in Qui'Tain (unless delays, which are rare) force them to. Hotel cabins are reserved for relatively short periods allowing travellers to relax for a few hours away from the common area before transferring to their flight.

Control Sensorium

The Sensorium is Qui'Tain's heart and brain. Three hundred specially trained Abbai personnel plug into the synthetic neural network of the spaceport and oversee and manipulate almost every aspect of its operation: from docking procedures to cleaning; long-range security clearance at the Jump Gate to security surveillance of individual items of baggage.

The Sensorium, for a control centre, is remarkably serene, as is the Abbai way, with each discrete team using control interfaces designed specifically for one kind of job, but communicating with many other teams constantly through a common communications interface that is a low-level telepathy enhancer. Communications between the Sensorium teams are conducted in Burai, the abbreviated language of the Abbai originally developed for underwater communication. It lends itself particularly well to communication in the Sensorium, where information must be exchanged rapidly and accurately.

The Sensorium is, of course, water-filled. External (but very well protected) processors keep the water filtered and oxygenated constantly and the temperature is maintained at a level conducive to the mental agility needed to use Qui'Tain neural interfaces.

All Abbai Sensorium personnel have a small interface element implanted into each wrist. This small, discreet implant connects with the sensor pads on the Sensorium couch used by the controller and provides instant access to all relevant control systems. Necessary displays are projected into a personal membrane screen set into a hood that arches above the operator's eyes, but all interactions are done at a neurological and telepathic level.

LOW LIFE IN QUI'TAIN

Qui'Tain has its fair share of ne'er-do-wells amongst those passing through its spheres but these tend to be petty crooks and opportunists out for a quick scam rather than any formal criminal network. The presence and diligence of the Qui'Tain security and the Qui'Pataar, in particular, ensure that Qui'Tain is reasonably free from serious criminal elements.

Lurkers

As with any transit hub, there are loopholes that can be exploited. The Abbai are almost immune to corruption as they are intrinsically bound to the notions of community and respect as postulated in the Honraati. Yet other races are not so cleaved to Abbai ideals and seek to exploit the perceived good nature of Qui'Tain for their own ends. Several Brakiri traders, for example, specialise in low-level smuggling and fencing stolen goods but none of them pose any major risk, as far as the Abbai are concerned. The confined nature and extensive communications structure of Qui'Tain makes it difficult for criminals or would-be criminals to hide their activities. Falling below the Qui'Pataar radar is difficult to do and requires the perpetrator to be able to lie without causing suspicion and act in as casual and business like a manner as possible to avoid arousing security personnel attention.

However there are a few who have mastered such dark arts...

Vance Reedham

A human traveller who has set-up a drinks and juices bar in the common area close to the Earth Environment. On the outside Reedham is an avuncular, overweight man in his late fifties attempting to compete for business in the busy Qui'Tain lounges but within he is a tormented, hateful soul fleeing prosecution for a major fraud covering several Earth colonies that resulted in bankruptcy for thousands. The name Vance Reedham is a completely false identity; his real name is Lyle Kavanagh and he lives in fear of discovery. He is a ruthless, murderous operator who has no qualms about taking life to protect his secret. Unbeknown to Vance/Lyle, the next liner due in from Mars will be carrying a passenger who may seal his fate. The widow of a financier who committed suicide following the loss of his reputation at Lyle's hands. She is not looking for Lyle but would recognise him wherever she saw him.

6th level Human Lurker

Hit Points: 21

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12 (+3 class, -1 Dex)

Attacks: +5 close combat, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Lurker's Knowledge, Survivors Luck

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 11

Notable Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Intimidate +6, Intrigue +6, Investigate +8, Knowledge (Qui'Tain Habitat) +6, Notice +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +5, Subterfuge +8.

Feats: Contact, Endurance, Die Hard, Fluency (Abbai, Human), Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Subterfuge), Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols).

Averyff Khilour

This Brakiri weapons dealer masquerades as a purveyor of innocuous technology (communication devices, high-tech toys and so on) from a grubby looking stall close to the Narn Environment. His devices whirr, click and glow within his unkempt trade booth but he always seems to have a small but steady trade. Averyff specialises in assembling devices that have hidden, often nefarious uses. A tiny but effective handgun can be assembled from a few parts from certain executive toys; a skeleton key using slivers of nano-circuitry plastic ripped from a PDA and hastily modified. His genius lies in an almost uncanny ability to realise the technological potential for even the most straightforward of items and then to manipulate it to make it work. Averyff is very careful in what he modifies and sells, taking care that he only ever points out (and in very roundabout ways) how to make that hand weapon work (and to sell the components) but never to manufacture it himself. Naturally he is known to Ukrith Mh'Thass and the representative has directed more than a few clients in Averyff's direction.

6th level Human Lurker**Hit Points:** 18**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 15 (+3 class, +2 Dex)**Attacks:** +4 close combat, +6 ranged**Special Qualities:** Dark Vision, Lurker's Knowledge, Survivors Luck**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12**Notable Skills:** Appraise +6, Bluff +10, Computer Use +6, Intimidate +8, Intrigue +8, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Qui'Tain Habitat) +8, Notice +7, Stealth +8, Subterfuge +10.**Feats:** Contact, Eye of Equality, Fluency (Abbai, Brakiri, Human), Improved Initiative, Lighting Reflexes, Run, Skill Focus (Appraise), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols).**Gayle Kamen**

Gayle works as part of customs filtering in the security department, the only non-Abbai to do so but welcomed as part of the Qui'Tain community nonetheless. She is an Earth Alliance spy with the brief to gather continuing intelligence on both the Abbai and those passing through Qui'Tain. She is also a Psi Corps telepath but uses her abilities very discreetly and focuses on surface level scans rather than deep mind infiltration (although she is capable). She never wears gloves. Gayle is an expert at blending into social environments so seamlessly as to become a natural part of them. The Abbai – even the Qui'Paatar, have no inkling that she is spying on them. Like most Qui'Tain employees, she shuttles backwards and forwards to one of the Abban orbital habitats, where she lives and has none of the tools of her craft onboard Qui'Tain, although her small, innocuous quarters in the Vuthastain Habitat has, secreted within it, all manner of communications, surveillance and monitoring technology only supplied to the best undercover EarthForce operatives. Presently, Gayle is collecting evidence on the Cult of Qui'Tain, which she finds quite a troubling development. She has little intelligence so far but has established its existence and is keen to probe deeper, perhaps joining herself.

6th Level Human Telepath**Hit Points:** 16**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)**Attacks:** +3 close combat, +4 ranged**Special Qualities:** Maintain Concentration.**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha

15

Notable Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +7, Intrigue +11, Investigate +8, Knowledge (Qui'Tain Habitat) +6, Knowledge (Telepathy) +10, Notice +9, Sense Motive +9, Telepathy +11, Subterfuge +5.**Feats:** Ability Focus (Scanning), Ability Focus (Communication), Alertness, Contact, Fluency (Abbai, Human), Iron Will, Telepath (P5), Weapon Proficiency (pistols).**Standard Equipment:** PPG, Psi Corps insignia, gloves**OFFICERS OF QUI'TAIN****Shummi Machat, Commanding Officer**
(Abbai Female)

Shummi is an expert in running large scale logistics operations. Before her assignment to Qui'Tain ten years ago, she was in charge of one of Abba's undersea prison facilities and before that, a ranking member of the Matriarchate's military. She, of all the Qui'Tain personnel, fosters the spirit and community of Qui'Tain the most. She is an exceptionally diligent and insightful CO but is somewhat troubled by the development of the Cult of Qui'tain. What began as a harmless, reverential society is now becoming something quite uncomfortable, in her view and whilst she would never demand its break-up, she is keeping a close eye on the way it is developing.

Shummi is normally found in the Sensorium but can be found touring Qui'Tain, speaking with both staff and travellers and acting as the chief ambassador for the port. She is approachable and helpful but she should not be underestimated; beneath her outgoing exterior she is a shrewd judge of character and quite capable of strong decisions – the result of having managed a prison facility for many years. But if her trust is earned, she is a good friend.

10th level Abbai Officer (Fleet)**Hit Points:** 24**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)**Speed:** 30 ft, swim 40 ft**DV:** 19 (+7 class, +2 Dex)**Attacks:** +10/+5 close combat, +12/+7 ranged**Special Qualities:** Specialisation, Rallying Call, Way of Command.**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +12**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 13**Notable Skills:** Athletics +4, Appraise +12, Bluff +8, Computer Use +12, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +9, Intrigue +7, Investigate +10, Knowledge (Tactics) +8, Knowledge (Qui'Tain Habitat) +10, Operations (Piloting) +8, Pilot +8, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Alertness, Bimitha Adept, Elite Commander, Evasive Action, Fluency (Abbai, Brakiri, Human), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Nerves of Steel, Spacecraft Proficiency, Skill Focus (Operations: systems), Veteran Commander, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Diplomat's attire, hand-held communicator.

Kaschot Em'lish, XO

Shummi's executive officer is a stalwart Abbai and ex-Paatar. Highly security conscious and naturally defensive, Kaschot is more reserved than her CO but arguably more practical. She controls the true bulk of Qui'Tain's operations and views the spaceport as a sophisticated and beautiful installation but little more. She has little patience for the increasing reverence towards Qui'Tain as some form of latent intelligence and shares Shummi's concern over the Cult of Qui'Tain's emergence, being quite prepared to do something about it. She is also concerned that certain Representatives from the Environments are demanding too much say in how Qui'Tain operates and have too much personal autonomy, leaving Qui'Tain exposed. She particularly distrusts Ukrih Mh'Thas and Kor Maray, although she has little evidence against either.

8th level Abbai Officer (Fleet)

Hit Points: 24

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft, swim 40 ft

DV: 17 (+6 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +7/+2 close combat, +9/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Specialisation, Rallying Call, Way of Command.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +10

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15

Notable Skills: Athletics +6, Appraise +8, Computer Use +10, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +8, Intrigue +10, Investigate +10, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Knowledge (Qui'Tain Habitat) +6, Linguistics +6, Notice +7, Operations (gunnery) +8, Operations (Sensors) +8.

Feats: Bimitha Adept, Fire Control, Data Access, Fluency (Abbai, Centauri, Human), Iron Will, Spacecraft Proficiency, Skill Focus (Operations: Sensors), Toughness, Veteran Commander, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Diplomat's attire, hand-held communicator.

Ettlat Kasak'aa, Chief Qui'Pataar

Ettlat is a dedicated and astute Pataari. Cautious, worldly, experienced and devoted to the Natar. She enjoys considerable respect from the thirty or so tireless Qui'Pataar under her command and she leads by example, working long, long hours and using a gentle, incisive questioning technique to unearth true motives and objectives. She is good friends with Kaschot Em'lish but has kept secret from her the fact that she, Ettlat, is one of the founders of the Cult of Qui'Tain. Floating in one of the Recreation tanks she heard the nascent intelligence of Qui'Tain calling to her through the water. Fearing she was working too hard, she simply rested for a little longer than usual and thought nothing of it; but the distant voices continued, revealing themselves to be the emerging consciousness of a completely new entity. Investigating this led her to meet others who shared the same experience and they thus formed the Cult to guide Qui'Tain towards realisation.

Outwardly, then, Ettlat is an exemplary officer and paragon of the Pataar ideal but she knows she cannot expose her true allegiance to the Cult of Qui'Tain to either Kaschot or Shummi and the strain of this secret is beginning to tell. Ettlat's diligence is showing the odd lapse and it cannot be long before these lapses become more frequent or more acute in nature.

4th Level Abbai Agent

Hit Points: 13

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Multi-Skilled, Opportunism (Stunning Attack), Skill Mastery (Subterfuge).

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Athletics +4, Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Computer Use +6, Intrigue +6, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Qui'Tain Habitat) +6, Notice +6, Sense Motive +6, Subterfuge +5, Stealth +4.

Feats: Fluency (Abbai, Centauri, Human), Skill Focus (Intrigue), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: PPG Pistol

BRAKIRI

As a relatively young starfaring people, the Brakiri have been quick to buy, study and adapt the systems and technology of others rather than develop their own from scratch. This is a typically pragmatic approach, since research and development is often a great deal more expensive than simply buying-in the commodities one needs and the Brakiri are always conscious of the cost. Much of what the Brakiri rely on for their infrastructure is a mixture of the homespun as well as the Centauri and Narn imports, especially the former. Despite having no great love for the Centauri Republic the Brakiri recognise excellence and innovation and the Centauri have offered both and thus the Brakiri corporations that rule Brakos have had no compunction in utilising Centauri ideas and technology, although in many instances they have carefully filed-off the serial numbers and stencilled over the remains with their own corporate ideograms.

Thus, like the Narn, the Brakiri have taken old Centauri installations and made them their own. However the Brakiri have never attempted to wipe out the past completely and if something appeals or rather more crucially, works, they are happy to use it without any fundamental redesign. So it is that the Plateau spaceport of Brakos, one of the largest on the planet, is essentially as the Centauri originally built it. Now owned by the Vhros Conglomerate, Plateau has been expanded considerably but it retains many Centauri features to which the Brakiri have added their own, indelible stamp.

Vhros Plateau

Rising a quarter of a kilometre above the arid prairie, the arrowhead-shaped Plateau mesa is owned completely by the Vhros Conglomerate, as is the surrounding prairie for some 800 kilometres in all directions. On top of the mesa is the Plateau spaceport, with buildings bristling from its top and burrowing into the rock beneath. Once a small Centauri staging post, Vhros has turned the core buildings into a thriving spaceport citadel and extended the basic infrastructure accordingly. It is a fascinating clash of styles: High Imperial Centauri mingles with the half-poured, angular look favoured by the Vhros Conglomerate. Behind the main spaceport terminal is Aik'Vhros, the sprawling shanty town that has developed over several decades to house spaceport workers, itinerants, lurkers and countless other misfits and unfortunates who find themselves in the glaring heat of Brakos. Due to the intense temperatures, Aik'Vhros is at its most active during the hours of darkness and so has garnered the name 'Night City' but the spaceport itself works around the clock, serving

both shuttles and direct space flights.

Plateau handles all kinds of space vessel; from Vhros-owned shuttle and cargo ships, through to atmosphere capable spacecraft and private vessels. Private ships have to be able to demonstrate their independence from any other major Brakiri corporation or face either a hefty landing levy or complete exclusion. Naturally, the right bribes in the right places at the right times can secure landing permission whatever the allegiance or origin, with the exception of Mk'Ruz allied vessels (see below); these are not permitted to even enter Plateau airspace.

The Vhros Conglomerate

Vhros is an amalgamation of three smaller corporations each with a far history in the water clans. Vhros made its reputation in ice mining and water purification but later diversified into technology acquisition and adaptation, with some dabbling in biotechnology and artificial intelligence. These latter two branches were never groundbreaking endeavours, so in recent years, Vhros has fallen back to what it knows best: performing cunning adaptations of proven technologies and then rebranding them as original designs. Naturally this has led to countless confrontations, some of them brimming into open warfare. To this day, Vhros is engaged in a feud over intellectual property rights with the Mk'Ruz Corporation and the two have stooped to violent hostilities and corporate sabotage quite recently. The original reason for the feud is long forgotten or has lost any relevance, it is now based solely on outright hatred, even though both corporations operate quite similar business practices.

For these reasons, Vhros has gone to great lengths to guarantee its own autonomy. Within Plateau Vhros law applies. Within Plateau, only Vhros goods can be traded. Within Plateau, allegiance to Vhros is essential if one wants to avoid expulsion and agents of competing corporations, especially Mk'Ruz, are banned.

Vhros is exceedingly proud of Plateau and especially in the performance of its Executive General Managing Director President, Po'Pragh, who has managed to improve its year-on-year revenue and profitability by twenty five percent quite consistently. Po'Pragh runs Plateau like a fiefdom and is intrinsically corrupt but this is inconsequential to the Vhros high brass; his methods get results and put rival spaceports (such as Xnatir, owned and operated by Mk'Ruz) into the shade.



ARRIVAL AND TRANSIT

Plateau is served by a wide network of Vhros-owned toll roads streaming across the prairie and to the cities on the edge of the wastelands. The plateau is visible from 100 kilometres away and at night it is lit-up with countless multicoloured lights along its ridge and summit – lights from both the landing area, the terminal buildings and of course, Night City. Vast parking facilities for ground vehicles surround the plateau, with tube transit systems taking passengers to the elevators built into the sides of the mesa. It is here, on the tube transit, that one first encounters Po'Pragh's grasping tendencies. None of the carriages are automatically air conditioned and because daytime temperatures can exceed 50 degrees Celsius, the journey into the starport can be exceedingly uncomfortable. Although for a modest fee of 20 Brakiri Credits, personal comfort modules can be hired from the main transit terminal that make the journey much more tolerable. Once at the foot of the mesa, these units must be returned before one can enter the elevators running up the side of the mesa to the passenger terminal. Predictably enough, only some of the elevators are air conditioned and it costs a further 20 Credits to use one of these (for which there are usually long queues), as opposed to the 10 Credits charged for a standard, non-air conditioned model. But the air conditioned elevators do have the luxury of windows, offering stunning views of the prairie as one rises to the

mesa summit, whilst the standard elevators are merely cramped boxes with video screens displaying constant advertisements for Vhros goods and services.

Once at the summit, the elevators open to reveal the Exchange Lounge. A huge holographic representation of Executive General Managing Director President Po'Pragh enthusiastically greets passengers to Plateau and reminds everyone that they will need to purchase a Plateau Card before they can make use of any of Plateau's facilities. Standard Brakiri Credits cannot be used in the Plateau – only Plateau Cards are valid. This single debit card costs 50 Credits to purchase, includes a biometric chip onto which a thumb and retina print is encoded and must be charged-up with currency before it can be used. Naturally there is a two percent exchange commission charged to load currency onto the Plateau Card and yet more long queues for the limited number of scanning and dispensing terminals. Touts hawking pre-charged Plateau Cards regularly hover around the queues, offering their merchandise for a 100 Credit base fee for the card, plus the currency on top at a further five percent fee. Their small retina and thumb readers can process a Plateau Card to the same standard as the main machines and the fact they will perform this service 'in-queue' is often an attractive, if expensive option. The holographic Po'Pragh continually warns passengers that fake cards are illegal and the touts are criminals but this does little to dissuade them. In fact, although Vhros

Plateau security guards move the touts along, it is merely a subterfuge; the guards themselves receive a cut from the touts to let them go back to business and since the 'fake cards' come from Po'Pragh's own blackmarket economy, it is Plateau – and so Po'Pragh – who benefit from this extraordinary scam.

GENERAL USAGE PROCEDURES

Plateau operates a traditional passenger system of check-in, security and departure. The system though, due to lax security and widespread corruption, is grossly inefficient. Check-in terminals are deliberately slow to process baggage and verify travel details, leading to yet more slow-moving queues. Yet, for a small charge to one's Plateau Card (50 Credits), one can use the rapid check-in machines in the central concourse of the departures sector.

Of course, mobile vending units circulate amongst the queues selling everything from soft drinks (such as the ubiquitous Vhros Shok! (a hyper sweet, root-beer like beverage) through to fatty, salty snacks and up to alcohol such as Vhros Brandy, which contains all manner of unpleasant additives and sedatives. The prices are inflated, naturally but since queue jumping is rife and tempers flare easily, passengers are often prepared to pay as they wait their turn for check-in processing.

Again, for a small fee, one can hire a professional Plateau Queue Manager. These Vhros employees will queue on a passenger's behalf, alerting the client when they have reached the head of the queue via a small pager unit. The charge for a Queue Manager is 20 Plateau Credits but many opt for it because it is cheaper than the Rapid Check-In machines and allows the passenger to go and spend time in one of the countless Vhros cafes dotted around the main Exchange Hall. Problems arise when the Queue Manager reaches the head of the queue then has to page the passenger and await their return (Queue Managers are forbidden to perform the check-in themselves), as delays are further compounded.

SECURITY

Check-in is followed by Security, another tortuous and potentially expensive process. Every single passenger is electronically scanned and checked against the slow-to-respond databases used by the Brakiri, which is based on Centauri database code that is about a century out of date. All hand baggage is searched and any non-Vhros produced goods, including the bag, are either charged a standard 10 Credit surcharge or confiscated. For a flat fee of 50 Credits passengers may use one of the Fast Track Security queues where non-Vhros goods are permissible and the processing code for the database is of a later iteration, ensuring a trouble-free security check.

The security staff are notoriously corrupt, with all manner of 'special taxes' levied either on items passengers are carrying that appear to be of dubious brand or origin or simply because they do not appreciate a passenger's attitude. Seasoned users of Plateau have learned to comply with security staff instructions or face even greater delays, random confiscations or hefty 'taxes' but the unwary often fall-foul of the unyielding, stern-faced nature of the security crews. Especially difficult passengers may be subjected to a semi-strip search in full view of others, or a full body-scan taking a few hours to process, so whilst the Vhros security process may be odious (and costly), compliance is often better than confrontation.

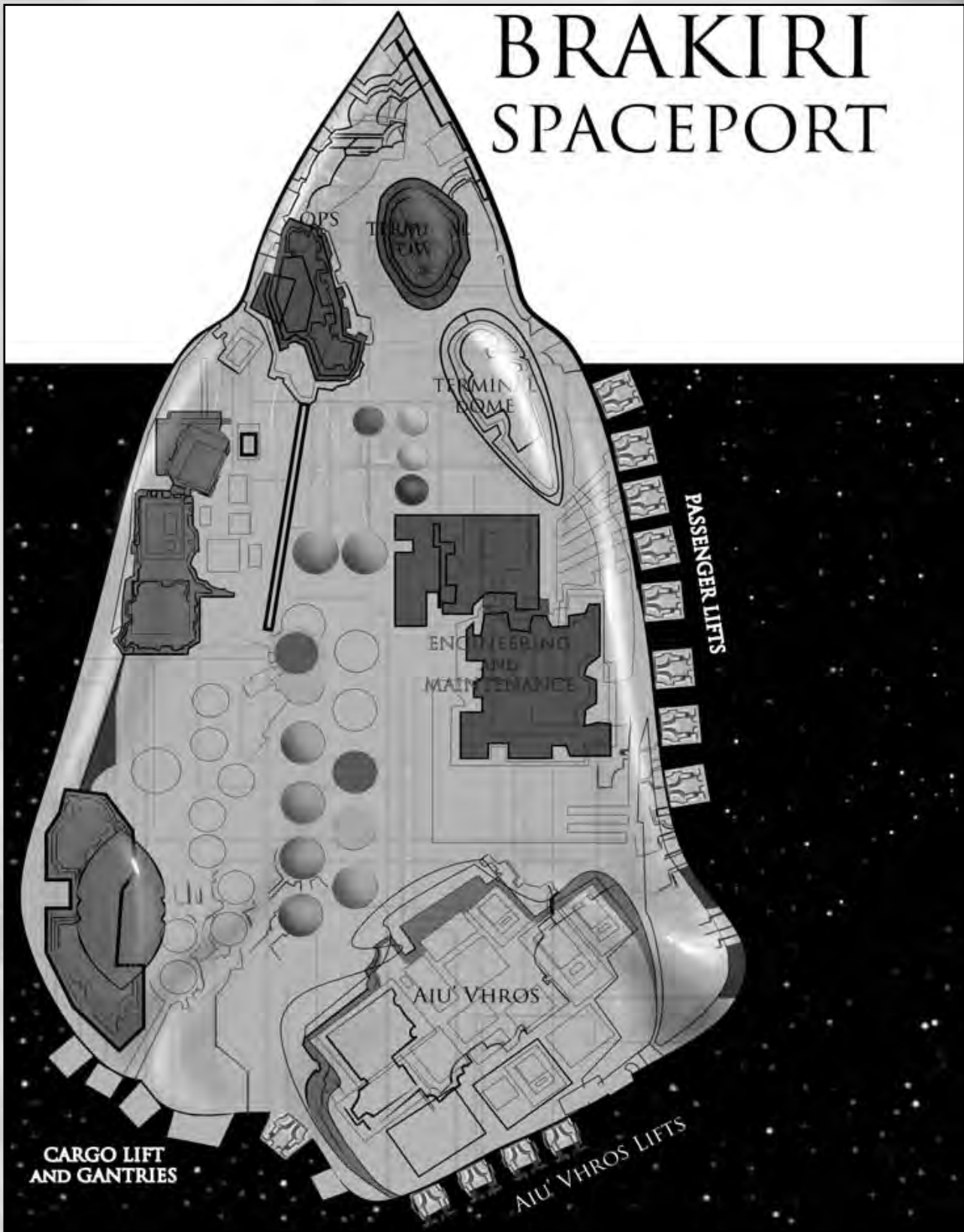
All security staff are Vhros employees and, more to the point, Plateau employees, hired by Po'Pragh's resourcing teams directly. Security staff are hired for their capabilities far more than for their personal integrity or history and the chief factor is the capability to help generate revenue. Security staff quickly learn that whilst the wages paid by Plateau are small, a blind-eye is turned to 'special taxes' which quickly boost personal income. Security staff are actively encouraged to be stoic in the face of confrontation and whilst violence is discouraged, there is an extensive array of procedures staff can use to enforce their authority if passengers become confrontational.

OPERATIONS

Landing/departure pads are aligned in the central space of the mesa summit and separated into passenger and cargo sections. There are 15 passenger pads, all capable of handling up to three shuttles each and twenty cargo/freight pads with a similar capacity. Everything is controlled from the Operations Centre, a Centauri designed building at the edge of the mesa. Flight systems and air traffic control is chaotic, with timetables that shift according to external whims, usually coming from Vhross headquarters but just as equally from Po'Pragh, who might decide that it is better to delay all passenger departures for a full day so that incoming freight traffic that has paid a handsome 'premium landing levy' can be accommodated. Delays are frequent, especially for passengers but no one complains. Delays mean more money is spent in the terminal dome and more people use Terminal Town's hotel and refreshment facilities. Given the distance of Plateau from major centres of habitation; Night City excluded but few want to stay there, Plateau has a captive market and it takes full advantage of it. Notions of customer service excellence are almost non-existent; profit margin rules here.

All passengers are processed through the Terminal Dome and all cargo through the Cargo Complex on the southern flank of the mesa. Most traffic is moved at night, in order to avoid the searing daytime temperatures but arrivals and departures continue throughout the day as well. The Terminal Dome is a Brakiri construction resembling an upturned, angular egg made of green plexiglass and Vhros-

BRAKIRI SPACEPORT



patented ceramics. The Cargo Complex, on the opposite side of the mesa, is a mixture of Centauri and Brakiri buildings with the latter grafted ungracefully onto the former.

All the landing pads can be lowered into the mesa for loading, unloading and maintenance. For passengers, there is the option to use the tube transit system at a fee of 20 Credits or walk to the appropriate launch area. The tunnels and passages within the mesa are maze-like and information displays are infrequent. Vhros Guides lurk at the entrances to the walkways offering to act as personal guides through the maze in exchange for a modest fee of 10 Credits. It can be money well-spent as the chances of getting lost and arriving at the wrong shuttle departure gate are high.

For cargo, adapted Narn cargo loaders and service drones can be rented for non-Vhros Conglomerate cargoes on an hourly basis. Security personnel make cursory checks of incoming cargo and may, for an additional fee, overlook certain goods that are on the Prohibited list.

CARGO AND COMMERCE

Plateau is Vhros Conglomerate's main logistics facility with all other traffic taking second place to its hectic schedules. The main Vhros fleet is orbit-bound and served by cargo shuttles working from Plateau. As Vhros has diverse interests throughout the Brakiri Syndicacy, all manner of goods flow through Plateau, from water through to military-grade weapons. The central motives are maximum profit, speed and minimum cost; this means security protocols, which slow-down the entire profit process, are regularly bent, broken and ignored altogether. Vhros cares little for this: most Brakiri corporations employ similar practices, so it is hardly alone but it does attempt to pay lip-service to League of Non-Aligned World agreements and conventions. Where it transgresses these, and is forced to defend itself, it has an army of commercial advocates on tap to argue its case.

A steady flow of stolen cargo flows out of the cargo processing facilities and into Night City's black economy. Need a PPG? Night City has them. Want narcotics? Night City can supply. Replica Vorlon Encounter suit? Night City can get one fabricated. All cargo levies go directly into the Vhros coffers with Po'Pragh taking his cut and 'night tribute' from Night City ensures that official Vhros security and auditing teams do not descend on the settlement. Traders coming into Plateau are advised to have adequate insurance for their payload (Vhros sells a dubious payload protection policy) in case of 'product loss or misappropriation' but still traders come to Plateau. Why? Because few questions are asked, it's easy, if relatively expensive to get into and out of Plateau and because the wider Brakiri markets and hunger for technology

guarantee good prices. Losing a small part of a cargo haul is often worth the wider profits to smugglers and low-market traders.

FACILITIES

Public Elevators

Ten public elevator systems operate on the north face of the mesa, ferrying passengers up to the Terminal Dome. Of these three are air conditioned whilst the others resemble vertically mobile saunas. Each elevator carriage can carry a hundred people, hauled by a mixture of Centauri freight hydraulics and Brakiri winching kit. The ascent and descent is stately; it takes 15 minutes for the full journey and in the daylight hours the 'standard' elevators are akin to ovens. Long queues for the air conditioned 'luxury' elevators are commonplace and fights between the patient and queue-jumpers are frequent.

Exchange Hall

The huge Exchange Hall is, thankfully, air conditioned but the sheer mass of people means it is frequently difficult to tell. Before one can proceed from the elevator terminus, one is confronted by the jolly giant holograph of Po'Pragh, extolling Plateau's virtues and reeling-off an impressive list of Plateau's profit accounts. Po'Pragh is an obese Brakiri but made to look noticeably slimmer in his holographic version. His jowls are heavy and his hair grey and thinning. The holo displays take several minutes to cycle through but always ends with an enthusiastic entreaty to buy a Plateau Card.

Beyond the elevator terminus is the Centrum which includes the check-in facilities, surrounded by all manner of cafes, fast food sellers and touts. Everything sold carries the brash Vhros logo and costs roughly 30 percent more than anywhere else on Brakos. Huge display screens play constant advertisements, many featuring Po'Pragh himself and an interminable litany of Vhros achievements. The advertisements are occasionally punctuated by flight information – or rather, the latest list of delays, followed by advertisements for the hotel facilities to be found in Terminal Town (the Pragh Plaza seems to get more mentions than most).

The security sector runs the full length of the Centrum's south side, where a small army of Plateau security specialists check everything going through to the departures hall beyond. Aside from the security checkers, there is precious little security presence milling around the Exchange Hall and Centrum. Those in attendance look bored and spend their time making offensive jokes about those passing through the Terminal Dome.

Water, water everywhere...

Beneath the mesa is an ancient underground river, tapped by Centauri-drilled bore-holes. Even though this natural water supply exists, it is strictly rationed, making water in Plateau an expensive and rationed commodity. Plateau still imports water from the outlying worlds' ice mines and Po'Pragh ensures that everyone in Plateau understands how precious it is. In the toilet facilities its costs 1 Credit to make a faucet function and chemicals are used to break down waste. Toilet facilities in Plateau are thus not especially pleasant places.

The Vhros franchise stalls are uniformly faceless, squatting beneath the brazen Vhros logo peddling Vhros consumables at Vhros/Plateau prices. The franchisees look bored, even when processing payment, knowing that a large chunk of the takings go straight back to Po'Pragh's accounts. There are a few proper sit-down-and-stay cafes, serving meals but none are especially inviting, even to Brakiri. Sometimes, though, when the crush of life in the Exchange Hall and Centrum becomes too much, they are a welcome refuge. However, merely taking a seat incurs a minimum 10 Credit charge and then there is the press of Queue Managers who home-in in those who look the least likely to want to tolerate a long check-in queue and most likely to want to pay someone for the privilege.

Riding a Standard Plateau Elevator

Getting to the top or bottom without losing consciousness when using one of the standard elevators requires a FORT save vs a DR of 20 or DR 18 for Brakiri and Narn, who are better suited to the extreme conditions. Those who miss the save pass-out through the heat for 20-CON minutes and need to be gently revived with water. Water is available at both summit and ground terminals at a cost of 10 Credits a glass or 15 Credits for chilled water.

Terminal Town

Attached to the Terminal Dome is Terminal Town, which hosts hotel facilities and a night club/casino. The three hotels are Vhros Central, Vhros Elite and Pragh Plaza. Vhros Central operates to a 'cheap and cheerless' business model with basic rooms, uncomfortable beds and a soulless cafeteria selling Vhros foodstuffs. At 50 Credits per night it does not represent great value but at least it affords some privacy and a modicum of relaxation.

Vhros Elite costs at least double but offers a better standard of living with half-decent rooms and service facilities. Prices vary according to delays; at times when delays are frequent or lengthy, prices double and there seems to be some intelligence between those in charge and the Operations Timetable controllers as to when and for how long, delays will occur.

Pragh Plaza is Po'Pragh's gift to himself. He bought the hotel with his own performance bonus and occupies the top two floors as his personal suite and offices. It is larger and better appointed than the two Vhros hotels and is built into the shell of a Centauri administration building. Its rooms are large and comfortable and begin at 200 Credits a night. Its restaurant is the best in the entire spaceport and whilst it should sell only Vhross produce, it does not and serves decent food from across the galaxy and at cosmic rates. Po'Pragh can often be seen dining in the restaurant, his vast carcass occupying a mobile chair that he never leaves. The chair levitates on unknown technology permitting Po'Pragh to scoot around his empire as though commanding a magic throne. He is followed everywhere by lackeys and security guards for Po'Pragh does not want to be kept waiting for anything and is in constant fear of assassination by Mk'Ruz agents. Po'Pragh was instrumental in several of the disputes that escalated into open combat between the two corporations and should, by rights, keep himself out of public reach. However his vanity and belief that he is a hundred percent safe within Plateau and especially within Pragh Plaza, leads him to take stupid risks.

In the basement of Pragh Plaza, carved into the rock of the mesa, is Pragh Casino. This night club and casino offers low-brow entertainment to the high-brow and rigged gaming tables to those who are rich and foolish enough to want to take their chances. Plateau employees act as ringers, claiming huge wins on fixed tables to lure-in the unwary. Prostitutes of several races, including a few humans, latch onto the high-rollers and spin the usual lucky charm stories. If they are unsuccessful in gaining a client for the night, some of the prostitutes will spike drinks and pick pockets to supplement their income. Sometimes they do the same even when they've secured a dupe and got him (or her) back to the hotel room.



Night City

Aik'Vhros, AKA Night City, began as a small collection of dwellings for Centauri cargo workers in the days when Plateau was a Centauri staging post. Since then it has grown into a small town, filled with Plateau employees, lurkers and those who want to be close to Plateau in order to line their pockets in some shape or form.

The buildings are a mixture of old Centauri and Brakiri domicile. No building is taller than three storeys and the streets are maze-like and dark, packed with waifs, strays, conmen, thieves, cutthroats and impoverished Vhros workers. It functions on a black economy of smuggled commodities and life is cheaper than water. Night City has attracted those who talents lie in petty crime, in villainy and those escaping the punishments for the same. It is a lawless place that is effectively controlled by two factions which have divided the settlement into two distinct halves.

The south side is controlled by The Plateau Workers' Guild. This is where all those who work in the main Plateau facilities live and the interests of the South Side are managed by Nk'Roth, the formidable matriarch of the Guild who is as ruthless as she is cunning. In her control are all the smuggling operations happening in and around Plateau spaceport, of

both Vhros and private commodities. She arranges what is stolen, smuggled, bartered and disposed of, taking a hefty cut of the proceeds which she distributes as a dividend to the impoverished Guild workers. She also controls almost all the property in the South Side, deducting rents from the dividend and distributing (or removing) accommodation privileges according to how well or poorly, workers have contributed to the black market activities she manages. Getting somewhere decent to live therefore means workers must be prepared to take risks and swear fealty to the Guild. The Guild also controls the supply of water in Night City, setting its price and exercising influence through the threat of embargoes. As all water in the settlement needs to be imported via Plateau (and is thus subject to one of Po'Pragh's extortionate levies) whoever controls the water supply effectively controls Night City.

The north side is controlled by the Hakir syndicate, a criminal gang controlling petty crime (pick pocketing, forgery, mugging and so forth) in Plateau and Night City. The Hakir syndicate wants a cut of the smuggling operation but Nk'Roth has refused, placing the Guild in direct confrontation with Hakir. The Guild suspects that Hakir is being bankrolled by Po'Pragh and is therefore a threat to the smuggling operation. These suspicions are correct, but Hakir enjoys this clandestine relationship with Po'Pragh only because it enables the disenfranchised to make a living; Hakir does not trust

Brakiri

Po'Pragh one centimetre and any threat to their activities would see the arrangement swiftly dissolved. Hakim controls the prostitutes operating in Terminal Town and uses the information they obtain to run a blackmailing scheme that has managed to extend across the galaxy. Hakim also wants to share the control of water but knows this is something the Guild would never freely relinquish. It hopes, therefore, to persuade Po'Pragh somehow to make the distribution of water a free market activity rather than a Vhros-influenced monopoly. Po'Pragh might be tempted, if the Guild was shown to be actively opposing Po'Pragh's direct interests in some way.

The two factions are antagonistic towards each other but act out their feud in discrete, non-violent ways. Mirroring the corporate feuding of Vhros and Mk'Ruz, the two try to gain the economic upper-hand with the Workers' Guild attempting to bring north siders into 'legitimate' employment and Hakim trying to lure south siders away from it. However, neither faction wants to attract the undue attention of either Po'Pragh or the full Vhros security services and so each has an interest in maintaining a certain balance and keeping their activities small scale and local.

Locations in Night City

Emperor Square. The division between the north and south sides is the old Emperor Square, once the centre of the

Centaury buildings. It acts as a general market area and meeting place, fringed by dingy dwellings and a dried-up well shaft that taps into a stream far beneath the mesa. The water supply was long ago diverted to serve Plateau and water supplies are thus rationed back to Night City at the equivalent of five litres per person per day. The Guild-run distribution point is the Old Well, where the Guild distributes rations in five litre measures and takes payment. Queues are long and when supplies dwindle tempers flare easily. There are the inevitable accusations of distribution bias towards south siders although, in truth, the Guild serves on a first-come, first-served basis. The Guild has the unenviable task of trying to calculate the population of Night City and petition Po'Pragh's bureaucratic stalwarts for increased rations, which inevitably increases the price. The success of these petitions depends frequently on Po'Pragh's mood and how disposed he feels towards the Guild. Performance targets are thus linked intrinsically to water rations.

North Side

Kamp'na Street: the long, winding street threading through north side is filled with market stalls and dark shops where one can, for a price, buy just about anything. Someone always knows someone else, who has a contact, who can supply what is wanted. The bars at either end of Kamp'na Street, Un'chooz and Chooz'un, are the places to put out a discreet word and within a few minutes (an hour at most), a contact and price can be made available. Kamp'na Street



is also the centre of operations for the Hakir; both bars are owned by the gang and Hakir's two controllers Kir'Hna and Kir'Fou, hold court in private chambers beneath each bar, connected by a secret passage way running parallel to Kamp'na Street and about 15 metres below street level.

The small market stalls, cramped together like beggars seeking warmth, offer street snacks and clandestine electronics. Some of the stall tenders are experts in repair and fabrication, being able to replicate an existing device using Great Maker-knows what tools and supplies. Most can fence stolen or smuggled goods, as long as few questions are asked.

Chol-Chi Row: an irregular square of ramshackle buildings, Chol-Chi Row offers cheap accommodation of the flop-house variety to those arriving in Night City. Conditions are grim but this is of little concern as long as they provide shelter from the unforgiving sun. The whole square is cooled by a home-made air conditioning system cobbled together from old shuttle cooling systems. A webwork of ribbed piping joins all the buildings of the row together, suspended over roofs running across streets and alleys, snaking up the sides of tenements. It cranks, grinds and wheezes constantly; *Chol-Chi* is Brakiri for 'What a Bloody Racket'.

South Side

Here the buildings are more ordered and better kept and most are accommodation for Plateau's army of workers. The Guild owns all the property and rents it out according to workers' performance and contribution to the Night City economy. Rooms range from cramped garrets to multiple roomed apartments for families and privileged workers.

The majority of shops and amenities are Vhros-branded but run to Guild rules, which means a certain relaxation of prices and the sale of non-Vhros items, smuggled in, naturally. The Guild has its headquarters at the centre of the district, in a converted Centauri warehouse that still retains some of its old grandeur. The streets are wide, to accommodate cargo traffic but dilapidated and sun-baked. Cooling is provided by old Centauri systems which, whilst neater than those in North Side, are curiously less efficient.

Bar Brohn. This single, large, Guild-operated bar, adjacent to the Guild headquarters, is where most workers come to relax. Only Guild workers or those vouchsafed by Guild members, are allowed entry. Brohn has a convivial

atmosphere and is devoid of Vhros trappings and logos. In fact, making any reference to Vhros or Po'Pragh, is strictly taboo; when the workers troop back here after a hard night at Plateau, they want to be free of everything the company represents and have taken care to erase the Vhros signature from Brohn's interior.

PLATEAU PERSONALITIES

Po'Pragh, Head of Plateau

The corpulent, corrupt mandarin of Plateau has jettisoned all pretensions of being a Vhros employee and revels in his status as the ruler of the mesa. He is impatient, contrary, domineering and arrogant, without any consideration for anyone else above how much they can contribute to his personal coffers and Plateau's profit margin. He is an economic genius and has put these skills to good use in forging his own personal wealth. He makes sure that Plateau performs but skims a safe percentage for his own needs and hides his tracks meticulously. Po'Pragh is incapable of effective delegation and meddles constantly in the operations of the spaceport, causing untold confusion and disruption in the process. He refuses all constructive advice and is prone to coming-up with new schemes daily, which are dictated to the officials who follow his levitating throne everywhere and then scurry-off to implement his directives. His burly Narn bodyguards threaten any who stray too close and are paid handsomely for their efforts.

Many want Po'Pragh dead, not least the Mk'Ruz Corporation. He is every inch the corporate tyrant; a domineering bully begging for his just deserts.

6th Level Brakiri Worker (white collar)

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Expertise, Worker Type: white collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +7

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Appraise +8, Computer Use +8, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +6, Intrigue +6, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +8, Linguistics +6, Notice +6, Operations (Systems) +6, Profession +10.

Feats: Fluency (Brakiri, Human, Narn), Independently Wealthy, Skill Focus (Appraise), Skill Focus (Profession), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).

Vas'Mharg, XO, Operations

Head of Air/Space Operations, Vas'Mharg is the beleaguered person in charge of managing the central operations for Plateau. Her life is spent juggling the constant timetable changes dictated by Po'Pragh with the constant stream of incoming and outgoing spacecraft. She is a highly competent space operations controller, frustrated by her employer's meddling and constantly under pressure from her own team and Po'Pragh's bureaucrats to meet conflicting deadlines. Thus she is always tired, always under stress and battling vainly but valiantly, to do the best job she can.

Vas'Mharg is an ardent supporter of the Workers' Guild in Night City but being an officer, is forbidden to be a member. She therefore supports the Guild and Nk'Roth, by supplying privileged information relating to cargos, schedules and security arrangements. An elaborate code exists between them, transmitted through the standard messages she and Nk'Roth have to exchange as part of their daily interactions. In return, Nk'Roth ensures the Guild workers do their utmost to comply with Vas'Mharg's schedules and not Po'Pragh's. That anything gets done at all is a small miracle; that Po'Pragh is blissfully unaware of this clandestine relationship is down to the providence of the Great Maker.

6th Level Brakiri Officer (Fleet)

Hit Points: 17

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +6/+1 close combat, +8/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +8, Intrigue +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Astrophysics) +6, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +6, Linguistics +6, Notice +4, Operations (Piloting) +4, Pilot +4, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Contact (Nk'Roth), Data Access, Fluency (Brakiri, Human, Narn), Skill Focus (Astrophysics), Skill Focus (Computer Use), Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

G'Qan, Head of Security

G'Qan is the Narn Head of Plateau Security. An ex-mercenary he is employed directly by Po'Pragh and has carte blanche over all security administration throughout Plateau. G'Qan is not naturally corrupt but he knows that to retain his usefulness to Po'Pragh he needs to allow the security staff

to indulge in the kind of bullying and petty corruption that satisfies his employer's desires for profit. Privately, G'Qan despises Po'Pragh but as the head of security and Po'Pragh's chief bodyguard, he must maintain a professional attitude, and he does just that. Given a good opportunity and the financial incentive, including the means to get far enough away from Brakos, G'Qan would have little hesitation in helping someone to get rid of Po'Pragh.

The security staff serving under G'Qan are a mixture of Narn and Brakiri, with the latter dominating. Of the Narn, most act as bodyguards to Po'Pragh, acting in rotation and occasionally take floor duties in Terminal Dome and Terminal Town. They are loyal to G'Qan, having served as part of his mercenary unit in previous years. The Brakiri security respect G'Qan's expertise, but have difficulty obeying orders given by a non-Brakiri and tend to act as they feel fit. Thus a certain tension exists between the Brakiri and Narn, although G'Qan is quick to ease matters wherever and whenever necessary, with his quiet, forceful, thoughtful personality.

5th Level Narn Soldier

Hit Points: 24

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+4 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +8/+3 close combat, +6/+1 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Co-ordinate Unit +1.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Athletics +8, Computer Use +5, Drive +9, Intimidate +9, Intrigue +5, Investigate +7, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +7, Operations (Driving) +7, Stealth +7.

Feats: Fluency (Brakiri, Human, Narn), Great Fortitude, Martial Arts, Surface Vehicle Proficiency, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Model 10 PPG, Padded armour.

Nk'Roth, Leader of the Workers' Guild

Nk'Roth is in charge of the cargo operation for Plateau and is also the leader of the Plateau Workers' Guild. A Brakiri female filled with energy and cunning she has no trouble in managing the complexities of Plateau's erratic cargo schedules and the equally complex politics of Night City the two being remarkably similar, master one and you have no trouble with the other. Nk'Roth is no criminal master-mind; instead she has simply a natural grasp of logistics and the foresight to ensure she can cover her tracks seamlessly. This, along with the information supplied by Vas'Mharg, has ensured that she can skim from the constant influx of cargo and without suspicion.



Naturally Po'Pragh hates her and the feeling is mutual. Nk'Roth refuses to be intimidated by someone who is too lazy to walk but recognises that Po'Pragh is as cunning as she is and needs to be managed carefully if Plateau is not to descend into chaos. She believes that, as corrupt as he is, Plateau would grind to a halt if he did not assert his presence. Whilst she hates Po'Pragh, she enjoys their unspoken game of wits and wants it to continue.

6th Level Brakiri Worker (blue collar)

Hit Points: 10

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 class)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Expertise, Worker Type: blue collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +4

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Appraise +6, Computer Use +6, Drive +6, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +8, Linguistics +8, Notice +8, Operation (S-systems) +6, Profession +8, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Contact, Fluency (Brakiri, Human, Narn), Iron Will, Skill Focus (Appraise), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).

Kir'Hna and Kir'Fou

The brother and sister identical twins that are head of the Hakir gang running North Side. Once they managed their own corporation but a series of feuds over water rights and a catastrophically bad alliance, led to their bankruptcy. They thus reinvented themselves as criminals, specialising in counterfeiting and smuggling. Their combined economic and tactical brilliance, not to mention their ruthless natures, has stood them in good stead and through controlling half of Night City they are in a uniquely influential position. Their key is to appear open and welcoming. Anyone can walk into North Side, meet with one of them and be housed, watered and fed free of charge. Then they request a favour, which turns into a demand if it is not offered. Those who refuse or cross them simply vanish; there are stories of a bottomless pit somewhere in the mesa that enemies of Hakir are tossed into.

It is impossible to tell Kir'Hna and Kir'Fou apart. They even seem to interchange identities as whim takes them, sometimes claiming to be the same person, even whilst in the same room. They share a peculiarly strong empathic bond and claim to be able to see the future. They share desires and this may even run to the incestuous. Both hate Nk'Roth, and would like to see her replaced with someone they control. There is hushed rumour of a plan to do just this but it is mere hearsay in the back alleys of Night City – one more bit of gossip in a sea of it.

Brakiri

Kir'Hna

6th level male Brakiri Lurker

Hit Points: 21

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 class)

Attacks: +5 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Lurker's Knowledge, Survivors Luck,

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10

Notable Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Intimidate +8, Intrigue +6, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +6, Notice +5, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +6, Subterfuge +8.

Feats: Contact, Endurance, Die Hard, Fluency (Brakiri, Human, Narn), Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Subterfuge), Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols).

Standard Equipment: Knife.

Kir'Fou

6th level female Brakiri Lurker

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+3 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +4 close combat, +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Lurker's Knowledge, Survivors Luck

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +8, Intimidate +6, Intrigue +6, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +8, Notice +5, Stealth +10, Subterfuge +8.

Feats: Contact, Eye for Equality, Fluency (Abbai, Brakiri, Human), Improved Initiative, Lighting Reflexes, Run, Skill Focus (Appraise), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols). Standard Equipment: PPG.

Machin is an agent of the Shadows. Unlike Morden he does not beguile and question. His methods and part of the Shadow's strategy, are direct and uncompromising. Machin is accompanied by Shadows everywhere, accounting for his ability to merge into the darkness. And he is playing a Long Game. His intention is to arrange the assassination of Po'Pragh and Nk'Roth, leaving the way clear for Kir'Hna and Kir'Fou to take control of Plateau. Other Shadow agents have already infiltrated high-up elements of Vhros Conglomerate and they would ensure that Plateau makes the full transition to Shadow control despite the brief chaos that would follow Po'Pragh's death.

5th level Human Agent, 1st level Shadow Agent

Hit Points: 17

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Master of the Craft, Multi-Skilled, Opportunism (Stunning Attack), Sense Vorlon Presence, Skill Mastery (Subterfuge), Telepathic Resistance, Upgrade (+2 Charisma).

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16

Notable Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +11, Computer Use +6, Concentration +6, Intrigue +9, Investigate +8, Knowledge (The Shadows) +6, Knowledge (Vhros Plateau) +6, Linguistics +6, Notice +6, Sense Motive +10, Subterfuge +9, Stealth +6.

Feats: Contact (The Shadows), Devoted Friend, Fluency (Brakiri, Human, Shadow), Skill Focus (Subterfuge), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Needler, False Identcard.

Machin

Machin is a human who claims to have been born on Io but no one is sure of his true origins. He lives in North Side and is the bodyguard to both Kir'Hna and Kir'Fou. He has absolutely no regard whatsoever for life of any kind, although his smiling, handsome face might encourage people to believe he is friendly and accommodating. He follows whichever claims to be Kir'Hna at all times, shadowing at a discrete distance but ever attentive. On the one occasion someone attempted an attack, the assailant was dead before hitting the floor, one of Machin's poisoned darts lodged in one eye.



CENTAURI

All Centauri spaceports ostensibly come under Republic control although administration is handled by a single ruling house, a privilege that defines the character of the spaceport and adds status to the house in question. Whilst it is rare for a spaceport's control to be forcibly transferred to another house, the threat is always there, ensuring that spaceport operations coincide with the Emperor's needs and what is perceived as being in the Centauri cause.

TUSCANO SPACEPORT

Named for the legendary defeater of the Xon in Centauri's distant past, Tuscano spaceport is a shining example of the Republican approach. It is located on the southern edge of Imperial City. Its administration is in the hands of House Kulaati and has been for a century. Given its location and the political aspirations of Kulaati, Tuscano is the model for Centauri spaceports throughout the empire. Its central, tower buildings are considered national landmarks and are built in the traditional imperial design: elegant functionality coupled with the opulence and arrogance typical of so many Imperial Palace structures.

Tuscano was built, in part, by slavery, not least slaves from Narn. Thus, to the Narn, Tuscano represents everything corrupt and repressive about the Centauri and is considered a physical insult: the few visitors from Narn are highly aware of Tuscano's history and exhibit distinct unease when travelling through the place. Almost every wall and ceiling in Tuscano is decorated with frescos and bas-reliefs in the typically overblown *Randaci* style, emphasising the epic. These document Centauri military and cultural achievements, beginning with the defeat of the Xon and moving all the way through Centauri's illustrious history to the latest series of frescos depicting Centauri dominance over the Narn Regime. Somewhat predictably this latest artistic addition, completed as late as 2254, is the first sight greeting new arrivals to the glorious capital of Homeworld.

LOCATION AND FUNCTION

Tuscano is seven kilometres south of Imperial Palace occupying its own, two hundred and seventy square kilometre site, ringed with parkland and formal gardens. The approach to the installation is via broad, tree-lined avenues carefully designed to reveal the grand Tuscano edifice a little at a time as transports and link services from the city get nearer. Finally, as the parkland gives way to the perimeter, the huge, stone edifice of Grand Tuscano is revealed, the parkland giving way to the ornate and imposing installation in a single grand sweep.

Grand Tuscano houses every facility needed for spaceport operations in its three wings. The central wing hosts reception and security facilities; the east wing hosts control and operations and the west wing is given over completely to accommodation, including the Imperial suites, used exclusively by the Emperor and his entourage and House Kulaati's own suites which aspire to (but are forbidden to match) the Imperial suites in opulence.

It is primarily a civilian installation although House Kulaati's military fleet is controlled from here but are based some kilometres east, for reasons of etiquette. Its cargo facilities are not the most refined in Centauri, with most freight being routed through the dedicated cargo ports of Selini and Lake Sucaro. Instead, Tuscano excels in making a personal impression, especially on offworlders. Tuscano is as much a statement as a functional transit hub and it prefers not to sully itself with such uncouth matters as cargo when there are far more important social and political stakes to be pursued.

ARRIVAL AND TRANSIT

The manner of one's entry into Grand Tuscano is purely dependent on one's house and status within it. The nobility are permitted to be carried by personal transport right to the West Wing entrance whilst those of lesser standing, including most offworlders, unless chaperoned by someone of high standing, must use the public entrance.

A monorail terminal serves the public entrance, its terminus being below ground with elevators bringing passengers up to the Grand Concourse. This separates the nobility from the commoners and further reinforces social divisions. The monorail service is fast and efficient, costing only a few ducats for passage to either Imperial Palace city or any of the outlying dormitories. It is not controlled by House Kulaati although the Tuscano terminal is and the station concourse reinforces the fact with abundant frescos celebrating the house's illustrious history and wallscreens and tri-dee displays outlining Kulaati etiquette and Tuscano procedures. Kula-Jai security ranks lazily patrol the terminal area, making occasional checks on personal documentation. Offworlders are immediately subjected to this indignity, irrespective of their apparent position and refusal to proffer identification and travel documentation, even though this is outside standard Tuscano security protocol, finds themselves detained for lengthy, detailed, aggressive questioning.

Above ground the Grand Concourse spreads forth, resembling an art gallery more than a transit terminal. Sculptures and statues, all of which are Kulaati designs of varying degrees of merit and taste,



are positioned at strategic intervals to break-up crowd flow. A single huge screen, suspended from the ceiling displays not only flight information but also details of the noted personages gracing the installation. Individuals pay the Kula-Lac for informing the masses of their presence, with the amount paid reflecting in the frequency and obsequiousness of the advertisement. House propaganda is slotted subtly into the information mix, highlighting recent government and diplomatic achievements in a manner guaranteed to irritate the movers and shakers of other houses but falling on the right side of good taste to be truly provocative.

Both arrivals and departures mingle in the Grand Concourse, although those of higher rank have dedicated departure and arrival points served from the upper floors of the Central Wing and need not mix with the commoners. Kula-Ka shops, stalls and restaurants line the perimeter of the concourse whilst Kula-Jai security personnel are stationed at strategic points around the concourse, watching the passing throng with detached interest and amusement.

Transit to the launch areas can only be accessed once security has been cleared. Again, several underground monorail

tracks run out to the launching stages and back again. High ranking passengers are chauffeured to the launching stages by a fleet of luxury ground vehicles, which take their time allowing common passengers to embark first and thus wait for the arrival of the more distinguished. Luggage is handled by the Kula-Sul Baggage Service, a model of efficiency and light-fingeredness. Luggage is checked at the check-in and flight clearance desks and then transported to the underground baggage handling facility for security scanning and loaded onto the appropriate service tractor. Between scanning and loading the Kula-Sul regularly open bags using a number of secretive devices designed to bypass most baggage security systems and gently rifle the contents for anything of interest or small value, before expertly sealing them again. Occasionally Kula-Jai oversee this process whenever the bags of someone alerted to them are in the Kula-Sul's hands, taking the opportunity to remove or add, items to a particular piece of luggage. The whole disreputable practice is, of course, denied and dismissed by House Kulaati but it is interesting to note the number of counters in the Grand Concourse specifically selling 'Baggage Insurance', owned and run, naturally, by the Kula-Luc, which entitles the purchaser to a garish badge to be placed on the baggage. Insured baggage is *never* tampered with; unless the Kula-Jai have good (or bad) reason to investigate it.

House Kulaati

For the purposes of Tuscano's administration, House Kulaati is divided into several functional castes. Each caste has its own social divisions, permitting social escalation within the caste subdivision. The style of hair crest worn denotes the caste, with height and span of the crest denoting position within it. The castes, from most inferior to ruling elite, are as follows:

Kula-Sul: Those who serve. Members of Kula-Sul are fetchers and carriers, porters, waiters, maids and butlers.

Kula-Ka: Artisans and traders. All shops and stores are under Kula-Ka control within Tuscano. Despite its lowly status within Kulaati, Kula-Ka considers itself exceedingly important, much to the irritation of the other castes. Whilst delusions of grandeur and self-worth are not uncommon in Centauri society, caste subdivisions are meant to understand their place, if not always acknowledge it. Kula-Ka seems incapable of such comprehension.

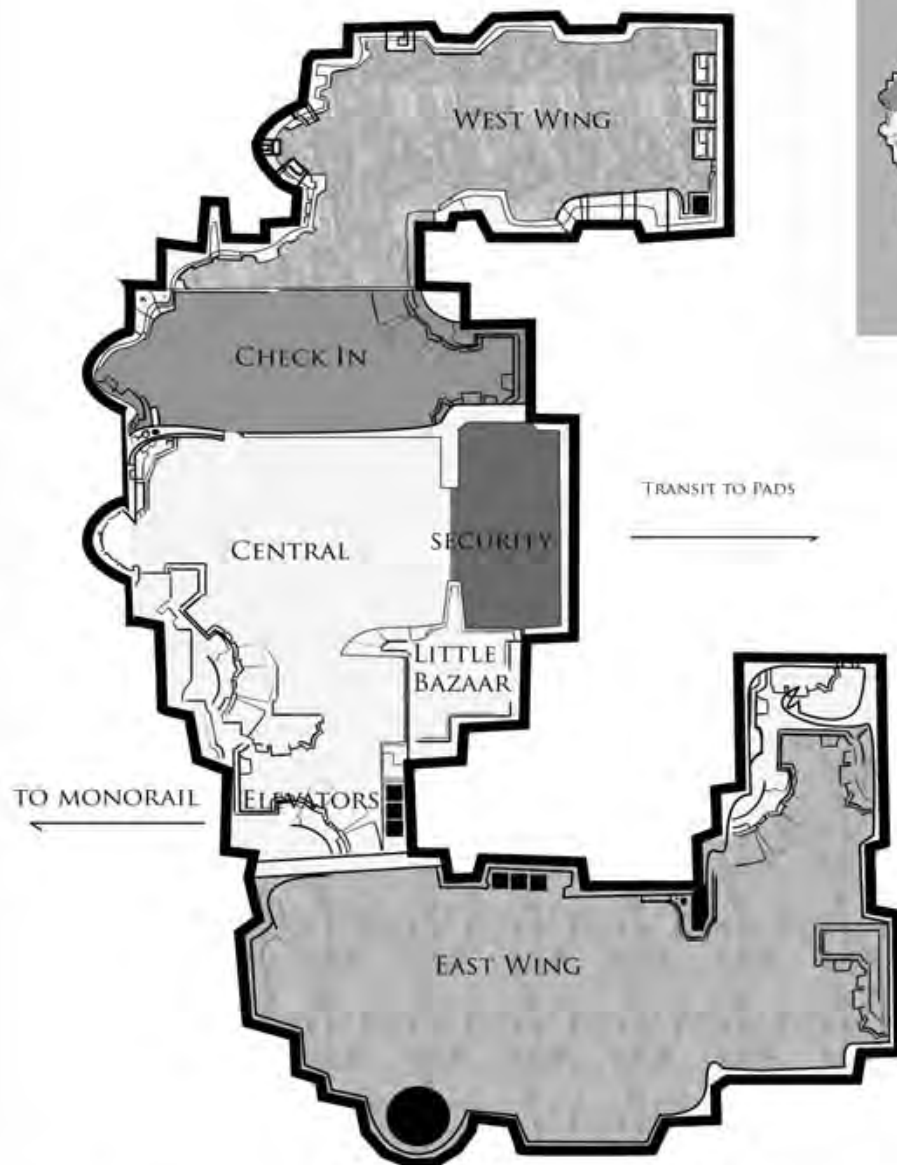
Kula-Jai: Military. The Kula-Jai handle every aspect of security in Grand Tuscano and are noted for their heavy-handed and abrupt approach. The Kula-Jai sport bright yellow sashes of varying thickness, denoting rank and position. A thin sash denotes a minor rank whilst a thick sash, strung with medals and other decorations, denotes high rank. All Kula-Jai are fiercely proud of their sashes considering them badges representing their personal integrity, courage and achievements. The worst thing one can do is touch a Jai's sash without permission. All Kula-Jai are permitted to carry a sidearm and a koltari, and they still fervently maintain the Molago duelling tradition.

Kula-Fha: Counsellors. Every child born to the house is tested for mental aptitude. Those who display exceptional skills in observation, logic, mathematics, conversation and telepathy are removed immediately to the Kula-Fha where they are hot-house schooled to ever greater intellectual capabilities. The Kula-Fha are the intellectual elite of House Kulaati, in charge of education and providing personal council to the Kula-Mir. Every member of the Kula-Mir has a Kula-Fha Seer appointed to him to act as his personal adviser. Kula-Fha Seers rapidly become indispensable and are, quite naturally, extremely important in shaping the agendas of the various internal factions within the house.

Kula-Luc: Economists. The Kula-Luc specialise in all areas of finance and look after the house's finances exclusively. They are a combination of economic analysts, bankers, credit brokers and stock traders. They ensure wealth stays where it should and thus maintain the caste divisions through sheer monetary frugality.

Kula-Mir: Nobility. The oldest tradition in House Kulaati and descendants for Mir Kulaati, the house's founder who claimed lineage from Tuscano himself, hence the strong ties with Tuscano spaceport. The Kula-Mir are typical Centauri nobles almost to the point of caricature, with elaborate hair crests, decadent tastes and a tendency to use Grand Tuscano as a personal fiefdom.

CENTAURI STARPORT



GENERAL USAGE PROCEDURES

Tuscano exclusively operates shuttle facilities to the orbital and system space docking bases; it has not the facilities to handle atmospheric-capable spacecraft and not the desire to deal with freight. Its shuttle system is therefore the key part of its operation and the spaceport's primary purpose is to co-ordinate passenger embarkation, beam the details to the various offworld bases it serves and ensure the smooth departure and arrival of passengers to Centauri Prime.

The Tuscano usage procedure is therefore relatively straightforward: arrive, check-in, a standard security check and then departure. The process is slick and routine. People come to Tuscano early to see and be seen. It is a chance for commoners to mingle in the same space as the nobility, even though glimpses of the occupiers of high society are rare, given the West Wing's seclusion and to say 'I have done Tuscano'. This social façade is perfectly normal practice in Centauri society, allowing the various noble houses to flaunt status and achievement to the masses and each other in ways that would be deemed unacceptable in other areas of social interaction.

Ticketing and flight permits are electronic, beamed to the personal communications chips all Centauri carry as part of their identification documentation. The check-in procedures are relatively informal requiring little more than a scan of the passenger's ID to verify destination and class of travel, as there are some who would attempt to secure a better class of seat fraudulently, baggage check-in and then a swift ushering through a general security screening for weapons and other items deemed illegal onboard the shuttle services.

There is plenty of time for passengers to absorb the grandeur of Tuscano and for the upper classes, use of the facilities of the West Wing is an essential part of any diplomatic trip. Many inter-house meetings are arranged there without anyone leaving Centauri and the Emperor also uses the facilities for audiences away from the oppressive restrictions of the Republic buildings.

SECURITY

The Kula-Jai take security very seriously but take their personal appearance even more so. What they lack in discipline they compensate for in vanity. Uniforms consist of a very fine facsimile of traditional, formal, court battledress, replete with broad epaulettes, large belt buckles and mirror-polished boots. Sashes are always immaculate and every Kula-Jai walks with a swagger and a sneer, save when in the presence of a higher rank, whatever the family.

There are three security presences throughout Tuscano; the Duty Jai, who patrol the Grand Concourse and other

public areas, Sentry Jai, who provide sentry duties within the West Wing and the main Security clearance desk. Finally the Control, which directs general patrol duties and monitors the multitude of security cameras dotted around the facility. The West Wing has its own security centre but doesn't prevent the Kula-Jai from monitoring the security feeds from elsewhere. All information is channelled through the Kula-Fha who consult and decide on what action needs to be taken. Thus, the physical aspects of security are carried out by the Kula-Jai but the intelligence is always referred to the Kula-Fha Seers. As a result security is inherently flawed within Tuscano. The Duty Jai are certainly corrupt and self-serving, whilst the Control Jai are torn between what they see and hear and what actions the Kula-Fha decide is best, which often conflicts with what the Kula-Jai *know* to be best practice.

Cameras and listening devices are scattered throughout the facility; just about every single room, be it public or private, is wired for either sight, sound or both. The Control Jai are responsible for monitoring the feeds from these bugs and do so with reasonable diligence but for the most part their monitoring is concerned with what the nobles of other houses are doing and how this can be used to House Kulaati's advantage. There is generally an over-reliance on the Duty Jai for spotting potential problems and since the Duty Jai use their shifts and patrols as an opportunity to swagger about and generally throw their weight around, Tuscano security is somewhat lax.

OPERATIONS

Tuscano operations are handled from the East Wing control centre. It monitors the status of the launch pads, co-ordinates orbital transfers and maintains a watch on Jump Gate approach and clearance. The Operations team are all Kul-Fha individuals who have demonstrated an aptitude for logistics, spatial awareness and rapid decision making. Whilst the control centre has state of the art AIs and automated systems for control launch and landings, the control personnel like to take personal charge as much as possible and some are capable of out-thinking the automated processes.

Launches and landings are co-ordinated on a precedence-basis. Whichever shuttle carries the most important person (from a Kulaati perspective) gets to launch or land first, although the Emperor always gains automatic priority. This means that flight schedules are sometimes subject to short-notice changes or disruption depending on relations between the various houses of the Republic. It is not unknown for recently made Kulaati allies to be shunted to the head of the launch queue, causing severe schedule disruption. Here is where the Kula-Fha controllers come into their own. The control deck is adept at swinging into diplomatic mode to explain away such abrupt changes whilst soothing fuming egos and explaining, in convoluted diplomatic speak, why the changes are not just necessary but essential.

Voice of the Kula-Ka

'I think what our so-called betters forget is that we keep them there. We, the Kula-Ka, grease the wheels for their political machinations and then smear the grease on that pole the Kula-Mir are so eager to climb. Our skills in trade and negotiation made Tuscano; without us, House Kulaati would never have gained the Glorious Emperor's patronage and thus be granted control of this, Centauri's finest spaceport. Without us, there would be no trade along Grand Concourse and no revenue for the Kula-Luc to count and covet. Without us – no outlet for fine Kulaati goods and no way to capture the populace who wander through Grand Tuscano and fleece them of a few more ducats. If you want information, too, then come to us; we see and hear everything going on. No need for the Kula-Jai's cameras and feeds; when people wander through the Little Bazaar or pause for a glass of fresh brevai, they talk and everywhere is a set of keen Kula-Ka ears.

But do the Kula-Mir, the Kula-Jai and the Kula-Fha listen to us? By the Great Maker they do not! Pah! Are they fools? They consider us mere merchants and makers but what we offer is an ear to the ground. Every footfall has a presence above it and a story in the print it leaves. Want to know what's happening in the West Wing? It gets blabbed all through Little Bazaar, albeit in hushed tones but we listen and watch. It is amazing how the body language changes in barter and of course we recognise the rich and powerful and know what to look for. The mood of the higher social workings reflects through all castes and classes, whatever the house.

So take heed when a Kula-Ka offers you information. Listen to him. It will be the biggest bargain you've been offered.'

Thus, the Kula-Mir nobles assert their whims over the control centre, just as the Kul-Fha assert their whim over the security arrangements. The controllers accept this as standard etiquette and procedure but for outsiders it is almost incomprehensible. The knock-on effects of delays or changes in schedules are felt throughout Tuscano and inevitably, it is the lower-class ticket holders who take the brunt of the disruption, whilst the higher ranking simply enjoy more wine in the West Wing's fine restaurants.

GRAND TUSCANO

Grand Tuscano is the name given to the main building of the facility and as already noted, it consists of three wings. Grand Tuscano's facilities mirror those found elsewhere in Centauri society. Everything is driven by prestige, position, appearance and politics. Segregation by class is quite normal and cross-cuts function and necessity.

The building has four floors and extensive underground facilities. Grand Tuscano is designed to look like a spaceport as little as possible and this philosophy is in keeping with traditional Centauri design aesthetics. The building, inside and out, is meant to please the eye, the heart and the soul first and foremost and serve the procedural needs of space travel as a secondary concern. That it is capable of doing both

is testament to House Kulaati's considerable administrative skills, although the clash of caste agendas means that the entire facility runs in a constant state of organised chaos – something the upper reaches of Centauri society seem to enjoy.

Central Wing

The ground floor of the Central Wing hosts the Grand Concourse, access to the monorail terminal, the check-in area and security area. The first floor offers restaurants and relaxation facilities. The second and third floors are allocated to short-term hotel accommodation. The architecture is grand throughout and music, such as popular symphonies and operas by Dorva, Centaro, and the Kulaati favourite Redalto, are piped to each level.

Grand Concourse

Stalls, bars and eateries line the Grand Concourse, all controlled by the Kula-Ka who consider the whole of the Central Wing their domain. The fare is exclusively Centauri although a handful of traders offer the odd offworld snack including some Narn specialities. The Little Bazaar, just to one side of the concourse, offers traditional Centauri crafts

Relaxation Centres

An age-old tradition in Centauri society, Relaxation Centres offer adult companionship including massage, stimulating conversation, a certain degree of psychoanalysis and of course, the usual gratification of the opposite sex. The consorts of the Relaxation centres are specialised in many performing and sensual arts, with specific training in the aesthetics of the Relaxation Centre they work in, cookery, for instance. Relaxation consorts are honour-bound to confidentiality, with pain of exile or death for any betraying that essential trust between consort and client. Becoming a consort is not considered to be a particularly estimable profession but their talents and undoubted benefit to Centauri male society are universally acknowledged.

and trinkets but also hosts numerous small booths where visitors may engage with fortune tellers who have some claim to deeper precognition and dream interpretation.

The statues and sculptures dotted around the concourse are there to break-up crowd flow as well as to showcase Kulaati cultural and artistic endeavour. The vaulted ceiling is painted with a striking mural depicting Centauri's development of interstellar flight with the centre piece being a Jump Gate represented as a complex Kulaati mandala of quite exquisite delicacy.

First Floor

The first floor offers a network of Kula-Ka eateries of a higher standard than those found on Grand Concourse. This is sit-down fare in opulent restaurants decorated in the High Centauri style, with shimmering drapes and rich tapestry carpets, where dressing for dinner is a more formal matter than simply donning a bib. Most of the restaurants also offer Relaxation Centres (see boxed text) for those who can afford it.

Khorua Kulaati Kh'on

The most prestigious of the restaurants and the home of the celebrated Centauri chef Alzo Khorua Kulaati, Khorua Kulaati Kh'on specialises in High Imperial cuisine where the presentation of the food and the method of its preparation is far more important than its actual flavour. Each dish is a minor masterpiece and its preparation is beamed to the diner's table and displayed as a holograph. The diner may offer criticism over how it was prepared and then choose whether or not to purchase the assembled creation. The restaurant has a one hundred percent record on acceptance, something chef Alzo boasts about in his frequent appearances on the Tuscano propaganda slots. A typical meal at Khorua Kulaati Kh'on cannot be completed in anything less than three standard Centauri hours, befitting the High Imperial style.

Calm

Calm is a Relaxation centre that happens to serve good food, rather than being a restaurant with a Relaxation centre attached. The menu displays the females available, along with the dishes they prepare, so part of the experience is choosing a companion and something that will please the stomach. The main relaxation area is a large oval room draped with many curtains that are pulled closed when the relaxation session begins. Each partitioned area has a traditional Centauri rokab stove and a cool store containing the ingredients for the companion's specialist dish, which is prepared over soothing conversation and lots of brevai. Once the customer has eaten, then the curtains are drawn and the relaxation begins.

Glaive

This restaurant celebrates Centauri's military achievements, reflecting the Lion of the Galaxy in its cuisine, which is both noble and brutal. Dishes are named for battles and military victories with desserts named specifically for defeated enemies, Xon blancmange is a favourite staple of the dessert list. The proprietor is the Kula-Ka Baldo Emear Kulaati whose ancestor was a renowned general in the Imperial fleet. He is resentful of his current status in the Kulaati house and seeks to climb to the ranks of the Kula-Mir; he thinks that declaiming Kulaati's roll in Centauri's proud military history, via the medium of food, is the way to do this. He wastes no opportunity in loudly discussing his views to any who will listen and this tends to work counter to his aims. However the undoubted quality and almost regimental simplicity of the cuisine he serves counteracts his social aspirations. The small Relaxation

Centre the restaurant operates, specialising in subservient and submissive consorts who are trained to adore war stories, continues to attract the militarily inclined from across many Houses.

The High Kulaat

The most luxurious of the restaurants, High Kulaat is favoured by the Emperor and his entourage. This is a formal dining room designed to accommodate high-standing social functions with decorum and integrity. Banquets are a frequent occurrence and the most formal begin at dawn and end at dusk, encompassing some eighty separate courses with wines to match. The restaurant is owned and run by the Mhjar family and they enjoy extremely good standing within the Kula-Ka caste and within the Kula Mir. The serving staff are, curiously, all ex-slaves, from the time when the Kulaati were actively engaged in the slave trade (a practice abandoned twenty years ago). The Mhjar family has proved to be such a good employer that it has attracted an almost fanatical loyalty amongst its staff. The levels of service are second to none at the High Kulaat, and the attention to detail is impeccable. This approach, plus the marathon banquets, have guaranteed the Mhjar's position within the house and the jealousy of several other families harbouring similar ambitions.

Second and Third Floors

Hotel accommodation occupies the second and third floors, the mini-fiefdom of the Vharji family which treats the operation of the hotel services as a particularly ruthless baron might treat unruly tenants. Offering three hundred rooms of varying standards and priced to a tariff that baffles even the Kula-Fha, the Vharji family actively reject guests who they feel do not meet their own standards of probity – sometimes with force. The rules for staying in their hotel rooms are lengthy, contradictory and stringent. Anyone caught contravening them risks either a surcharge to the bill or ejection from the premises. Many young bucks from the Centauri noble houses passing through Tuscano spaceport engage in the sport of 'Vharji-Baiting', where they compete to see how many rules they can flagrantly break before they are evicted.

Why, then, would anyone choose to stay here? The answer is twofold. First, the prices are modest as is needed to be, to attract custom and second, because there is nowhere else to stay. The Grand Concourse is too busy to allow people to doss-down on benches or the floor and the Kula-Jai security do not permit it anyway, which means that those who find a shuttle delayed – a not infrequent occurrence – need a bed and the Vharji are happy to provide one, on their terms.



Voice of a Kula-Fha Adviser

Whilst I am of House Kulaat, I am like the achridinia lizard of the Centaur south and change my colours to match my surroundings. I must adapt to whichever House I am tasked to serve, taking on their ways and customs temporarily in order to make their brief stay as comfortable and rewarding as possible. I understand what Tuscano can provide and make sure it is offered. I arrange the things these busy, busy people have not the time to arrange. I facilitate the security checks, the baggage clearance and all the tiny mundanities that we all would, if we could, delegate to someone else.

I am attentive to our guest's needs and desires. I anticipate them having worked with them before or having researched them in advance. For instance, I discovered that Ambassador Molari, en-route to Babylon 5 for the first time, disliked seeing the colour green before making any space flight; I therefore combed his suite several days before and had every trace of green removed and the whole suite redecorated in soothing shades of blue and mauve. He marvelled at my work and I was humbled. And when an Earth ambassador arrived during the last winter for a state visit, using Tuscano as her base, I learned she enjoyed certain two dimensional programmes of a humorous nature from the late 20th Century. I duly sourced the entire recorded works of a long-dead bard called Fray-seer and had them channelled to her suite's communications network. She was most delighted.

Of course we Kula-Fha advisers learn much about those we serve in the course of their brief but eventful stays but they learn of us too. The trust and confidences we share builds rapport and clarity of purpose and it is my task to ease that process in its fulfilment. Naturally, there is information we may add to our Purple Books, for that is only right and the Centauri custom...

Complaints about the way they behave fall on deaf ears. Elsewhere in House Kulaat the Vharji enjoy an excellent reputation for diligence and loyalty to the House; complaints are listened to by the Kula Mir and then explained away glibly. Resistance is certainly futile.

Amongst the more comprehensible rules are:

- ⑤ No alcoholic beverages in rooms or public areas
- ⑤ No unmarried couples
- ⑤ No unmarried couples posing as married couples
- ⑤ No more than two wives in a single room; additional wives must be in a separate room
- ⑤ No weapons of any kind
- ⑤ No duelling

⑤ No slanderous gossip

⑤ No Narn

⑤ No music to be played before breakfast

⑤ No pets

⑤ No slaves (servants are permissible but only in the presidential suite)

Curiously the hotel operates a Relaxation Centre and this seems to be the shining jewel in the hotel's torment. The consorts are highly trained in the sensual arts, particularly one call *shathithra*, which involves a multitude of oils, unguents and legal sedatives. Doubtless it is the skill of the consorts that prevent many guests from complaining or becoming openly hostile.

Fourth Floor

The upper floor of Central Wing is the observation terrace, overlooking the landing fields beyond. It is a popular area as it also looks out onto several terraces of the West Wing and is thus a good place for spotting one's social superiors at work and play. Naturally the Kula-Jai maintain a strict security presence here, especially when the Emperor is using Tuscano. On these occasions the observation terrace is usually closed-off completely, although there have been occasions where the Emperor has allowed it to remain open so that he might maintain a level of connection with his people.

Entrance to the observation gallery is free to ticket holders but charges a two ducat fee to non-passengers. Kula-Jai sentries stand at the main entrance plaza, flanking a booth where a Kula-Luc officer checks ticket information and makes the charge when appropriate. The booth attendant is Lir Oprait Kulaati, a man of advanced years but raptor-like faculties despite his frail frame. He has an eidetic memory, and superior powers of observation. Each evening he files an infallible report, from memory of who has entered and exited the observation gallery. If time permits he watches the gallery itself, observing what people do. His daily report is circulated widely in Tuscano: to security, the Kula-Mir, the Kula-Fha Seers and operations personnel. His report is utterly factual; a straight reporting of who entered, what they were wearing, where they were going (or returning from) and what they did. It carries no opinions or conjecture but is conveyed such that the spaceport can glean a great deal of insight into passenger habits and where necessary, the habits of particular passengers. Lir Oprait is one of Tuscano's best-kept secrets and his remarkable memory makes him one of its strongest assets.

West Wing

The West Wing is the haunt of the nobles of Centauri. Not for them the crowded, sweatbox of Grand Concourse; not for them the strangeness of the hotel. In the West Wing nobles are accommodated in the way nobles should be accommodated: with private suites, exclusive Relaxation Centres, servants aplenty, dutiful sentries and the best food and wine the spaceport can provide.

If Grand Tuscano generally does not resemble a spaceport terminal, then West Wing resembles one even less. It is designed as a grand ambassadorial palace; a place where the landed and monied can feel at home, relaxed (in all senses of the word) and prepare for their offworld transit. West Wing is administered exclusively by House Kulaati's own nobles, the Mir Tuscano Prefects, who, with their Kula-Fha advisers, ensure that the highest standards of West Wing are maintained with absolute consistency. Only nobles know what nobles want and this is why West

Wing's administration is not left to chance. Overseeing the whole operation is Lord Cur-Mhir Vulein Kulaati, a patriarch of House Kulatti with a brilliant white hair crest and dark, suspicious eyes. He is a consummate host, instinctively aware of what his guests require and ensuring it is provided through his prefects network. Vulein (as he prefers to be known), knows when and how to facilitate political machinations and he is an arch mover in such schemes even though he harbours no immediate desires to occupy high office himself.

West Wing has five floors.

Ground Floor – Grand Entrance

Anyone entitled to use West Wing – and everyone knows who they are – enters via the Grand Entrance into an impressive, vaulted ceiling hall richly appointed with sculptures, tapestries and portraits of the great, the good and the infamous. The hall is dominated by a massive statue of Tuscano himself, sword in one hand and severed head of a Xon in the other. It is the practice to bow before it upon entering, although the degree of reverence offered varies considerably, depending on the regard Tuscano is held in by the other noble Houses of Centauri.

A small army of servants – Kula-Sul – is assembled in military-style ranks and faux-military dress, ready to scurry forth and fetch and carry for the latest noble arrival. Either Vulein or his deputy, Fha-Maskaal, greets the dignitaries, informs them of where they are to be quartered and more importantly, tells them who else is present in West Wing. It simply would not do for rival noble Houses to make a chance encounter in West Wings hallowed corridors.

Beyond the Grand Entrance is the departure/arrival suite. It is here that personal transportation ferries the guests out to the launch areas. A cursory security check is made, which is nothing like as rigorous as for lower ranks, and naturally baggage is never interfered with.

It is not uncommon for a West Wing guest to request a flight be delayed; either because there is diplomatic or House business to be concluded at West Wing or simply because a noble has forgotten something and sent for it. Vulein, when such cases arise, attempts to minimise or mitigate the delay through a variety of strategies but frequently has to negotiate with Control (via Fha-Maskaal). If a requested delay is especially outrageous or based on nothing more than whim, Vulein is within his rights to veto it, warning the House concerned that a fine might be levied to compensate the hundreds, if not thousands, of people who would be affected. This sobering prospect serves to keep delay requests both to a minimum and for only very good reasons.



First, Second and Third Floors – Private Suites

There are fifteen private suites in total – five per floor – capable of accommodating an entourage of up to fifty per suite in splendid comfort. Every suite has a retinue of Kula-Sul servants and a Kula-Fha adviser who acts as a personal liaison for the duration of the visit. His job is part diplomat, part butler and part spy, the latter being an unspoken element of the job but one that is understood by all concerned.

Each suite of rooms is opulently furnished and given enough warning, can be redecorated to suit the taste or requirements of the visiting dignitary. All travel affairs pass to the Kula-Fha adviser assigned to the suite allowing the guest to relax and attend to more important matters without the need for worry. The Kula-Fha adviser's presence is discreet but tangible; he is never very far from his guests and makes it his absolute duty to serve them beyond their expectations.

Each of the three floors dedicated to the guest suites have a central Meeting Centre, equipped

with full conference and audio-visual facilities. On the second floor is the West Wing's Relaxation Centre, rumoured to be the finest outside of the Palace harem. The consorts chosen to serve the West Wing Relaxation Centre are considered to have almost reached the pinnacle of their career and indeed, service at the West Wing may lead to a consort being selected to join a particular House permanently or even become the wife of a dignitary who is taken with the services offered.

Fourth Floor – Emperor's Suite

The whole floor is given over to the Emperor's Suite, a large, self-contained complex of rooms mirroring the levels of comfort found in the Imperial Palace. Sentry Jai guard the grand doors into the suite. More for ceremonial show than actual security, as their bored expressions indicate. Beyond them, the corridors are wood-lined, the floors thickly carpeted and the sweet smell of Vale Lotus (the Emperor's favourite incense, allegedly) hangs in the air.

The Emperor's Suite does not gain much use but is maintained as though it does, nonetheless. His reasons for travelling off-world are few and he has an army of emissaries and ambassadors available to conduct remote business, so his visits are infrequent.

When he does travel, House Kulaati is notified through the appropriate channels and the Kula-Mir swing into a well-rehearsed routine to prepare the suite, arrange (read bend or delay) all flight schedules to meet the Emperor's timetable and scour the entire facility for anything that might make his brief stay uncomfortable (such as bugs – real and electronic, assassins and so forth). When he arrives, it is with his travelling entourage of up to thirty advisers, servants and other functionaries. They are swept up to the suite with appropriate ceremony, and Vulein himself attends to the Emperor's needs from Tuscano.

Fifth Floor – Kula-Mir Suites

The fifth floor of the West Wing is given over to the Administration and living space for Vulein and other key spaceport personnel. This is Kula-Mir and Kula-Fha territory, and includes meetings rooms, a small control centre and secure links to the rest of the key facilities within the spaceport.

East Wing

The East Wing is the control centre for Tuscano operations. It manages all launches and landings, with full displays of the launch pad status and links to the orbital bases where the planet-side shuttles dock with their respective transports, liners and military vessels. Spread over four floors it is served by a combination of castes from within House Kulaati but headed by the imposing presence of Command Prefect Sho Mir Tuvalus Kulaat. A man with a distinguished, if somewhat disreputable war-record and a deep seated hatred for Narn, Tuvalus is a terse commander with little patience and a tendency to explode into semi-impotent rage with the general incompetency surrounding him.

Tuvalus administrates more than he controls. The Kula-Fha ensure the smooth running of the control functions, within the constraints of outside meddling and delays and the ancillary automation means that Tuvalus needs to do little save rubber-stamp a variety of orders and stamp his feet and shout at the latest schedule disruptions.

Like the rest of Tuscano, East Wing resembles a fine stately home or art gallery more than a space station but whereas most of Grand Tuscano is at pains to hide its systems from view, throughout East Wing they are on full display. Every aspect of the Grand Tuscano infrastructure is controlled from here via a vast and complicated network of computer systems and semi-AIs. Whilst key systems are isolated, allowing for independent operation in the event of failure of another component, the links and reliances are manifold meaning that a single large system failure would impact on the entire system. If a core system goes down, its impact is felt throughout the spaceport. The failure of a single, critical component could bring the installation to a standstill. Tuvalus knows this and hates the incompetence but the Kula-Fha advisers who effectively run the Control

facility prefer it this way, believing that complexity and interdependence mirrors the true-life networks of Centauri relationships and that all systems, social, political and technical, should be managed organically. For a strategist and tactician like Tuvalus, who understands only too well the 'single point of failure' concept, East Wing is a saboteur's dream come true and the Kula-Fha Seers who conduct the bulk of the business are a bunch of over-educated idiots who will be expunged from the whole Kulaati caste system if Tuvalus ever becomes House Patriarch, which is highly unlikely but the man has to dream.

Launch Pads

Four main launch pads, reached by underground monorail, stand half a kilometre due south of Grand Tuscano. The huge, circular, steel surfaces have ten separate landing and launch hard-standings for ground to orbit Zan-class civilian transport shuttles. The standings can be raised or lowered, with maintenance facilities located underground. In the centre of each launch pad is a roughly square, functional, terminal building handling embarkation and disembarkation. The functions and facilities are all managed from East Wing but Kula-Sul technicians, co-ordinated by the Fha Seer Vross, conduct maintenance work and oversee boardings, luggage transfers (indelictely) and the manage the general chaos that accompanies every boarding. Vross is the calm at the eye of the storm, a man of infinite patience and lecherous eye who looks upon his Kula-Sul staff as a favourite grandfather looks upon his grandchildren, indulgent them far too much.

A fifth pad is reserved for the Emperor's personal shuttle, which is always stowed in its own, isolated, below-ground hangar and raised only when a flight is to take place.

PERSONALITIES

Command Prefect Sho Mir Tuvalus Kulaat, Head of Tuscano Control

Tuvalus is a veteran of the Narn occupation and perpetual thorn in the side of the Kulaati infrastructure. A short-tempered but far-sighted man, he is desperate to rid Tuscano of its inefficiencies but is continually stymied by the perpetual politics and status-chasing. He is an excellent warrior and capable administrator but not one for playing political games. Having lost an arm during a Narn insurgency attack, he was invalidated out from service and has refused prosthetics and knows that heading-up Tuscano control is the best operational position he can hope for. Unfortunately he cannot make what he wants out of Tuscano because the machinations of people such as Vulein and Maskaal make it impossible. If he could change the order of things, he would but his loyalty to House Kulaati runs deep, even if his respect for its current state does not.

8th Level Centauri Officer (Fleet)**Hit Points:** 22**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 17 (+6 class, +1 Dex)**Attacks:** +9/+4 close combat, +9/+4 ranged**Special Qualities:** Branch Specialisation, Born to Intrigue (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Rallying Call, Way of Command.**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 12**Notable Skills:** Athletics +6, Appraise +6, Bluff +10, Computer Use +10, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +13, Intrigue +6, Investigate +6, Knowledge (tactics) +6, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +6, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +8, Linguistics +8, Notice +5, Operations (Piloting) +6, Pilot +8, Sense Motive +10, Subterfuge +4.**Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Fluency (Centauri, Narn, Human), Improved Initiative, Nerves of Steel, Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).**Standard Equipment:** Hand-held communicator.**Fha Seer Vross, Overseer of Launch Pad Operations**

Although his hair crest is thinning and maintained by rather too much lacquer, Fha Seer Vross knows all there is to know about launch pad operations and etiquette. He is an easy-going sort, insightful but with a sentimental tendency that causes him to view his staff as children to be indulged and looked after, rather than managed and controlled. As a result he is a grandfather of organised chaos and not someone who handles stressful situations with any great aplomb. His tendency is to panic and blame others, scolding them and promising punishments that even a true child would happily ignore.

6th Level Centauri Officer (Fleet)**Hit Points:** 17**Initiative:** +2 (+2 Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex)**Attacks:** +6/+1 close combat, +8/+3 ranged**Special Qualities:** Branch Specialisation, Born to Intrigue (Diplomacy, Intimidate), Rallying Call.**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 13**Notable Skills:** Athletics +4, Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Computer Use +11, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Intrigue +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Astrophysics) +8, +4, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +11, Linguistics +6, Notice +4, Operations (Piloting) +4, Pilot +4, Sense Motive +10, Subterfuge +6.**Feats:** Data Access, Fluency (Centauri, Human), Skill Focus (Astrophysics), Skill Focus (Computer Use), Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Vision of Death, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).**Standard Equipment:** Hand-held communicator.**Lord Cur-Mir Vulein Kulaat, Head of Grand Tuscano**

Vulein is a man of quiet, smiling patience but iron political will. He understands all there is to know about house etiquette and can play whatever game needs to be played, at whatever level and generally win it. He aspires to be the House Kulaati patriarch in the not too distant future and through his duties within Grand Tuscano he is able to secure his position through quiet dealings with the other houses and of course, finding favour with the Emperor on the occasions when the two men are able to meet. His right-hand man is Maskaal, his Fha-Seer of over thirty years and the two have an unspoken, innate understanding of each other supported by a latent telepathy that has developed over time. Vulein is not a man who should be crossed, for his memory is exacting and he is adept at playing long games. He is prepared to tolerate a great deal and as an astute judge of character, knows how to manipulate people to his own ends. In the case of Tuvalus, he recognises the man's competency as a commander and is prepared to overlook his rages because, ultimately, he will need people like Tuvalus when he starts to make his own political plays.

8th Level Centauri Diplomat**Hit Points:** 16**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex)**Attacks:** +5 close combat, +6 ranged**Special Qualities:** Aide, Born to Intrigue (Notice, Subterfuge), Improved Diplomacy, Strong Influence, Swift Diplomacy.**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +11**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15

Notable Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Computer Use +6, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +12, Intrigue +14, Investigate +8, Knowledge (law) +6, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +8, Linguistics +8, Sense Motive +8, Subterfuge +2.

Feats: Alien Empathy, Contact, Fluency (Centauri, Human), Great Fortitude, Noble Birth, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Attaché case, diplomat's attire, hand-held communicator.

Fha-Maskaal Kulaat, Deputy Head and Chief Adviser

As Vulein's deputy and adviser, Maskaal is party to all Vulein's schemes and plans. The two men share a deep empathy and Maskaal can perfectly anticipate and act on, Vulein's requirements in any given situation. He is a fine Kula-Fha Seer and a brilliant mind in a sea of brilliant minds but he is vain and this is a weakness.

It is a weakness currently being exploited. During a recent visit by members of House Malachi, Maskaal was surprised to find a human as part of the entourage. The human, calling himself Morden, asked Maskaal what he wanted, surely, quietly, persistently. Maskaal found himself describing how he and Vulein would rule House Kulaati together, uniting the other Houses and making Centauri great once more. Morden smiled and left but has returned on several other occasions, usually alone and delivered information Maskaal (and by extension, Vulein) has found extremely useful.

Maskaal is therefore being beguiled by the Shadows. His own vanity blinds him to the truth and to his shame he has not revealed anything about Morden's visits to Vulein, finding alternative explanations for the information Morden has supplied.

5th Level Centauri Agent

Hit Points: 15

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Born to Intrigue (Sense Motive, Subterfuge), Master of the Craft, Multi-Skilled, Opportunism (Stunning Attack), Skill Mastery (Subterfuge).

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14

Notable Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +10, Computer Use +6, Concentration +6, Intrigue +8, Investigate +8, Knowledge (law) +6, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +6, Linguistics +6, Notice +6, Sense Motive +10, Subterfuge +10, Stealth +6.

Feats: Contact (Mr Morden), Fluency (Centauri, Human), Prehensile Tentacles, Skill Focus (Subterfuge), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: PPG Pistol, hand-held communicator.

Lir Oprait Kulaati, Wizened Observer

The hunched and balding Oprait has served Grand Tuscano well for seventy years, having worked in almost every function in the installation. His photographic memory and ability to convey critical information succinctly and accurately makes him a highly valued retainer by the likes of Vulein and Maskaal.

There is one thing Oprait has not revealed in his reports; the occasional meetings between a dark-haired human and Fha-Maskaal, some of which have taken place on the Observation terrace. Oprait would never dare question Maskaal's motives but he certainly does not trust the human, who has appeared, wreathed in darkness, in several recent dreams. Oprait is in a dilemma that is threatening his razor-sharp mental faculties and testing his loyalty; should he report Maskaal's activities to Vulein or remain silent?

6th Level Centauri Worker (blue collar)

Hit Points: 10

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12 (+3 class, -1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +2 ranged

Special Qualities: Born to Intrigue (Notice, Sense Motive), Expertise, Worker Type: blue collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Computer Use +10, Concentration +8, Drive +6, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +10, Linguistics +6, Notice +10, Operation (systems) +6, Profession +8, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Contact, Fluency (Centauri, Human), Iron Will, Skill Focus (Notice), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).



Ang Vharji Kulaat, Owner of the Hotel

Ang Vharji and his family operate the Hotel and Ang is responsible for the bizarre rules the hotel embodies. Most think him mad but Vharji is more sane than most. He is deeply interested in psychology, a talent that has been recognised higher in House Kulaati and the authoritarian rules imposed in the hotel are there as part of an experiment to see just how much people are prepared to tolerate and to measure the results of different species against known Centauri psychological profiles. The findings and observations of his experiments are reported to Vulein, who conveys them upwards and with the assistance of Maskaal, Vharji devises new rules and restrictions, and even more extreme tests of behaviour, to see just how much Centauri and offworlders can be pressed.

6th Level Centauri Worker (white collar)

Hit Points: 12

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Born to Intrigue (Linguistics, Notice), Expertise, Worker Type: white collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +7

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Appraise +8, Computer Use +8, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +10, Intrigue +6, Investigate +8, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +10, Knowledge (Earth Alliance) +8, Linguistics +6, Notice +6, Profession +10.

Feats: Fluency (Centauri, Human), Independently Wealthy, Skill Focus (Investigate), Skill Focus (Notice), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).

Baldo Emar Kulaati, Owner of Glaive

Although he has never taken part in any great battles, Baldo Emar adores Centauri military history and conveys this abiding interest through his restaurant. He is sympathetic to all military personnel and is particularly welcoming of Tuvalus, on the rare occasions when the Control head visits the Glaive. Baldo is less tolerant of the Mhjar, who own the High Kulaat. He finds their slavish recreations of imperial banquets and affront to true cuisine because it lacks heart and presence. Food should reflect the battlefield: an assault on the senses followed by a victory of taste. Mhjar and his odious family are merely *poseurs* and social climbers – an insult to the ideals of fine cooking and drink.

5th Level Centaury Trader

Hit Points: 13

Initiative: +1 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+3 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +4 melee, +5 ranged

Special Qualities: Born to Intrigue (Diplomacy, Intimidate), Investment, Master Trader +1, Traders Knowledge.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15

Notable Skills: Appraise +7, Bluff +7, Computer Use +8, Diplomacy +7, Intrigue +10, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +5, Knowledge (Centaury Military History) +5, Profession (blue collar) +10, Sense Motive +8, Subterfuge +6.

Feats: Alien Empathy, Contact, Fluency (Centaury, Human), Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols).

Sur Mhjar Kulaati, Owner of the High Kulaati

Sur Mhjar is one of the Kula-Ka that believes his caste should be thought of more highly. He does not mask his feelings and is ready to sound-off at the slightest opportunity about how the Kula-Ka have shaped Kulaati fortunes more than any other caste in the House. His opinions are amusing to the Kula-Mir, inspirational to the Kula-Ka, tedious to the Kula-Fha and simply misunderstood by the Kula-Jai. Sur considers Baldo Emear to be in denial and almost a traitor to Kula-Ka's overlooked greater glory. As a result, the two restaurateurs share a great enmity, not least about their chosen styles of cuisine and tastes in décor.

5th Level Centaury Trader

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 melee, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Born to Intrigue (Diplomacy, Intrigue), Investment, Master Trader +1, Traders Knowledge.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16

Notable Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +9, Computer Use +7, Diplomacy +9, Intrigue +8, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +3, Knowledge (Minbari) +5, Profession (blue collar) +8, Sense Motive +9, Subterfuge +5.

Feats: Alien Empathy, Contact, Devoted Friend, Fluency (Centaury, Minbari, Human), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols).

Ghest Fhron Jai Kulaat, Head of Security

The head of Security is, perhaps, the one person who truly understand Tuvalu's frequent rages. An insightful and diligent man, his security operation and beloved Jai are frequently scuppered by the dealings of the Kula-Fha and in particular, Maskaal. Every time Ghest imposes his authority, it gets undermined by some absurd requirement from the Kula-Fha Seers. Ghest knows that corruption is rife throughout Tuscano but also knows it is tolerated because it helps the higher castes to get their job done. He also knows it is a disaster waiting to happen. He has thus given up trying to get his message across and instead contents himself with performing his security duties as best he can, storing up each and every incident so that he can march into Vulein's West Wing sanctum and say 'I told you so.'

3rd Level Centaury Soldier, 3rd Level Officer (Fleet)

Hit Points: 24

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+4 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +7/+2 close combat, +7/+2 ranged

Special Qualities: Born to Intrigue (Intimidate, Sense Motive), Combat Training, Coordinate Unit +1, Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 9

Notable Skills: Athletics +5, Computer Use +6, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +7, Investigate +5, Knowledge (Grand Tuscano) +6, Knowledge (Narn) +7, Medical +4, Notice +5, Operations (Piloting) +5, Pilot +3, Sense Motive +8.

Feats: Armour Familiarity, Blind Fight, Combat Expertise, Die Hard, Endurance, Fluency (Centaury, Human), Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: PPG Pistol, hand-held communicator.

DRAZI

'When we build a spaceport, we design it to display our superior grasp of aesthetics and social discourse. When the Narn build one, they just rip-out the heart of one of ours. When the humans build one, they get a committee to do it and take an age. When the Drazi build one, they take a gun platform and add a departure lounge...'

Londo Mollari to Michael Garibaldi, preparing him for what to expect when visiting Zhabar.

Londo's description is highly accurate. The Drazi do not distinguish between civilian and military installations because, to them, there is no difference. Space travel is simply another *In-shala* and because all In-shalas are underpinned by the need for swift, decisive action, combative wherever possible, there is no reason to distinguish between civilian and military installations. So it is that installations like *Zhab'Shak* – Zhabar Gateway – are essentially military bases offering a few facilities catering for non-military operations. The Drazi propensity for violence or at least their readiness to engage in it, is evident in almost everything they build. Peaceful concerns simply do not enter into the design scheme, because, as the Drazi have always maintained, they will 'fight anyone, anywhere, anytime'.

There is also a secondary reason. Drazi do not, as a race, like to leave the Freehold and a good many would never leave Zhabar itself. Amongst the Drazi there is scant demand for dedicated space travel facilities and so whatever requirements they do have can be amply served by using military installations.

ZHAB'SHAK

Resembling a massive, armoured teardrop, encircled by its docking halo, Zhab'Shak is typical of a Drazi military docking orbital. Zhab'Shak is designated as the single point for visiting races to use when approaching Zhabur; attempting to dock anywhere else provokes an immediate, violent response. The station bristles with visible weaponry; missile arrays and particle blasters are on permanent display, both on the main teardrop and the docking ring. Zhab'Shak typically has three or four attack vessels docked at any given time, usually Sunhawk Battle Cruisers or Firehawk Advanced Cruisers (see *Babylon 5 Ships of the Galaxy* pages 114 and 113 respectively) but any of the Drazi Fleet's ships will be taking up docking ports and they do not move for incoming passenger or freight traffic. If all docking points are occupied, then all other ships, Drazi shuttles included, must wait. Try to negotiate a place on the docking ring, is met with stony silence; complaints are met with challenges and typical Drazi belligerence.

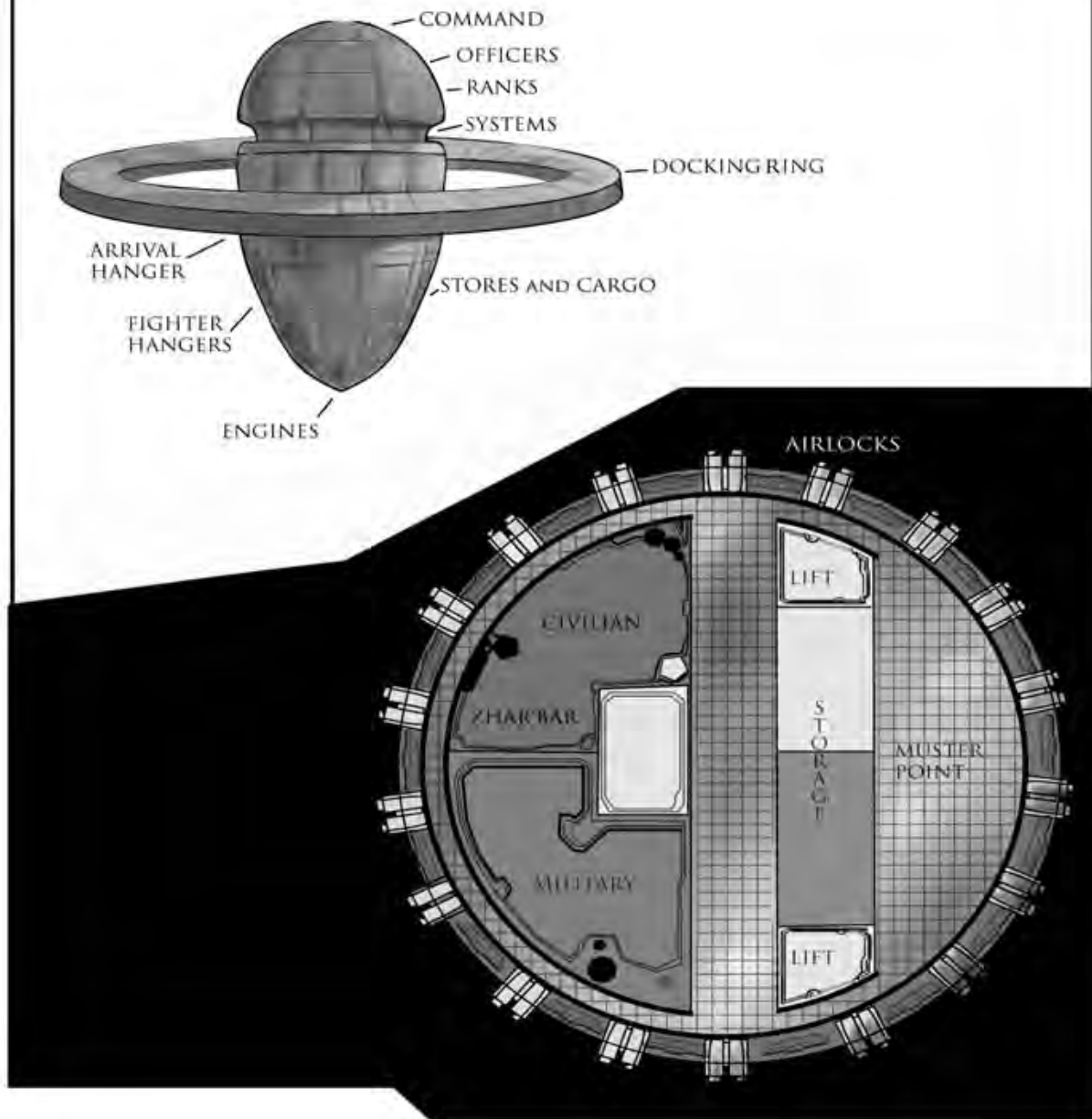
The teardrop and docking ring configuration is common to Drazi bases. The docking ring is connected by passageways to the main structure and it can be jettisoned if needs be, with the teardrop having its own engines for manoeuvring and its own attack and defence systems. Thus Zhab'Shak can operate as a system defence vessel as needs dictate, although it has no jump capabilities. Zhab'Shak is under the command of the Purple (defensive) section of the Drazi Fleet, with the fighter units being under the command of the Green section.

REACHING ZHAB'SHAK

Zhab'Shak's sensors pick-up all traffic emerging through the Jump Gate and a fighter patrol is immediately despatched to intercept, inspect and take action against, anyone who does not answer, in the right way, the extremely detailed set of identification questions and protocols issued by Zhab'Shak control. Raiders using the Jump Gate are fired upon immediately and if necessary, a Claw Eagle Assault Frigate might be launched from the docking ring to assist in subduing any undesirables.

As an incoming ship approaches Zhab'Shak a litany of instructions on docking protocols is issued verbally whilst the fighters despatched from the station escort the vessel in towards the teardrop. Where possible the vessel will be docked on the docking ring and may find itself side-by-side with a Drazi warship. The docking airlock is not extended until all personnel have been checked by security scans and a Drazi security team has searched the ship and checked the cargo and manifest. Any cargo not matching the manifest description is jettisoned and gunned into its component atoms.

Drazi



DRAZI

STARPORT

Zhab'Shak – War Watcher Class Orbital Defence Platform

The War Watcher Class of defence platforms are designed primarily for system defence and a network of twelve War Watchers, including Zhab'Shak, orbit Zhabar. Similar configurations are found in other Drazi systems. Most do not include the docking ring that marks Zhab'Shak as a spaceport and the statistics below represent the War Watcher Class in general.

Gargantuan Spacecraft

Defence Value 16 (-2 Size, +4 Handling, +10 Equipment)

Armour 36, Handling +4, Sensors +10

Stress 6. Features: Fusion Engine, Skyhook Catapult (x3), Targeting Computer (+2)

Crew: Drazi Line (+4 BAB, +6 Training); 8 Officers, 16 Pilots, 22 Sensor Operators, 400 Crewmen

Cargo: 50, Control 6, Crew 40, Engines 20, Hangar 14, Weapons 20

Fore Arc Weapons

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Aft Arc Weapons

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons

Heavy Particle Blaster (Close, Offence 60, 1 weapon space)

Heavy Particle Blaster (Close, Offence 60, 1 weapon space)

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons

Heavy Particle Blaster (Close, Offence 60, 1 weapon space)

Heavy Particle Blaster (Close, Offence 60, 1 weapon space)

Twin-Linked Particle Blasters (Close, Offence 12, 2 weapon spaces)

Craft: 4 Cargo Shuttles, 20 Star Snake Light, Attack Fighters, 10 Fanged Serpent Fighters

Any passenger or crew member that fails Drazi security protocols is liable to arrest and deportation to the point of origin, which usually means the entire ship is denied docking rights and escorted back to the Jump Gate with its business unfinished.

From the surface of Zhabar, shuttles ascending to the station do not need to undergo any further clearance provided they are of Drazi origin or part of an already docked ship. Anything unidentified or that cannot be reconciled on its approach, is subject to a Zhab'Shak attack.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Zhab'Shak is not truly equipped to deal with civilian traffic either in terms of cargo, passengers or ships and this is all too evident from the lack of standard civilian protocols common in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds and other regions of the galaxy. All Zhab'Shak's operations are conducted at a military level, using military language and with military precision; any other considerations are absolutely secondary.

Once docked and security reconciliation is complete, passengers may disembark and are confined to the Arrival hangar area. VIPs will be greeted by Bazak'fa Dagartaz but everyone else is left largely to their own devices. There are no hotels, no shops and precious few sources of information relating to ship and shuttle transfers. The one concession

to this is the Zhar'Bar, the huge, rowdy, mixture between a bar, mess-hall, restaurant and fight-pit. Here, displays in Drazi and curiously abrupt English reel through what shuttles and ships are expected when and whether or not they need to give-way to military traffic, which they frequently do. Delays are the norm rather the exception owing to the precedence military traffic takes over civilian operations and whilst this does not bother Drazi passengers, non-Drazi may find it difficult to understand.

All around the station Drazi troops go about their business. They pay no attention to civilians and ignore any questions asked of them. Trying to provoke a response is likely to incur a confrontational response and certainly would not earn the sympathy of the station's commander in chief, Or'Fa Fazak. Seasoned travellers know to proceed directly to the Zhar'Bar and wait patiently, although given the propensity for fisticuffs in the Zhar'Bar, the patient wait is likely to be anything but uneventful.

SECURITY

As a military installation, security is exceptionally tight. Civilians are forbidden to leave the Arrival hangar, irrespective of how long they may have to wait before taking the next leg of their journey. All other areas are sealed to non-military personal and locking mechanisms are based on scale pattern recognition, ensuring that non-Drazi are forced to stay-put. The scales of every Drazi



are, at a microscopic level, uniquely patterned and this forms the basis of the security system. The technology underpinning the security network is military-grade software and exceedingly difficult to overcome (DR 28) for anyone wanting to attempt it. Additionally, scanners set into each doorway read the scale pattern of those passing through and alert the central control area of any unauthorised personnel; soldiers are then despatched to intercept the intruder.

OPERATIONS

All operations are monitored and controlled by the sensor and operations crews working in the control centre at the very top of the station. Their duties are usually routine: co-ordination of incoming and outgoing spacecraft, talking through security screening and guiding ships to the right port on the docking ring. In a military situation the control centre becomes the Zhab'Shak's bridge as it switches to its capabilities as a warship, including all weapon-control and defensive systems.

Below the control centre are accommodation areas for officers, with rank and file accommodation occupying the floor below. The officers enjoy single occupancy suites, allowing them space to relax, whilst the rank and file crew occupy large dormitories which, in times of crisis, can be converted into hospital suites. Civilians are not afforded these levels of comfort, although VIPs might be offered an officer's suite (grudgingly) if the need arises. Otherwise, civilians are expected to use the meagre facilities of the Zhar'Bar or remain onboard their original shuttle or transport if at all possible. This is not a deliberate attempt to make visitors uncomfortable; it is simply a harsh practicality of a military installation that has been haphazardly equipped to handle passengers and cargo.

At the base of the teardrop are the fighter hangars and cargo stores; vast, open areas crewed by skilled hangar teams who can handle fighter maintenance and cargo duties equally. Rapid ascent/descent elevators run through the whole length of the station, allowing scrambled fighter crews to get to their ships within minutes.

CARGO AND COMMERCE

Cargo from docked vessels is moved to the cargo hangar by single-pilot maintenance pods of the kind found throughout the galaxy. The cargo area is sectioned into civilian and military areas and only military cargo is allowed to linger for any length of time. Zhab'Shak offers no cargo processing facilities save for temporary storage and transfer from one vessel to another and even then, civilian cargo is often encouraged to load directly into the shuttle it is destined for rather than go via the cargo hangar.

Military cargo is different and always takes

priority. Different military vessels docking with Zhab'Shak have differing needs and the cargo teams ensure that the right supplies are allocated to the right vessels in the right portions.

There is thus no commerce aboard Zhab'Shak. It is a straightforward, relatively efficient (for military purposes, at least) transfer point. Traders bound for Zhar'Bar, hoping to find trade facilities of the kinds found on other spacestations or spaceports are going to be exceedingly disappointed. One Brakiri trading crew that tried to establish an ad-hoc trading stall in the muster point found all its cargo being impounded, the traders imprisoned for several days and then being unceremoniously escorted back to the Jump Gate sans cargo and sans profit. The message was swiftly communicated around the Brakiri Syndicacy: do not try to trade on a warship.

ZHAR'BAR

The Zhar'Bar is the only civilian-operated area on the station. Run by Melaska, a forthright but essentially amiable Drazi, it accommodates for both civilian and military relaxation serving meals and drinks. Since there are no civilian accommodation facilities on Zhab'Shak, Melaska has installed rows of long, wide, reasonably comfortable couches that can be used for sleeping if needs dictate.

The bar is divided into two areas, keeping civilians and military apart – although that does not stop military personnel from regularly invading the civilian space if the military side becomes too busy. The bar is a popular venue for the military. Melaska's small team of beleaguered staff are dutiful servants, bearing the brunt of crude military jokes and helping to calm the frequently frayed tempers.

For civilians, Melaska is an oasis in a military wilderness. She knows or can find out, when ships are arriving or leaving and point people in the right direction. As a reasonable linguist and skilled people-watcher, she can communicate with several races, including Narn, Centauri and Humans and meet many of their specific dietary needs or preferences using an array of food processors in the kitchens at the rear of the bar. If not serving, she is happy to mingle with travellers, although she always refrains from becoming too familiar, as is the Drazi way.

As a result of her position, Melaska has built-up a formidable knowledge of contacts, both on Zharbar, across the Freehold and in beyond the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. She does not use this information for profit and is quite happy to share what she knows if asked. All Drazi are intrinsically honest and do not believe in withholding information. She is therefore a good source of news and intelligence that can assist travellers forced to spend any length of time aboard Zhab'Shak.



DOCKING RING

The huge docking ring encircles Zhab'Shak like a wedding ring. Capable of docking the largest Drazi cruisers through to the smallest personnel shuttles, it can dock up to twenty vessels simultaneously. The interior of the docking ring is nothing more than a series of airlocks running between the access tubes connecting the ring with the teardrop and these retract into the main body of the station when not in use by an individual vessel.

As already noted, the docking ring can be jettisoned from the teardrop in the event of an emergency. If this occurs any personnel aboard the ring must either return to their host ship or evacuate to the main station. If placed on an emergency footing, Drazi warships have robust procedures for this kind of action but civilian craft are effectively left to their own devices. The captains of civilian ships are informed of this general procedure as they are guided-in to dock but the instructions are not repeated again, so it is down to visiting crews to pay attention.

KEY PERSONNEL

Or'Fa Fazak

Captain of the Zhab'Shak, Fazak has held the rank of Or'Fa for 17 years and feels frustrated that he has not yet achieved Zutan. Fazak is noted for never having ever selected a Green sash in any of the selections and this may account for his subsequent lack of advancement in the military. As a result of his frustrations and seemingly inert military career, Fazak is even more combative and defensive than most Drazi and he is viewed with fear amongst the crew of Zhab'Shak for his excessive adherence to violence as a problem solving mechanism. If a crew member is not available to strike, then Fazak takes it out on machinery and his tantrums have forced the replacement of about seventy percent of the Command Centre consoles over the years.

Despite his personal frustrations Fazak is a very able commander with an excellent strategic brain and a genuine curiosity for other cultures and creeds. He sees the command of Zhab'Shak as his one, last chance to shine and for this reason attempts to be as welcoming as he possibly can to other species, and encourages his crew to be the same. Those that do not or are not, are physically punished.

6th level Drazzi Officer (Fleet)**Hit Points:** 18**Initiative:** +4 (+2 Dex, +2 racial)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex)**Attacks:** +7/+2 close combat, +8/+3 ranged**Special Qualities:** Scales (DR 1), Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13**Notable Skills:** Acrobatics +6, Athletics +8, Computer Use +12, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (Zhab'Shak) +4, Knowledge (Drazi Freehold) +6, Knowledge (tactics) +8, Operations Sensors +6, Operations (Systems) +6, Pilot +8.**Feats:** Brawler, Evasive Action, Fluency (Drazi, Human), Iron Will, Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Veteran Spacehand, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).**Standard Equipment:** Hand-held communicator, PPG pistol, Padded armour.**Bazalka Dagartaz**

Dagartaz is in charge of the civilian areas of the ship, a duty stemming from the fact that he is a 'defeated' Or'Fa. Dagartaz knows his place and whilst is prepared to stand-up to Fazak physically, is accepting of his role as captain of the civilian operations. It is his duty to ensure cargo and passenger transports run to time and do not interfere with military operations and to act as 'greeter' to any VIPs passing through Zhab'Shak en-route elsewhere. He does not especially like the job but as a dutiful Drazzi, accepts that, before he can gain status, he must show deference and dedication to duty.

Dagartaz does have a distinct disadvantage in being the chief point of liaison for non-Drazi civilians. A combat wound to his throat has severely restricted his speech. This is not a problem for the Drazzi tongue, which uses a precise economy of words anyway but when communicating in English he is reduced to barking monosyllabic words which he needs to carefully consider before using them. Communicating with Dagartaz is therefore a slow and sometimes, confusing business. He can take an age to respond to a simple question and answers with a single word. Laughing at this impediment incurs his wrath but those exhibit patience and sympathy gain his trust and loyalty.

5th level Drazzi Soldier**Hit Points:** 22**Initiative:** +3 (+1 Dex, +2 racial)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 15 (+4 class, +1 Dex)**Attacks:** +8/+3 close combat, +6/+1 ranged**Special Qualities:** Scales (DR 2), Co-ordinate Unit +1.**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +1**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12**Notable Skills:** Athletics +8, Computer Use +5, Drive +9, Intimidate +9, Intrigue +5, Investigate +7, Knowledge (Zhab'Shak) +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +7, Operations (Driving) +7, Stealth +7.**Feats:** Brawler, Dense Scales, Fluency (Drazi, Human), Great Fortitude, Martial Arts, Surface Vehicle Proficiency, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).**Standard Equipment:** PPG Rifle, padded armour.**Oratphar Zakirrk**

Zakirrk is the commander in charge of all cargo loading/unloading and transfer procedures. An exceedingly sullen Drazzi, he resents being stationed on Zhab'Shak since he is, usually, a Green section officer used to commanding fighter squadrons. Like Fazak he takes his frustrations out on cargo and baggage, especially civilian payloads and on several occasions cargo containers have gone hurtling into vacuum to be used as particle blaster target practice by an angered Zakirrk. His behaviour causes untold problems for Dagartaz and it is not uncommon to see the two of them squaring-off either in the corridor or a Dispute Pod, screaming insults at each other before they trade blows. Zakirrk dislikes and distrusts non-Drazi after several bad experiences on the Drazzi colony world of Mofaka VI which he refuses to discuss.

Despite his attitude Zakirrk is a capable officer and a very good fighter pilot. Like many on Zhab'Shak, he is frustrated and restrained, which is always dangerous for the general Drazzi condition.

5th level Drazzi Soldier**Hit Points:** 23**Initiative:** +4 (+2 Dex, +2 racial)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 15 (+4 class, +2 Dex)**Attacks:** +8/+3 close combat, +8/+3 ranged**Special Qualities:** Scales (DR 1), Co-ordinate Unit +1.**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 10**Notable Skills:** Acrobatics +6, Athletics +6, Computer Use +3, Drive +6, Intimidate +5, Intrigue +5, Knowledge (Zhab'Shak) +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Operations (Driving) +5, Stealth +6.**Feats:** Brawler, Fluency (Drazi, Human), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Surface Vehicle Proficiency, Weapon

Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).
Standard Equipment: PPG rifle, padded armour.

Melaska

Melaska operates the sole Drazi concession to hospitality, Zhab'Bar, the large drinking and eating establishment located near to the Transit Lounge. As Zhab'Bar is frequented by station personnel as well as non-Drazi travellers, Melaska attempts to keep the two apart to avoid fights. She does not mind combat within each group but combat between station personnel and visitors always has unpleasant after-effects (mostly for non-Drazi) and incurs Fazak's wrath.

Melaska is a good, unofficial ambassador for Zhab'Shak. She is able to restrain her natural Drazi tendencies and is quite willing to explain the rules and quirks of the station. She offers a crash-course in Drazi etiquette and in particular, Zhab'Shak etiquette, which is subtly different from general social norms. She is also able to translate for Dagartaz and is frequently required to, as she has an excellent grasp of English and is a skilled linguist by Drazi standards.

So, with customers of Zhab'Bar, she is as patient and friendly as one can expect a Drazi to be but with the staff of Zhab'Bar, she can be as intolerant and petulant as Fazak

with those in his command. Melaska is a perfectionist and wants to project a good image always. If fights erupt whilst non-Drazi are in the bar, bar staff get blamed for not being attentive enough. Zhab'Bar customers can, on a good night, get to see both sides of Melaska; the accommodating and the truly terrifying.

5th level Drazi Worker (blue collar)

Hit Points: 12

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +4 close combat, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Scales (DR 1), Worker Type: blue collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14

Notable Skills: Computer Use +5, Concentration +7, Intrigue +4, Knowledge (Zhab'Sha) +9, Knowledge (Centauri Republic) +3, Knowledge (Drazi Freehold) +5, Knowledge (Earth Alliance) +3, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +3, Notice +5, Profession (blue collar) +8, Technical (Mechanical) +8.

Feats: Brawler, Fluency (Centauri, Drazi, Human, Narn), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).

Standard Equipment: Concealed knife.



EARTH ALLIANCE

Earth's spaceports fall into two categories; military and civilian/commercial. The former come firmly under the aegis of EarthForce, whilst the latter are under the jurisdiction of Earth Alliance in the shape of the Earth Alliance Interstellar Transport Directorate (EAITD). Up until the Earth/Minbari war there was a clear demarcation between the two types of spaceport but during the war EarthForce took operational control of all military and civilian spaceports enabling single, centralised control of all spaceport installations, which was an essential step in the war effort. As a result, all Earth spaceports display a heavy degree of militarization which, even so long after the war, has not been fully relaxed although the civilian and commercial installations have returned to EAITD. In the event of any further confrontation EarthForce can and would, resume full control, quickly being able to return all spaceport installations to a war footing.

EAITD is a vast organisation and its installations are scattered across human space. Given this huge, disparate nature, EAITD runs each spaceport to a tried and tested operational model and franchises certain facilities, such as recreation and accommodation, to local companies, whilst retaining control of the key functions such as operations, security and customs.

EAITD spaceports are either land-based or orbital but irrespective of type they operate in very similar ways with almost identical operational facilities and procedures. The example in this chapter is for the Wisconsin Spaceport but its operational model is replicated throughout the EAITD network.

EAITD NORTH AMERICAN PRIMARY ASTROSERVICES HUB, WISCONSIN

The EAITD Astroservices Hub (Wisconsin), to give it its full title, is the largest civilian and commercial spaceport in the northern United States. It is connected by a MAGLEV rapid transit network to the terrestrial airport facilities and functions and is, to all intents and purposes, a small city in own right. Occupying 20 square kilometres it operates shuttle services to orbit-docked spacecraft and as a launch and landing site for those capable of entering Earth's atmosphere.

The spaceport has three terminals
– two for passenger services and

one dedicated to commercial and cargo services. Each terminal has four take-off and landing zones, with each zone having three launch and landing pads. Terminal One supports direct landing and take-off spacecraft; small vessels capable of interplanetary and Jump Gate travel but which are also capable of atmospheric operation. Terminal Two supports shuttle services to the orbital docking platforms for the larger ships which cannot enter the atmosphere. Terminal three is the commercial and cargo area and mixes both shuttle and direct services. Passenger and commercial/cargo are effectively autonomous operations although all the flight and landing procedures are regulated from the Operational Control Services building.

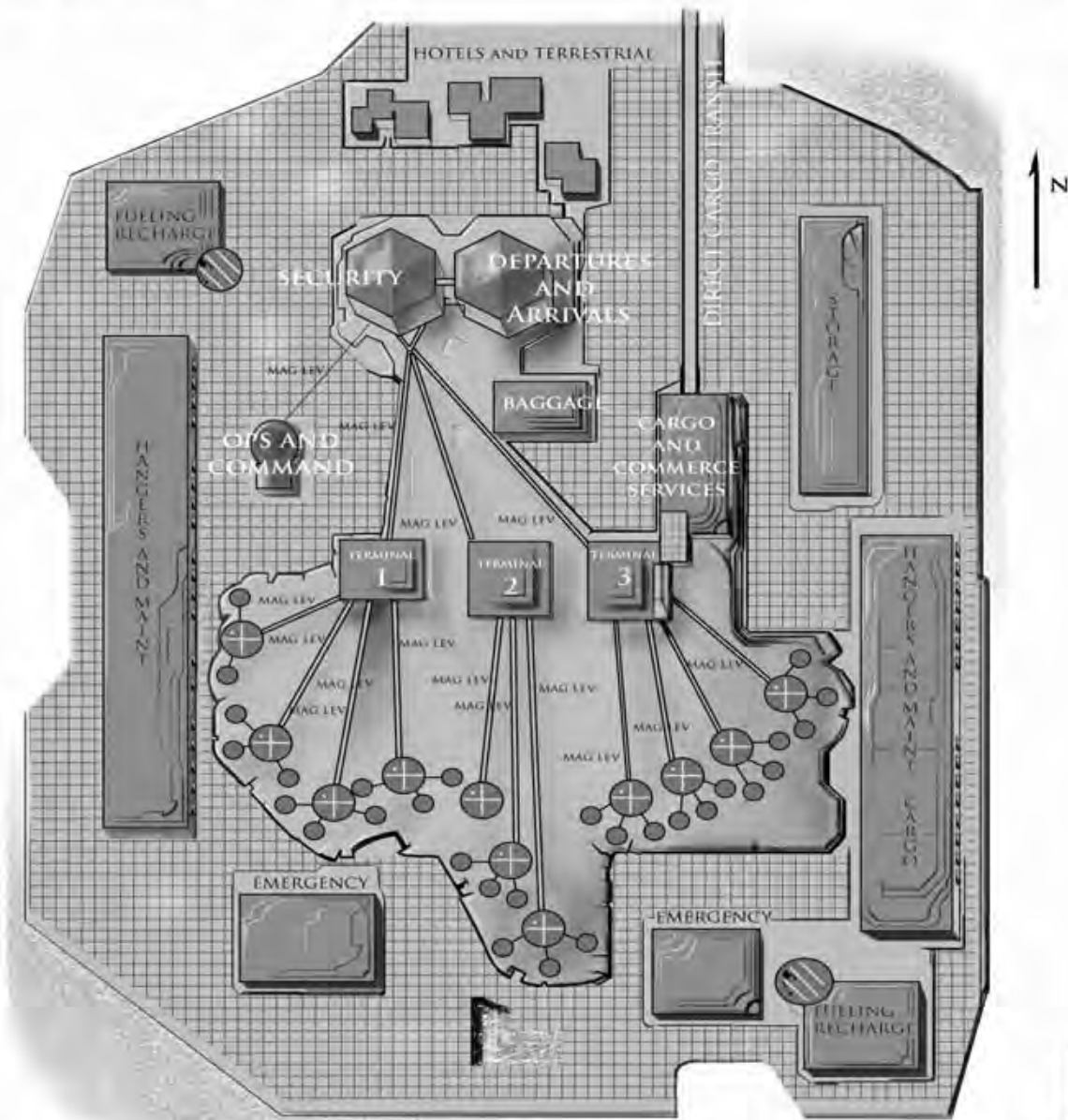
The spaceport is located on the south western shore of Lake Superior, north of Washburn and east of Port Wing. The immense, twin geodesic domes of the main halls dominate the skyline for kilometres around, flanked by the huge, cantilevered hangar and maintenance buildings to either side. MAGLEV transits from Duluth, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Chicago provide the main terrestrial arteries and within twenty kilometres of the spaceport perimeter the urban sprawl of Brule-Benoit Cityscape has grown to provide a necessary buffer between the spaceport hub and the Wisconsin interior. Brule-Benoit offers a mixture of the high class, middling-fare and low-rent in terms of accommodation, shopping and housing. Many of its residents work at the spaceport in blue collar facilities, whilst the transitory population is of the business and travelling class, en-route to off-world.

The Wisconsin Hub or just 'The Hub' as it is known in Brule-Benoit, is one of the oldest non-military, commercial spaceports in operation. Sanctioned in the early 21st Century, it was designed along traditional airport lines but over the next one hundred years was refashioned as space faring technology developed, commercial space flight became cheaper to sustain and cargo requirements were developed. In 2112 it was redesigned by Milton Gage-Reynolds, the famed architect behind several domed habitats, including New London (England) and New Carthage (Tunisia) in the early 2090s. He was responsible for the construction of the twin domes and the redesign of the space-side facilities and maintenance yards. The Hub retained its old airport-style infrastructure and feel but the passenger facilities were now in keeping with the dome habitat approach so familiar and comfortable for many. When the Centauri Fine Art Appreciation Committee awarded The Hub its 'Aesthetic Trade Installation' award in 2170, it was a cause for massive celebration, and a bronze statue of Milton Gage-Reynolds, ten metres high, was erected in a specially commissioned garden between the two domes.

The Hub is a state of the art spaceport. Its twin domes are architectural masterpieces in terms of design, function and style.

EARTH STARPORT

WISCONSIN



ARRIVAL AND TRANSIT

The arteries of the spaceport are the MAGLEV rapid transit rail systems (MRT), which ferry passengers and cargo from the main Arrivals/Departures and Security complexes to the three terminals and then to the service pads. The MRT is fast and fully automated. Inbound and outbound tracks ensure a circular service constantly shuttling backwards and forwards between the service pads at 125km per hour. Each MRT pod carries up to 100 passengers in reasonable, silent comfort during the short trip from the Security complex to the Terminal and then from the Terminal to the service pad. Baggage services use a similar MRT system but this is located underground and managed via the Baggage Processing Complex serving Terminals One and Two. Cargo and commercial uses its own, heavy-duty and freight MRT managed from the Cargo and Commercial Service complex.

The MAGLEV system is controlled by a local AI that constantly monitors all parts of the transit network. In the event of failure in any part of the system, transit halts and dedicated repair systems are invoked. The engineering requirements are such that maintenance requirements are extremely low and can be carried out by drones acting under an extension of the AI or local, in-situ repair centres that can replicate nanocircuitry in a matter of minutes to bring the system back into service. The MAGLEV system has never broken down in its entire history and whilst small failures and short-circuits are rare, when they have occurred, the repair procedures are so effective that passengers are completely unaware of the issue.

Within the main domes and terminals passenger transit is via small, personal MAGLEV couches that circulate throughout the different parts of the facilities, shifting floors through a precisely controlled paternoster conveyor system. The transit couches are voice-activated; one only needs to speak a destination, even using colloquialisms or slang and the couch whisks away to the destination with barely a pause. Again, a local AI maintains the traffic system ensuring a seamless travel experience for those who do not wish to walk. For those who do, elevated walkways run throughout the buildings and the main thoroughfares are wide, self-cleaning boulevards, ensuring a pleasant strolling experience.

GENERAL HUB PROCEDURES

All luggage, with the exception of small, hand-luggage, is collected from the passenger's home by the appropriate carrying company (usually chartered by the travel broker) in advance of using the spaceport; nothing larger than a simple attaché case or haversack can be taken into the main building. No one can enter The Hub without EAITD biometric clearance (see

Security, below), which is gained either before purchasing passage or is given to all vetted Hub personnel. The Arrivals/Departures (A/D) dome is the first port of call, where initial biometrics are scanned and access granted. Check-in and luggage clearance is fully automated by the biometric read-out. Passengers are scanned and cleared for boarding as soon as they enter the airport. Holographic displays throughout the A/D dome show the latest travel itinerary news and updates, with live streaming to personal communication devices and wrist-coms so that no passenger will be late for a flight.

Hub Security Alert Levels

Alpha – low risk designation. Standard monitoring procedures apply.

Beta – medium risk designation. Movements monitored remotely but no shadowing presence required unless unauthorised transgressions occur.

Delta – High risk designation. Movements monitored remotely and Hub Ghost shadowing invoked.

Epsilon – Major risk designation. Immediate apprehension and detention

Assuming passengers have time before their flight, they may enjoy A/D's sumptuous facilities. Otherwise, MAGLEV couch transit takes them through to the Security and Customs (S/C) dome in preparation for boarding. Once cleared through S/C, passengers are directed to the appropriate terminal for their flight and taken there by MAGLEV transit.

At the terminal, assuming there is time, further facilities, including special Club lounges for VIPs and business passengers are available. Otherwise, passengers are directed to the appropriate Gate for transit to the launch pad for their flight.

The EAITD biometrics every passenger needs to carry ensure that the Security Centre is aware of the location and movements of everyone within The Hub. The entire system is awash with nano-sensors and cameras tracking, logging and feeding back the movements of the two hundred and fifty million passengers and staff who make use of the installation each year.

SECURITY

Standard EAITD security screening is based on a personal biometric passport. All users

Voice of a Ghost

'Some days I have to look in every mirror I pass just to remind myself of what I look like. My face, my hair, my clothes; everything about me is so nondescript that I just blend right in, sometimes to the point where I forget I'm a Ghost and almost attempt to board the ship in the fake itinerary, which Hub Security's provided me with. I can guarantee that, if you scan a crowd, knowing there's a Ghost in its midst, you'll look right through me. I look like your next door neighbour, your co-worker, your boss, the cleaner. You could pass me a thousand times a day and still not know my function. On quiet days, I forget it myself. I drift into a coffee shop and while away a morning with a latte doing the sudoku and just forget I'm working. Next I'll drift up to the shopping plaza and try on a new jacket and maybe buy it using EAITD money, completely, blissfully, unaware of myself. It gets that deep.

Then the alert sounds and the microbead I have, implanted behind my ear gives me Target and bearing and I snap into the zone. I focus one thousand percent on the Epsilon Code ahead of me, sliding through the crowd, keeping perfect pace, watching everything he does, everyone he talks to. When he stops I stop and I got a thousand routines for looking non-descript again. It comes naturally to me, flipping into and out of that zone. You'd never know and my target certainly never does. Then he's moving again and so am I, scanning the plaza for the nearest quiet spot so that when control says to take him down, he goes down without anyone knowing. I just move in real close, grip the arm in the way they taught me, so that if he tries to move, he gets a dislocated shoulder and I steer him to one side and get ready for the slamdunk.

So every day I have to look in the mirror to remind myself who I am.'

of EAITD facilities, regardless of race, must provide a DNA sample that is coded to the security mainframe. All travellers, when purchasing any form of commercial transit ticket, are allocated a unique identifier that is coded to their personal communication device or wrist-com. The identifier is a complex coding sequence, based on EarthForce ciphers, that contains full personal records (cross-referenced and screened against Earth Alliance's own identity matrix system), travel itinerary, boarding clearance and a range of additional information including travel history, any criminal records and so forth.

Entering any of The Hub's buildings initiates a security scan against these biometrics, either permitting or denying, access to various facilities or areas of the spaceport. Personal movements, as already described, are tracked constantly and detailed files maintained. Those who have a criminal record, Psi Corps record or other sensitive file are flagged accordingly on The Hub security system and monitored accordingly. Any breach or attempted breach of an area unauthorised by the biometric passport immediately alerts Hub Security, bringing a swift response – the level of which depends on the nature of the transgression and the alert level of the individual

The entire installation is permeated by micro-cameras, sensor arrays and audio capture equipment, all of which

can be keyed to a biometric passport ID to ensure complete, remote surveillance. However, where a human presence is required, the spaceport maintains its cadre of 'Ghosts'.

Ghosts

Ghosts masquerade as passengers, mingling with the morass of people throughout the complex, watching for any signs of suspicious activity or actively engaged in the personal surveillance of a particular target. All Ghosts are security personnel who have been trained extensively in covert surveillance techniques, espionage and counter-terrorism measures. It is impossible to tell who is, or isn't a Ghost. They blend so seamlessly into the fabric of The Hub that they can, on occasion, forget their own role. To counter this, the Security centre sometimes assigns a false target to be followed and monitored but not apprehended. This could be another Ghost or even a completely innocent passenger (who should, if the Ghost is going his job properly, be oblivious to the attention). Usually though, false targets are those with an Alpha risk designation.

Ghosts are discreetly armed and trained in offensive, defensive and restraint martial arts. If called upon to apprehend and detain a target – Delta or Epsilon risk



designations, for example – they are trained to act swiftly and in a way that arouses as little commotion as possible. Two or three Ghosts are usually assigned to such activities, co-ordinating their movements to isolate the target (in a washroom, say or in a quiet part of the installation), before subduing and detaining.

Supporting the Ghosts are the visible Hub Security services who patrol the facility constantly, usually in pairs, maintaining general vigilance in the face of so many passengers coming and going. The uniform of Hub Security is a black and green jumpsuit, with a standard EarthForce padded armour over jacket and black and green helmet bearing the EAITD crest. Security patrols are always made aware of Ghost presence in the areas they patrol and are kept informed of any covert surveillance operations and given specific orders concerning whether or not they may be needed to assist – or keep a discreet distance.

OPERATIONS

The Operations and Command centre is located in a third, smaller dome, to the west of the Security Dome. From here, all launches and landings are co-ordinated, along with most administrative functions for the main domes. The Ops dome fulfils local air traffic control functions and orbital rendezvous procedures for the transit shuttles taking passengers to waiting

orbital spacecraft. Every one of its twelve levels is a hive of activity, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The main control centre, located in the very middle of the dome, is tended by over 100 personnel involved in co-ordinating launch and landings for every craft using The Hub. Main control is divided into sub-sections for each terminal, with a dedicated air/space traffic control team conducting the tricky business of manoeuvring hundreds of craft out of, and into, the facility's landing and take-off areas. Above the control desks of each section is a holographic representation of The Hub with all spacecraft positions plotted three dimensionally, in both the Hub's airspace and in orbit above the Earth. A constant exchange of information takes place between the Ops controllers and the spacecraft crews as incoming and outgoing ships are cleared for their manoeuvre.

The rest of the dome is given over to the complex administrative requirements for The Hub. It includes offices, meeting rooms, training areas, simulators and recreational areas. The upper level is reserved for staff accommodation; standard single occupancy suites used by staff who are working residential shifts of three or four days at a time. The accommodation level is another constant hive of activity, with its own recreation facilities including a gym, sports complex, medical facilities, cinema and shops.

The Ops dome has, naturally enough, the tightest security in the entire facility. Access is granted only via biometric passport codes and each employee has to submit to a facial recognition scan before being able to enter the building. Ghosts do not operate here but have full authority to, if the need should arise.

CARGO AND COMMERCE

Terminal Three handles all cargo and trade flights into and out of The Hub. The Cargo and Commerce Services hangar attached to terminal three provides full manifest reporting and checking facilities, with several teams of docking crews responsible for monitoring the cargo coming through the facility and getting it loaded and unloaded. Docking crews have the authority to open and check all cargo, irrespective of owner and destination. Most checks are performed with the latest scanning and detection apparatus but physical checks are conducted randomly or if suspicions are aroused. Hub Security maintains a visible presence here although all manifest checking is handled by the Docking teams.

The terminal does not provide anything other than very short term storage for inbound and outbound cargo; there is simply too much of it, so the facility is a constant through-flow of a bewildering array of goods and equipment. Where cargo storage is necessary, a short-term storage facility is offered to the east of the main services building but all cargo stored is subject to rigorous security checks

before being stored and as it emerges from storage. There have been a few cases of stowaways bribing their way into the Storage depot and so vital signs scans are conducted on each item as it enters and leaves. Stowaways who are caught are taken to the Security centre for detention and questioning before being placed under arrest and handed over to EarthForce.

Arrivals/Departures Dome

The A/D Dome is the main facilities centre of the spaceport. It has 12 levels accommodating just about every facility necessary to passenger comfort.

Each level is arranged in a concentric ring around a central, open area that stretches up to the plexiglass dome itself, flooding the whole dome with natural light. Access to each level is via personal transit couch or one of the 30 elevators located around the inner column of the dome.

Level One (Ground): Transit Information

Holographic and two dimensional screens present constant news regarding arrivals and departure, security and safety information, spaceport procedures and so forth. Commercial flight providers have their own presence here, with enquiry points and lounges open to those with the right security clearance. It is common for commercial



operators to have a chaperone facility where an experienced member of staff escorts the passenger through The Hub, acting as a combination of guide, personal shopper and font of all knowledge.

For those unable to afford such a luxury, information on Hub facilities is available from a multitude of kiosks and the huge array of information screens located about the massive atrium. This is always an extremely busy level, thronged with people. Coffee and snack bars are located near to the two MAGLEV points, ideal for meeting and greeting.

Levels Two and Three: Shopping

A plethora of shops and boutiques, enticingly lit in such a way to improve the mood for parting with credits, the curving concourse is a sea of designer logos and up-market, desirable brands. Tucked away between the big names are the lesser-known and budget stores selling reasonable facsimiles of the more salubrious goods from their higher-ranking, bigger-budget cousins. Shops from across the galaxy are represented, including *Hubris*, the Centauri-based fashion chain operated by House Emaliar which has successfully forged several new lines mingling traditional Centauri fashions with those of 21st Century Earth in a somewhat questionable amalgamation that is nevertheless popular amongst those who want to afford it.

Personal shoppers employed by the flight operators ease their way through the throng, customers following closely, smiling gaily as they direct their charge to the latest fashions and designs. Although it is technically illegal under the fair custom laws, many personal shoppers enjoy handsome commissions from the some of the stores and they ensure that their customers are given the appropriate guided tour. On the upper level, the shopping concourse becomes less frenetic as it gives way to galleries for fine art from across the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. *Kaamrii* is the most opulent of these galleries; specialising in water art from Abba its works have the dual qualities of being both exquisitely pleasing to the eye and capable of being drunk.

For those with more modest budgets the various Brakiri 'facsimile' boutiques offer discount replicas of everything from *Hubris* fashions and *Kaamrii* liquid sculptures, through to serviceable replicas of Earth technology and the occasional Minbari crystal meditation enhancers. Prices in the discount shops are typically freely open to barter, something considered uncouth and unfair by the more prestigious names but perfectly legal nonetheless. One or two of the discount stores have criminal contacts and will, for a fee, arrange rendezvous and under-the-counter services such as smuggling or fencing of stolen goods.

Security is, naturally, aware of this and Ghosts circulate in the area but quite often a blind eye is turned to the activities. A little low-level

crime can often help lead to the cracking of bigger ones and as long as the less reputable traders do not go too far in their shady dealings, Security is prepared to tolerate their presence. Amongst the Lurkers of The Hub, this is known as 'The Level Two Contract'.

Levels Four and Five: Restaurants

The smell from these two levels is intoxicating. The mix is not unlike the shopping levels below; the up-market and the budget but there is food and refreshment to cater for every taste, human and offworld. Small, open cafes entice with coffees from across the galaxy, whilst single-stove street vendors turn out all manner of fast food, including local specialties from Narn and Drazi. Of particular note is the Drazi *shlesh'na* stand which always has long queues. *Shlesh'na* is a spiced Drazi dumpling served in a herb broth that is, at once, filling, nutritious and exciting to the palate. For some reason its smell and taste is particularly enticing to humans (Drazi consider it somewhat bland), reminiscent of black truffle but a fraction of the price.

More expensive restaurants line the fifth level. These are places to be seen in, rather than to eat at, although the menus are never less than stunning. The old and famous Ramsay chain now fallen from its heady days of global domination and mostly confined to spaceport concourses, is still a popular venue for 'Old Cuisine', although the wealthier and more image-conscious drift towards the Earth and Centauri restaurants such as *Chrysanthemum* (Japanese/Centauri fusion sashimi) and *Ghol-atch* (Centauri grilled meats and vegetables), both of which challenge each other in terms of changing aesthetics and ever-more ambitious menus, despite their styles of cuisine being worlds apart.

Level Six: Medicentre

The medicentre is a fully-functional xeno-medicine hospital and general health and wellbeing clinic. Drop-in services for dentistry and plastic surgery are available, as well as pre-flight check-ups, prescription drug preparation and remedies for Jump Gate sickness, which is ever popular with first-time or infrequent travellers who are susceptible to the nausea accompanying Jump Gate lurch.

The hospital itself has three hundred beds and facilities capable of handling just about all the races of the Non-Aligned Worlds and a medical crew with the skills to match. It has full operating facilities and aqua-therapy chambers for Abbai patients. Naturally enough, it is not a long-stay facility but with so many people passing through The Hub each day, illness and emergency treatments are common, and the medicentre is capable of stabilising a condition so that the passenger can either continue their journey after treatment or be transferred to a medical facility elsewhere in North America.

Level Seven: Observation Deck

The observation deck offers a stunning panorama of the entire facility and out across Lake Superior to the north and Brule-Benoit to the south. Arrivals and departures can be watched freely and image enhancers are available to those wanting a closer view. Full-wall monitors provide real-time streams of orbital transfers and two entire walls are devoted to the outer-system Jump Gates, accompanied by soft, soothing music and a calm explanation of the sensations of Jump Gate transit. Relaxation couches are positioned around the concourse with yet more refreshment stalls and smaller cafes. The observation deck has a curious clientele; non-travellers who come here to watch and note, the serial numbers and insignia of inbound and outbound ships which they record in electronic ledgers and constantly cross-reference against catalogues of transit timetables, records of destinations and likely distances travelled. These spacecraft spotters are known as Shufflers, after their curious, pack-like habit of shuffling around the concourse whenever a new ship is spotted.

Levels Eight and Nine: Hotels

The Hotel and Accommodation levels house both upmarket hotels and bargain-basement personal habitation capsules, rentable for a few credits a night. The Hyatt, Plaza and Hilton chains dominate the traditional hotel space, whilst eezbyed and Slumberland cater for the budget market. Conditions are never less than comfortable, whilst in-room (or cubicle) facilities differ with brand and price. The larger names offer every level of accommodation, adaptable to species-tastes, from standard traveller rooms through to full, presidential suites.

Level Ten: Staff Accommodation Suites

EAITD staff, who typically work week-long shifts, can make use of the accommodation cubicles (of which there are sixteen hundred) on this level, at no cost. Entry to the level is biometrically controlled and within it is a self-contained world with its own restaurant and shopping facilities (EAITD branded and franchised). The accommodation is functional but relatively comfortable, if cramped. Nicknamed the Battery, after the barbaric battery-farming processes of the 20th and 21st Centuries, it is, for many, a home from home and even has a hundred or so almost permanent residents. Part of this level is home to HubWatch, the installation's television channel which broadcasts round the clock news and information concerning Hub life and operations.

Levels Eleven and Twelve: Gardens, Aquarium and Arboretum

The uppermost levels of the dome are given over to the gardens, a stunning, two-tiered paradise with specially regulated micro-climates to support the bewildering array of plant life from earth and beyond. The gardens

are relaxing, peaceful and The Hub's green lung in a largely artificial world. Special habitats support vegetation specimens from Minbar, Centauri, Narn and Brakos, each with its own arboretum and in the case of Minbar, chapels of meditation and spiritual renewal.

Sub Levels: Equipment

Beneath the thrum the of the public levels of the A/D dome is the immense equipment basement, which runs between this and the Security and Customs dome. This maze of service tunnels, equipment rooms and maintenance ducts is high-security since it controls almost every aspect of life above: air circulation and conditioning, environment replicators, communications and power plants. It is a hidden hive of activity, with service and engineering personnel maintaining the Hub's vital pulse. In this underground environment it is easy to become disorientated and lost. The various equipment sections are identified by icons and acronyms; signposts are almost non-existent, meaning that only trained staff are able to navigate their way safely around this closeted world.

Security and Customs Dome

The S/C Dome is home to the Hub's security services but also to the main security and customs clearing areas processing every passenger coming through the installation. Pre-board and offload scans take place via the banks of security desks arranged for each terminal, watched over by the hard-faced customs and security operatives of the EAITD Security Section. Security scanning is necessarily thorough; biometrics, plus full-body x-ray as each passenger must pass through a scanning portal as they enter the S/C dome's main atrium from the transit hall connecting it with the A/D dome.



PPG Security Stunners

Based on the model 10 PPG, the stunner uses very similar technology to the Narn stun gun described on page 138 of the *Babylon 5 Second Edition* rules. Consider its attributes as identical to this weapon.

Psi Corps maintains a low-key presence in the dome. Registered telepaths are employed by EAITD Security for surface thought scanning but Psi Corps, knowing full well that The Hub can be used as a conduit for rogue telepaths, have a discrete office in the S/C dome and are constantly on the watch for rogues. Those that are sensed or spotted



through earlier security measures, are assigned a Gamma risk level and monitored by a Ghost who shadows them all the way through to the S/C dome and up to the point of their departure. Psi Corps kept informed by the Security control section located in this dome. Once it has been established beyond doubt that the target is a rogue telepath seeking exit from Earth, they are apprehended and taken to the Psi Corps facility on the fourth level of S/C – a so-called Fourth Level Protocol.

The S/C dome follows a similar design to A/D; cascading shafts of natural light through a central shaft, and a never-ending river of species heading out to flights. The dome has fewer levels than A/D; six in total, with the following functions.

Level 1 (Ground) - Departures

The departures hall conducts security screening for all planetary departures, as described earlier. The vast atrium is filled with holographic security notices, reminders of procedure and streamed news channels. The conviviality of the A/D dome is replaced with the formal, displaced air of a security facility. Officials rarely smile, are focused on their job and do not, ever, suffer fools, petulance, arrogance or anything less than one hundred percent co-operation. Even in the huge

atrium, queues for the security screening desks are long and delays frequent. The security scanning system is fast and efficient but the due diligence of the staff means a slow-down is inevitable. Queue minders wander up and down the lines, asking discrete questions, making occasional spot-checks on those with an Alpha or Beta risk designation and generally making sure every passenger has full documentation with them.

Level 2 – Arrivals

Arrivals to Earth are separated from departures with customs and security procedures taking place on the second level, which has its own MAGLEV links to the terminals and A/D dome. The security process mirrors that of departures, with travel documentation and biometrics being scanned and verified before each arrival is permitted to pass through the customs channel and be considered, finally, to have properly reached Earth. The Security staff, including Ghosts and Psi Corps, are on the alert for known high-risk passengers through their own, off-world contact infrastructure and undesirables are intercepted promptly, efficiently and firmly. Resistance brings force, with PPG stunners being used to subdue the unruly.

Level 3 – Security Suite

Everyone apprehended by Security (save rogue telepaths, which are treated using the Fourth

Level protocol) is brought to this level. It is home to search units, which have the authority to conduct an invasive body-search if necessary, interrogation rooms, holding rooms, cells and its own laboratory, for testing unknown substances from off-world. Being taken to Level Three is a sobering experience. The décor is spartan and functional; the lighting subdued and the whole floor eerily quiet, save the footfalls, near and distant, in the seemingly endless maze of corridors leading into the different wings of the Security section. Questions are not asked until the detainee has been processed; effectively a formality as Security inevitably has all it needs from ongoing security checks and is in an interrogation cell for questioning. Psi Corps has a squad of operatives on Level 3 to assist with interrogation procedures, although they have no jurisdiction unless the detainee is an Earth-born, rogue telepath, in which case they are taken immediately to Level Four.

Level 4 – Psicorp

The Psi Corps facility follows the traditional pattern of almost every Psi Corps installation across the planet. Functional, with a constant litany of reassuring messages stencilled across the walls concerning telepath unity and parenthood. There sixty Psi Corps agents here, most of them dedicated to tracking and apprehending renegades aiming for a new life elsewhere. The level has its own interrogation and Psi testing facilities, staff accommodation and a private MAGLEV link to Terminal Three where its privately-owned spacecraft are stationed.

Those apprehended under the Fourth Level Protocol are invariably whisked away from The Hub and to one of Psi Corps' main facilities (the closest being Chicago). Long term detention at The Hub is never an option.

Level 5 – Control Centre

The control centre for all security operations. The entire complex is under constant surveillance with perpetual communication with the standard security personnel and Ghosts. The main control hall is filled with wall screens, holograph screens, tracking displays and real-time links to security services around the Sol system, beyond it and with spaceports across the League of Non-Aligned Worlds. Every aspect of the spaceport, its residents and its passengers is monitored, day and night. Security operations are handled by teams of staff who control a particular area of a particular level or part of an installation. Each team is led by a sergeant who in turn reports to a lieutenant responsible for several areas. Update summary briefings are held every eight hours at shift changeover by the group lieutenants and the Head of Security provides a full Hub briefing twice a day – 0900 and 2100 hours.

Level 6 – Accommodation

Level Six is exclusively for security accommodation and built to the same standards as the staff accommodation in the A/D dome. Security personnel have access to a full

range of facilities, including a gym, three restaurants (Earth and Centauri cuisine) and a target range. The Ghosts have separate accommodation to the standard security personnel, preferring not to mix with the rank and file. This generates some awkward situations between the two groups of security operatives; Ghosts are viewed as distant and aloof, whilst they regard uniformed security personnel as faceless EAITD bureaucrats. All are suspicious, to some degree, of Psi Corps and its methods, which are at distinct odds with standard security procedures and methods.

Level 7 – Observation deck and Gardens.

Even security personnel enjoy greenery. The gardens on this fully open deck are relaxing and peaceful with several impressive water features and a Zen Buddhist rock garden as the focal point. Security staff and especially Ghosts, are recommended to spend at least thirty minutes of their personal relaxation time enjoying the garden and unwinding from the relentless bombardment of information about passengers, security risks and flight regulations.

Operations and Command

A smaller replica of the two main domes, the O/C dome provides operational control over all flight-bound aspects of The Hub. It houses space traffic control, launch and landing control, emergency systems invocation and when necessary, spaceport lockdown.

Although a great deal of the launch and landing procedures are automated, O/C is supervised constantly, with manual intervention taking place for the countless exceptions that can occur in the take-off and landing procedure. Launch and landing slots are carefully controlled but even minor variations in a schedule or spacecraft system glitch can lead to problems for the automation. For this reason the O/C control team is specially trained in identifying and acting on, minor, manual technical adjustments to ensure a smooth flow of inbound and outbound traffic.

For obvious reasons the security for O/C is water-tight. Biometric checks change hourly, searching for new identifiers such as DNA, speech patterns, sweat patterns and surface thought activity. A small team of telepaths are employed to scan all personnel, for signs of intrusion but also signs of stress and distraction that might compromise an operator's ability to do his job.

The O/C dome is raised on a 60 metre pedestal to afford it a perfect view of the terminals and service pads. Each terminal has its own team of O/C operators who know the procedures unique to that terminal intimately and instinctively know how to react in any given situation, be it routine or emergency. Thus far, The Hub has never suffered a major disaster in its history.

Core Functions for O/C include

- ⑤ Space traffic control: Hub and Orbitals
- ⑤ Landing and take-off slots
- ⑤ Refuelling procedures
- ⑤ Emergency service co-ordination
- ⑤ Flight Path co-ordination
- ⑤ Central communications for the entire facility

Terminals

The three terminals handle separate forms of traffic. They operate to similar designs and embarkation/disembarkation protocols are essentially similar but the spacecraft they service are different classes.

Each terminal is connected to either three or four service pads and each service pad has three landing/launch platforms. The pads are connected to the terminal by MAGLEV, which provide rapid passenger transit to and from docked spacecraft. Each launch/landing platform can be lowered below ground level in the case of emergency or for crucial maintenance reasons.

Terminal One

Spacecraft with atmospheric and landing capabilities are docked at Terminal One. These range from small in-system transits shuttling between the various Sol colonies, through to interstellar craft of modest size.

Terminal Two

This terminal services ground to orbit shuttle services transporting passengers from the port up to the grand Space Liners that berth at the orbital terminals above the atmosphere. Light shuttles are therefore a common sight at Terminal Two with a constant flow of vehicles entering and departing the spaceport.

Terminal Three

The cargo terminal, servicing both atmospheric-capable craft and cargo shuttles bringing in freight from orbital vessels. The extensive cargo facilities of The Hub mean loading and unloading is rapid once all security has been completed. Short-term storage facilities are available for those who pre-book, otherwise a designated pick-up for cargo is required; vessels wanting to land without

being able to prove onward transit arrangements are denied entry to The Hub.

The dock crew at The Hub is heavily unionised and typically militant. Despite The Hub having some of the most up to date cargo handling facilities and systems available, complaints regarding pay and conditions are frequent although it has been over a decade since the last industrial action.

High Life and Low Life

The Hub's facilities are many, ranging from news stands through to the finest hotels. Sketched below are some of the highlights to be found.

Majestyk's Bar and Grill (A/D Dome, Restaurant Level)

Run by the Majestyk family for over fifty years, the Bar and Grill offers good, simply prepared food at ridiculously inflated prices as do most of the food outlets in The Hub. Pictures of the Majestyk family down the years line the walls and the current manager Gil Majestyk tends front of house whilst his twin sons Dominic and Dashford manage the bar. It specialises in beers from around the Sol system and beyond, boasting a range of ninety different types and strengths, 'We Can Refresh Ya!' is the tagline and it is the Bar and Grill's sheer variety and the constant stream of curious customers, that allow it to get away with the exorbitant prices it charges. The food consists of grilled meats and vegetables served in a variety of Earth styles although the Mars-born chef, Montalban, has introduced several Martian specialities over the years. The atmosphere is friendly and convivial and the clientele eclectic. The Bar and Grill is popular with both Narn and Centauri visitors and consequently the Majestyk's maintain a healthy stock of food and beers to suit their palates.

Gil Majestyk's contacts at Terminal Three mean that he is able to receive and move certain contraband stocks, either for personal profit or on behalf of others. It takes years to earn Gil's trust and thus make use of his services and contacts but if the price is right and discretion assured, Gil can either get it or handle it. If he is crossed, his contacts in the Brule-Benoit and Chicago crime syndicates make sure retribution is swift, painful and conveying the right messages. The Majestyk family has long, long links to the organised crime syndicates of the Lake Superior/Michigan axis and is protected from on-high by dark, criminal forces. Security suspects this, of course and Ghosts constantly watch the Bar and Grill but Gil Majestyk and his family are clever and carefully cover their trail. The operation is slick and proof, if it could be obtained, largely untraceable to the Majestyk family.



Oratorio, Restaurant (A/D Dome, Restaurant Level)

This opera-themed restaurant is extremely popular with Narn visitors. One half of the floor space is given over to a stage with holographic set design and morning, noon and night diners can enjoy a meal and a drink whilst watching a succession of popular Earth and offworld operas performed by a professional company. The popularity of this gimmick with the Narn has not been lost on the proprietors and there is an increasing number of Narn operas and operettas being staged. As most Narn operas are used as thinly veiled attacks on Centauri oppression, Centauri visitors either walk out in disgust or boycott the place entirely. A year ago, a staging of the infamous Narn epic *V'khlor! V'khlor af'ankchnut!* ('*Get Out You Bastards*') during an important Centauri trade delegation tour of The Hub, resulted in a riot involving both Narn and Centauri and a subsequent increase in Oratorio's revenue by 106%. The same opera is planned for a repeat performance later this year.

Ramsay's (A/D Dome, Restaurant Level)

Considered somewhat passé but still popular, is the global Ramsay food chain, specialising in fine cuisine at affordable prices. The menu is typically 21st Century specialties: over-presented fast food with ostentatious titles served with a scowl and an expletive. Centauri and Brakiri delight in

this collision of style and attitude, enjoying the howls and curses emanating from the kitchen area. A holograph of the long-dead proprietor, demonstrating the preparation of the restaurant's signature dishes, plays across the numerous tri-dee displays but there is no masking the pretension of the place. For fast food, the quality is good and prices reasonable but there is no question over the unambitious (yet remarkably quaint) approach to presentation.

Loaders (A/D Dome, Fifth Level)

A drinkers' bar, popular with off-duty Terminal Three workers, this small, intimate bar is unrefined yet unrepentant of its blue-collar approach. Gossip and information relating to cargo in all stages of transit can be picked-up here if one knows the right people to speak with, although care and discretion need to be maintained. The clientele is fearful of Ghost presence and rightly so. That does not prevent the union representatives from gathering here for discussions, usually in one of the private cubicles reserved for the union's brothers and sisters.

eezyBed (A/D Dome, Level Nine)

A self-service hotel, the cubicle rooms are rentable using a credit chip either by the hour, day or week. Each cubicle has a fold-down bed, table, washbasin, shower and communication facilities. Very popular with

budget travellers it is affordable, no-frills comfort. The communication system has a direct link into the Geisha Bank, allowing guests to select intimate company according to their means and preferences. Naturally enough eezyBed (or Sleazybed, as most know it) has a seedy reputation but it provides a vital service considering the ridiculous prices charged by the likes of the Hyatt and other brand hotels.

The Geisha Bank (A/D Dome, Level Eight)

The Geisha Bank describes itself as a 'personal shopping and facilitation service for the busy commercial traveller'. For an appropriate hourly fee, one of the Bank's attractive, skilled Personal Assistants will act as a personal shopper, a guide around the Hub, a messenger or as is most common but curiously never advertised, a prostitute. The Bank has over 300 Personal Assistants of a variety of races (human, Centauri, Brakiri) on its books, all with impeccable security credentials, providing services to all classes of traveller (as long as they can pay). The business is entirely legal as long as it is conducted with discretion and the Geisha Bank's owners, Jubal Masakara and Diana Wade, are never less than discrete. Naturally enough they learn a great deal about what is happening within The Hub and elsewhere and have the good sense to offer their intelligence for sale in the right quarters, including Security and Hub Operations.

PEOPLE OF THE HUB

Commander William S Wilson, Hub Chief of Operations

A distinguished veteran of the Earth/Minbari war, Commander William S Wilson is in charge of all flight operations in and out of the hub. During military service he was in charge of several logistics operations both on Earth and outside the Sol system and excelled in taking charge of large, complex supply infrastructures. At the end of the war, he chose to retire from EarthForce and moved into commercial spacing operations for such companies as Glau-Danube, Virinon Eskalonar (the Centauri commercial transport conglomerate) and finally EAITD. His grasp of logistics and infrastructures made him a natural choice for the role of Hub CO when the role came up eight years ago. He has made the position his own, introducing many new procedures that have made the spaceports operations slicker, safer and helped achieve an increase in capacity without reliance on an inflated budget.

Wilson is a stickler for efficiency and never accepts less than one hundred percent. He also refuses to believe that any problem is insurmountable: 'Always a way, my man.

Always a way.' is his catchphrase. His presence in O/C is ubiquitous. He insists on personal updates every two hours and from time to time takes on direct control duties simply to keep his hand in. Not

one to suffer fools at all, let alone gladly, he likes to be surrounded by those who can challenge him intellectually and is always looking for those who can grasp both the Big Picture and the fine detail. Despite his demanding nature he is a respected Chief, even if he is difficult to like on occasions.

10th Level Human Officer (Fleet)

Hit Points: 26

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 18 (+7 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +12/+7 melee, +11/+6 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call, Way of Command.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +10

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Athletics +8, Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Computer Use +12, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +11, Intrigue +6, Investigate +10, Knowledge (Minbari Federation) +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +8, Knowledge (The Hub) +6, Notice +6, Operations (Piloting), Operations (Systems) +6, Pilot +8, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Elite Commander, Fluency (Human), Iron Will, Nerves of Steel, Spacecraft Dodge, Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Veteran Pilot, Veteran Spacehand, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Standard Equipment: EarthForce wrist link, PPG pistol.

Lieutenant Commander Aleisha Keynes, Hub Chief of Security

The stern-faced, iron-willed Aleisha Keynes has spent her life in spaceport security operations, rising through the ranks and a variety of Sol system installations to finally achieve the exalted position of Security Chief of The Hub. As a dyed-in-the-wool EAITD employee, she has a strict view of the organisation's rules and processes and a reputation for never veering from them. She was part of the EAITD team that developed the Ghost concept and she is especially proud of her Ghost team at The Hub, sometimes to the point where her traditional security staff have felt neglected – something that causes divisions between the two units.

Her no-nonsense approach is a front. She is a clever woman and an arch manipulator. Using a string of contacts throughout the installation, none of whom know each other (or her), she has manipulated the transit and sale of contraband for almost six years, skimming a cut and making herself very wealthy in the process with her funds being distributed across a dozen off-world banks and credit exchanges. To cover her tracks and partly for amusement, she has briefed her security staff and Ghosts on the need to find the mysterious 'Van Keiser', a fictitious Chicago crime lord who is supposed to control the areas she, in reality, is involved with. The real Chicago

underworld, seeing their own influence diminished in The Hub, equally want to find this Van Keiser too – and deal with him.

4th Level Human Soldier, 4th Level Officer (Ground Force)

Hit Points: 27

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+4 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +11/+6 melee, +9/+4 ranged

Special Qualities: Combat Training, Coordinate Unit +1, To the Limit, Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +7

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 11

Skills: Acrobatics +6, Athletics +8, Computer Use +10, Diplomacy +8, Drive +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Tactics) +10, Knowledge (The Hub) +6, Notice +6, Operations (Gunnery) +8, Operations (Systems) +6, Sense Motive +8.

Feats: Armour Familiarity, Contact, Endurance, Fluency (Human), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: EarthForce wrist link, PPG pistol.

Lieutenant Commander Macauley 'Macvee' Visconti, Chief of Facilities

Macvee Visconti is the cheerful, up-beat, flippant chief of buildings and facilities in The Hub. His main areas of concern are the buildings and he has charge of all matters to do with their smooth running, including communications and information technology, engineering and so forth. If something goes wrong in a building, his job is to ensure it get fixed immediately. Macvee is nearing retirement and has never achieved the position he's coveted – that of Hub Commander-in-Chief. Inside, he is a bitter man who considers himself a failure, despite his pristine record and obvious talents as Facilities Chief. He enjoys good relations with the various unions operating at The Hub and is a behind the scenes peacemaker for some of the troubled dealings Commander Wilson has had with the labour co-ordinators. His innate good nature is clearly valued within The Hub and he is a popular man with the common touch; he regularly drinks at Loaders, for example but he harbours a deep grudge against EAITD and Commander Wilson in particular, whom, he believes (wrongly) to have taken a job that should have been his.



6th Level Human Officer (Ground Forces)**Hit Points:** 17**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex)**Attacks:** +6/+1 melee, +8/+3 ranged**Special Qualities:** Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 13**Notable Skills:** Appraise +10, Computer Use +10, Diplomacy +8, Investigate +8, Knowledge (Tactics) +10, Knowledge (Hug) +8, Notice +6, Operations (Systems) +6, Sense Motive +10.**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Fluency (Human, Minbari), Independently Wealthy, Skill Focus (Knowledge: Tactics), Surface Vehicle Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).**Standard Equipment:** EarthForce wrist link, PPG pistol.**Pieter Durant, Head of Psi Corps Operations**

The genial Durant is in charge of all Psi Corps operatives at work in The Hub. An extremely talented telepath he is also cunning and manipulative. His position isolates him from the other Hub officers but he considers this a strength rather than a detriment. He respects Commander Wilson, considering him an exceedingly competent facility head but is suspicious of Keynes and somewhat frustrated that Wilson does not entertain his suspicions. For the most part Durant dedicates himself to his job, being somewhat smug in having cracked a rogue telepath network operating through The Hub and hoping for a more prestigious posting to somewhere better suited to his talents.

6th Level Human Telepath**Hit Points:** 16**Initiative:** +5 (Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)**Attacks:** +3 melee, +4 ranged**Special Qualities:** Danger Sense, Maintain Concentration.**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +9**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 17**Notable Skills:** Bluff +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Intrigue +6, Investigate +10, Knowledge (Hug) +6, Knowledge (Telepathy) +10, Notice +8, Sense Motive +10, Telepathy +12.**Feats:** Ability Focus (Scanning), Ability Focus (Blocking), Alertness, Fluency (Human), Gestalt, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Telepath (P7), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).**Standard Equipment:** Psi Corps insignia, gloves.**Lonshar Emaliar, Manager, *Hubris***

The Centauri manager of the *Hubris* fashion store in the A/

D dome, Lonshar delights in schemes and intrigues and simply cannot resist dabbling in the internal goings on of The Hub. Through various devious means he has worked his way onto the Traders Committee which represents all traders operating within the installation and meets regularly with Macvee Visconti to air grievances and exchange news. In typical Centauri style he has managed to make himself both deeply indispensable and intensely irritating. He somehow picks up the gossip Macvee misses and comes into information Aleisha Keynes wants; either for real security purposes or to assist with her illegal plans. His petitions for meetings are frequent and he leaves the daily operations of *Hubris* to his nephew and protégé Iluvar, who has the real eye for fashion. Lonshar knows everyone who is anyone in The Hub and plays-up his contacts at every opportunity. His vanity is extraordinary and he takes twice as long over his hair crest than is necessary. He likes it to be known that he is a man in the know; a power behind the throne. But as a result he has enemies amongst many of the traders in the A/D dome and Aleisha Keynes own network of contacts (including the Ghosts) are watching him carefully. Lonshar is too arrogant to take this kind of threat seriously but it is very, very real.

5th Level Centauri Trader**Hit Points:** 15**Initiative:** +0 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**DV:** 13 (+3 class)**Attacks:** +2 melee, +3 ranged**Special Qualities:** Born to Intrigue (Diplomacy, Intrigue), Investment, Master Trader +1, Traders Knowledge.**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +8**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 13**Notable Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +6, Intrigue +8, Notice +4, Profession (blue collar) +10, Sense Motive +10, Subterfuge +8.**Feats:** Alien Empathy, Contact, Devoted Friend, Iron Will, Fluency (Centauri, Human), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistols).**Standard Equipment:** EarthForce wrist link, PPG pistol.**Randall Guyler, Proprietor, Loaders**

For many years Randall Guyler worked Terminal Three, in charge of logistics. A loading accident forced early retirement and he used his compensation money to buy Loaders, which he turned into the blue-collar bar of choice in The Hub. He consequently has strong union sympathies but tries to remain aloof from the politics, despite his keen interest in the fate of his old Terminal Three co-workers. Randall is on very good terms with Macvee Visconti and shares his bitterness at Commander Wilson intransigence. Randall is an excellent conduit of information and like many, he is concerned about the amount of smuggling that seems to be slipping past security, co-ordinated by the shadowy Van Keiser. He and Macvee suspect that Gil Majestyk has some part in all of this but have no evidence to prove it.

4th Level Human Worker (blue collar), 2nd Level Trader

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +0 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12 (+2 class)

Attacks: +5 melee, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Investment, Traders Knowledge, Vocation Bonus, Worker Type (blue collar),

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Bluff +4, Computer Use +6, Drive +8, Knowledge (The Hub) +8, Linguistics +6, Notice +6, Operations (systems) +4, Pilot +6, Profession (blue collar) +10.

Feats: Brawler, Fluency (Centauri, Human), Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge: The Hub), Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistol).

Gil Majestyk, Proprietor, Majestyk's Bar and Grill

Gil Majestyk is taciturn and hardworking. Despite his underworld connections he is an honourable man and not a person to rush into decisions. He longs to become a legitimate businessman, shedding his criminal links but knows this is unlikely to happen. Gil is under intense pressure by the Chicago crime heads to uncover Van Keiser and he knows he is suspected of being Van Keiser

himself. Despite his ambitions to go straight, Gil is not a man to be crossed and he is more than capable of ruthless action when the need demands it. With general security in The Hub being so tight he understands the constraints and has no wish to attract the attention of the Ghosts. He thus keeps his operations low-key, subtle, and tries not to antagonise the members of the Traders Committee, despite his deep loathing of Lonshar Emaliar.

6th Level Human Trader

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +5 melee, +5 ranged

Special Qualities: Investment, Master Trader +2, Traders Knowledge.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +10

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17

Notable Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Computer Use +6, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (Hug) +6, Notice +6, Profession (blue collar) +12, Sense Motive +12.

Feats: Alien Empathy, Contact, Data Access, Devoted Friend, Iron Will, Fluency (Human), Resist Scan, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistol).



MINBARI

Minbari spaceports are crafted to suit the specific needs of the ships being served. On Minbar itself, the spaceports – ancient by human standards – are carved from the crystalline outcrops just as with any other building, whilst elsewhere the installations are designed to blend into the local landscape whilst still retaining the distinctive Minbari style.

In space, spaceports are freed from the demands of a local aesthetic and it is here that Minbari technology displays itself. Humans gasp when they first cast eyes on the strange, angular, dorsal Sharlin warcruisers which, to them seem ugly and ungainly. Yet the orbital spaceports the Minbari perfected at around the time of Valen dwarf even the Sharlin achievement.

Oldest, first and foremost of the Minbari orbitals, at the centre of the Minbar system itself, is Thorolost.

Designed and shaped by artists and philosophers, Thorolost is the gateway to the Minbari homeworld. Located equidistant between the Minbar system's two Jump Gates, Thorolost resembles, to human eyes, nothing less than an immense sea horse in space; a graceful, curving architecture of ribs and protrusions, coloured with deep and pale blue, encircled by remote lighting drones that surround the spacestation in constant beams of brilliant white light, almost as anointing it with bracelets and necklaces of diamonds.

In the years after the Earth-Minbari war, the Minbari have gone to great pains to accommodate other races in the spirit of co-operation forged with Earth and epitomised by the Babylon project. In many systems and in many ways they have revised their dealings with the other species of the galaxy but Thorolost remains one symbol of Minbari progress that has not, cannot and will not be so mutated. Thorolost is more than a space station; it is a symbol of how Minbar reached for the stars and attained them. It is a testament to Minbari co-operation between castes, to their technological expertise and their sense of spirituality within the universe. Thorolost was built to serve Minbari alone and it continues to do so. Other species may arrive here and many do but the expectation is that they will accept Thorolost on its own terms and not expect to find a microcosm of their own facilities.

THOROLOST

The spaceport is named for its architect who, inspired by the constellations designed a spaceport that reflected their beauty and complexity. Thorolost was a Worker but had a brilliant mind and an acute sense of harmony with the cosmos. He took his designs to

philosophers and other learned members of Minbari society and discussed his proposals. Together they fashioned the shape and function of the first spaceport and brought it into reality. It is unique; no other spaceport shares its design, though many have been inspired by it and it is considered to be part of every spacefaring Minbari's rite of passage that they travel through Thorolost at least once in their lifetime.

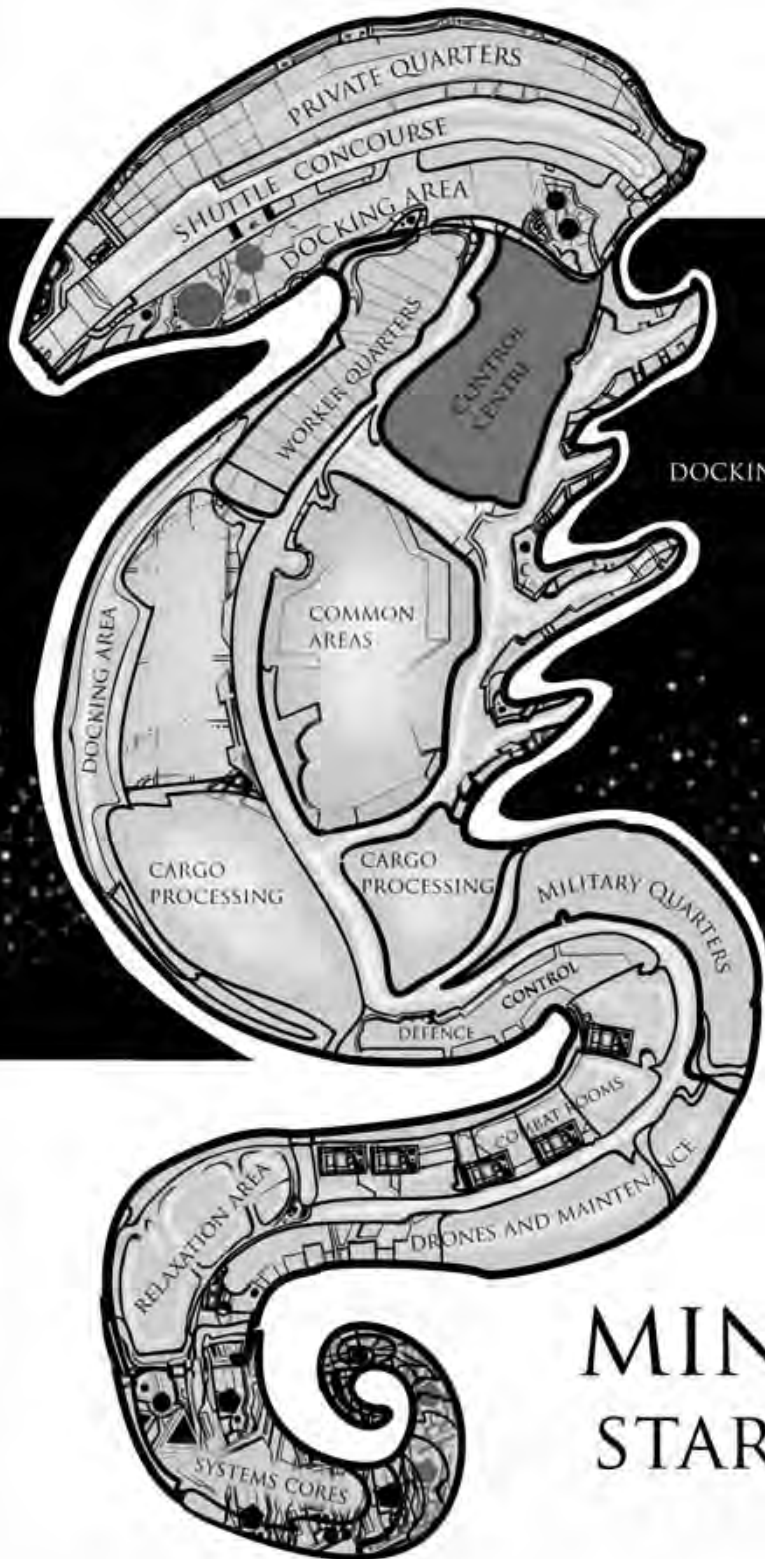
The swirling, seahorse-like design (though Minbar houses no such animal) is said to reflect the shape of a nebula Thorolost discovered whilst scanning the stars. He found it so beautiful and so representative of everything he was seeking to achieve in his spaceport design that he needed no other reference. The spaceport reflects all the traditional Minbari aesthetic elements but also has an unworldly, cosmological presence marking it as something special. It is three kilometres in length with a swollen, belly-like central section housing the main systems and command functions. The spines opposite the belly side are docking gantries designed to handle the ships of the Warrior caste and capable of berthing the largest warships the Minbari produce.

Internally Thorolost is divided into caste areas and that is how the spaceport will be described below. Each caste area has its own procedures although the overall control and co-ordination of Thorolost comes down to the Worker caste who maintain the facility.

GENERAL USAGE PROCEDURE

Thorolost acts as the transfer point for shuttles bound to and from Minbar and the Jump-capable starships of the Minbari fleet. Large ships are docked alongside the spaceport whilst shuttles and small cargo vessels are docked inside the facility. Flights from Minbar are always expected and arrival preparations made by drones and members of the Worker caste, leaving the operations crew to monitor Gate activity from either of the Jump Gates. If defensive measures are needed, such as activating Thorolost's defence grid, that duty is handed to the Warrior caste defence team, which occupies the 'tail' section of the facility.

All vessels clearing the Jump Gate must beam full identification status, intent and a full passenger and cargo manifest. Failure to comply results in Thorolost's defence grid being placed on ready and Minbari interceptors being launched from one of the nearby military spacestations. Given the superiority of Minbari weapons technology, the chances of an unauthorised or hostile ship getting past Thorolost are remote and the Warrior caste is quick and eager to respond to any potential threat.



MINBAR STARPORT

The Minbari Passenger Voice

I shall never forget my first view of Thorolost. I watched it on the shuttle monitors, appearing first as a bright blue speck against a curtain of darkness, a brilliance in the stars. It grew larger as we closed distance and it began to take form. At first it was impossible to tell how it was taking form, because it was wreathed in shadows and then rings of light but eventually I realised that it was unfolding itself or seemed to be, as we approached it. The sight – its majesty – as we got nearer, caused me to shiver. The shuttle slowed as the shape of Thorolost filled the monitor view and then we went up and over it, the cameras training down so we could see every ripple of its surface, every indentation and curve. Then, as we passed over one side, we plummeted beneath and I could see a line of Sharlin docked against the huge spines, like the young of the *nadal* fish, waiting to be released to freedom for the first time. We passed beneath, the transfer pods shifting around us like dust motes. Then we rose, back into the arc-glare of the orbiting spotlights and approached the vast, wide, thin entry hangar where countless other shuttles were nestled, side-by-side.

It was only when we came to rest and were told we could disembark that I realised I had been crying.

Once onboard, Minbari are free to disembark and proceed to their destination. There are no security checks or customs protocols to be completed. Minbari society did away with such inconveniences, which suggest distrust of one another and so are against the teachings of Valen, long ago. However, non-Minbari must remain on their ship until the Command Centre has had an opportunity to run identity scans against lists of known undesirables and run a cursory scan, at the very least, on any luggage or goods they might be carrying. Anyone arousing suspicion is subject to a full search and interrogation by the Warrior caste before being either allowed to continue on their way or detained for further action, which depends purely on the level of undesirability of the individual.

Passengers boarding one of the externally docked liners or military cruisers are ferried to the vessel by the automated transit pods found all along the lower section of Thorolost's belly. These pods are keyed to a specific ship's identity beam and make their way at a stately pace around the spaceport and dock smoothly with the destination ship. For many, there is never any need to set foot in the main halls of Thorolost at all, transferring from a shuttle to a pod to a parent craft easily and seamlessly. However, as Minbari like to be relaxed and have time to prepare for the voyage ahead, it is common to arrive at Thorolost early, appreciating its beauty as they approach and then take their time relaxing before moving onto their main ship for the main leg of the journey.

RELIGIOUS CASTE QUARTER

Occupying the 'head' section of Thorolost, the Religious caste have their own quarters and communal areas spread across ten decks of their crescent-shaped part of the spaceport. Whilst they are free to wander the Great Avenue, which winds through the centre of Thorolost like a single, great artery, most do not and remain within their own section where they have everything they require whilst using the facility.

The Religious caste has its own docking channel which runs the entire length of the head section. Tractor beams take control of all craft capable of being safely docked inside the section and manoeuvre the craft to one of 300 docking ports lining either side of the docking channel. The process is fully automated with perfect traffic co-ordination intelligence ensuring there is not the slightest chance of collision even at the busiest of times.

Encircling the docking channel is the main area of the Religious Caste quarter. Replicating the quiet, tranquil, crystal-lined passageways of traditional Minbari Religious Caste buildings, the quarter is laid out in an intuitive pattern of halls, walkways, gardens, meditation areas and private sleeping quarters. New arrivals will have had their personal quarters preassigned and it is an easy matter to

navigate the seemingly complex array of halls, because they follow patterns almost identical to those found on Minbar.

Discreet visual display units, set into the crystal walls, keep visitors silently informed of transit and flight status, information displayed subtly and unobtrusively. Refreshment needs are catered for by the retained Worker caste staff – the *Chulat* – who have been trained in detailed Religious Caste etiquette and can anticipate requirements either through personal experience or through watching body language. Rank within the caste determines whether or not a Religious caste member has a personal assistant allocated to them, however they may well reject the offer; many do but even if this does not happen, these trained Workers maintain a ubiquitous but low-key presence at strategic points throughout the quarter, ready to attend to specific requirements as and when needed.

The Chulat have their own quarters within the Religious quarters and access to kitchens and other necessary facilities for meal preparation for their charges. Anything not available within the Religious caste quarter can be summoned from the Common area in the Workers' Quarter.

The Concourse

The concourse looks out onto the shuttle docking area, allowing observers to watch craft arriving and departing,

being handled by the ever-shifting network of tractor beams that manoeuvre the craft into their correct positions seamlessly and silently. The co-ordination of ships in this way has been likened to a dance and it is fascinating to watch the constant exchange of vessels, their settling and then their departure again, all taking place in the silent vacuum, lit by the soft but encompassing glow of Thorolost's drone arclights that float in and around the spaceport, shedding light wherever it is needed.

The Crystal Garden

A popular area in this quarter is the Crystal Garden. This large, oval hall, was seeded with small crystals when Thorolost was first built. It has become a tradition now for each member of the Religious Caste to bring a piece of crystal with them from a place they find sacred and add it to the collection here in the garden. The garden now contains millions of individual crystals, of all shapes, sizes, colours and hues, forming a maze of grottoes, pathways and open areas to which have been added soothing water features and at the far end of the oval, a transparent section of hull gazing out onto the field of stars.

This is a place of great reverence, with Religious caste Minbari quietly and thoughtfully searching for the best place to add the crystal they have brought with them or simply wandering through the crystal labyrinth, absorbing the almost tangible mysticism of the place. Non-Religious members tend to find the garden disturbing and even the



The Chulat Worker's Voice

'They call us the *Chulat*, those of us tutored in the ways of the Religious caste and there to look after them. This is good work. A calling, I feel. Valen had a faithful attendant called Chulat and that is where our name comes from. I worked aboard Thorolost for two years before I was allowed to take the Chulat initiation and I had to study for six months before that, learning all the forms of Religious Caste etiquette and showing I could anticipate questions and requests before they are vocalised.

We understand that the Religious caste need peace and tranquillity and cannot, not even for a moment, allow their thoughts to be interrupted by worry or confusion. That is why the Chulat exist; to remove the need for anxiety and ensure they have whatever they need without wondering how to find it. Thorolost is a huge place and I was anxious when I first came to work here, because things were difficult to find. But I had the luxury of time to learn and most passengers do not have the same luxury. And so we are the Chulat. And we find out what the Religious Ones require and we make sure it is available. Most requests are straightforward but some are more difficult. Once, I found myself having to take a transfer pod all the way out to a Sharlin to collect a single flower petal that had been left behind! Imagine that – me, being escorted into a war ship to retrieve the softest, most beautiful petal I have ever seen. And the lady I was serving was gracious too. When I brought that petal to her she smiled and touched my cheek. I remember her name, even now. *Deleenn*.'

Chulat do not like to spend too much time in here but for the Religious, this is a place of deep, abiding and intense spirituality and could almost be thought of as Thorolost's soul.

Hall of the Grey Council

Although the Grey Council spends the bulk of its time aboard the Valen'tha, it docks with Thorolost on a regular basis to take on supplies and allow the crew a 'shore' break. It is the custom for the Religious members of the Council to reside in the Religious quarter and here, also is where the Grey Council maintains a meeting hall for those occasions where it must assemble to discuss matters and do not wish to do so on Valen'tha.

The hall is never locked and people are free to visit it as they wish. It is a plain, dimly lit place that is smaller within than its external appearance suggests. Nine seats surround a low table and behind each seat is a holographic projector linked to a control unit in the chair's arm. Above the circle of chairs is a larger holo-projector capable of displaying high-resolution images of star systems, maps and real-time feed visuals. The communication system has direct links to the Command and Control Centre and the Warrior Caste's Defence Centre, allowing the Grey Council to see precisely what the spaceport can see, at any given time.

Recreation Wing

The Recreation wing is a place for the Religious caste members to exercise mind, body and soul. It contains sports courts, meditation salons, private baths, saunas and massage services. It is continually staffed by Chulat who have all been trained in the best use of the available facilities and on delivery of the specific services such as Minbari Therapeutic Massage (Duchat Technique).

WARRIORS' CASTE QUARTER

Despite Thorolost being a largely civilian outpost, the Warrior Caste has always maintained a claim to at least some of the spaceport's operations. The defence grid (and defence in general) falls naturally to their control and it is common to find the Warriors using Thorolost as a transfer and supply point.

As with the Religious Caste, the Warriors have their own quarter; in this case the long, curving, 'tail' section of Thorolost. Military shuttles and transports use the main docking bay but all Warrior accommodation, systems and facilities are segregated from the rest of the port. Warrior Caste staff are retained to monitor defences and these specialists remain on

detachment to Thorolost as part of their general, rotating, tours of duty across the Minbari defensive line.

The Warrior quarter is fashioned to replicate other military bases: clean, unfussy lines with logically structured areas and wide walkways. The permanent Warrior garrison numbers two hundred Minbari, all eager to contribute to Thorolost's defences and all eager to prove to the Workers and Religious Castes that Thorolost is still of military significance.

Accommodation Wing

Built on three levels, the accommodation wing is Spartan, in the Minbari warrior tradition. There are only basic comforts and the rooms are single-bed cells arranged in a hive-like lattice with the larger, officer cells located at the bottom of the tiers. Each cell contains a bed, display unit and basic hygiene facilities. Officers' cells are larger, with room to entertain (in somewhat cramped conditions)

Minbari Fighter Pod

AI controlled to respond in a realistic combat manner, Fighters can be programmed to function at a variety of character levels, from Level 3 through to Level 10. The abilities below illustrate a Level 3 Fighter.

HP 20; Init +5; Spd 30 ft. (20 ft.); DV 18; Atk: +6 close combat or +5 ranged

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12,

Notable Skills: Weapon Focus (Minbari fighting knife), Weapon

Proficiency (close combat, pistol), Weapon

Specialisation (Minbari fighting knife)

Standard Equipment: Equivalent to Minbari battle armour (DR 5, -10 ft, -1 ACP), Minbari fighting knife (+6, 1d4+4 dam, x3 crit, 1-h), Minbari holdout laser (+4, 3d6 dam, 18-20 crit, 30 ft., special ammo, AP 3), Neural Stunner (+3, damage: save vs Fort at DR 15 or be rendered unconscious for 6-CON modifier hours, 5 shots)



and larger displays including video feeds from Thorolost's external cameras.

Defence Control

The Defence Control centre is an open, crystal-lined area with several huge holographic projections showing the two Jump Gates, the outlying military space stations, orbital platforms for Minbar and various other strategic displays as the Warrior Caste requires. All traffic emerging from the Jump Gates is monitored from here, using feeds and sensors identical to those used by the Workers' Control Centre. All vessels entering the Minbar system are subject to identification checks from both the Warriors and the Workers. On most occasions the Workers co-ordinate all the routine requirements for communication and docking with Thorolost but wherever there is a military concern, the Warrior Caste assumes control from this control centre, being able to completely replicate the functionality of the main control centre.

If the defence grid needs to be brought online, then it happens here and is a Warrior decision with no reference to the Workers. Any perceived threat to either the Jump Gates, outlying stations and platforms or Thorolost itself automatically invokes martial law on the spacestation, with Thorolost immediately converting from a civilian hub to a working military defence outpost.

This structure of command is fully accepted as normal practice by the Minbari. Despite the fact that the Workers are far more intimate with Thorolost than the Warriors, they know that martial expertise is an essential component of the spaceport's operations and relinquish control without a second thought. It happens rarely; few are foolish enough to threaten the Minbari in any way, let alone within their own system and it has been a long, long time since the defence grid needed to be activated in genuine response to a threat. To remain ready and practiced, drills and simulations occur on a regular basis, sometimes treating completely unarmed and non-threatening Jump Gate traffic as deadly enemies. The crews of the ships caught-up in these war games are oblivious to it, of course and never have any idea that particle and missile weaponry is being trained on their trajectory.

Defence Grid Weapons

Fore Arc Weapons

Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)

Port Arc Weapons

Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)

Starboard Arc Weapons

Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)

Aft Arc Weapons

Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Neutron Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 50, Beam 1d8)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)
 Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 20)

Fighter Hangar

The Warrior Caste maintains a squadron of fifty Combat Flyers (see *Babylon 5: Ships of the Galaxy*, page 40) on standby for both Thorolost defence and escort duties to the Jump Gates. The Combat Flyers are configured for quick launch and can be scrambled within ten minutes of the call to arms being sounded. The hangar deck provides full maintenance and upkeep facilities and is staffed by a combination of Warrior officers and Worker maintenance technicians who arguably know more about the craft they service than the pilots.

Combat Flyer

Small Spacecraft

Defence Value: 28 (+2 size, +6 Handling, +10 equipment);

Armour: 12; Handling: +6; Sensors: +12; Stealth: 24 (34);

Stress: 8; Features: Atmospheric Capable, Gravitic Engine, Minbari Flight Computer, Minbari Jammer Suite, Targeting Computer (+3)

Crew: Minbari Warrior Caste Line (+5 BAB, +9 Training); 1 Pilot, 3 Passengers

Structural Spaces: 8 (Cargo 3, Control 1, Crew 1, Engine 2, Weapons 1)

Fore Arc Weapons

Light Fusion Cannon (Close, Offence 10, 1 weapon space)

Escort duties are common, usually as an honour guard for

the Valen'tha and the liners of other Minbari (and visiting) dignitaries and so the hangar area is always a busy place for Workers.

Combat Rooms

The Warrior quarter has several combat rooms, which are simulation areas for close and ranged combat practice and training. Each area is equipped with a variety of combat simulators, mechanical and holographic, for Warriors to use to hone their combat skills. The holographic simulators are programmable for a wide variety of combat situations, using a local AI to respond to Warriors' actions in a realistic way but using neural stunners instead of lethal weaponry. Simulations include ground attacks and defences, space combat simulators, with a fully working series of Combat Flyer cockpits and Thorolost-specific scenario simulations with replications of the spaceport's layout beamed into the three dimensional combat space.

The mechanical units are simply called Fighters and are used for close combat and melee practice. A Fighter resembles a Minbari-sized, egg-like pod that twists, turns and manoeuvres in a realistic fashion but is capable of deploying multiple weapon strikes simultaneously to test even the toughest fighter's reflexes.

Injuries do occur in the Combat rooms but full medical facilities are available in the Relaxation suite, and there has never been a fatality. Warriors consider it a rite of passage to go up against a Fighter or enter a simulator and emerge with a scar to boast about.

Relaxation Suite

Similar in nature to the relaxation suites found in the Religious quarter, the suites here are, again, staffed by skilled Workers. In addition to services such as massage, the Warriors' Relaxation Suite offers a medical bay, teamed by Minbari Worker paramedics, for purposes of tending Combat Room wounds and scrapes. In the event of an emergency, the entire Relaxation Suite can be converted to a fully functional medical wing capable of handling hundreds of casualties, although such a thing has never occurred in living memory.

Also in the relaxation suite are meditation cells – crystalline cells where members of the Warrior Caste may come to meditate and clear their minds before entering the frame of presence needed for optimal fighting ability. It is common for Warriors to spend some time in meditation before a simulation, drill or session in one of the combat rooms. A small team of Workers keep the cells ordered and prepared with Minbari incenses designed to heighten concentration and clear the mind of distractions. When a Warrior arrives, it is customary to notify the duty Workers of the kind of meditation he intends to pursue so

that a cell can be prepared in the right way with the right types of incense.

WORKERS' QUARTER

Whilst known as the Workers' quarter, this is the main hub of Thorolost accommodating both Workers passing through the spaceport, those who are employed here and alien visitors in transit to Minbar. VIPs and ambassadors are generally accommodated in the Religious quarter and assigned a Chulat for the duration of their stay but most are allowed only to wander the common areas of this quarter. Attempting to enter either the Religious or Warrior quarters without due permission is considered a deeply impolite transgression and all visitors are reminded, as they arrive, that certain areas of Thorolost are reserved according to Minbari caste traditions.

The most important section of this quarter, running like a vein through the entire installation, is the broad, crystalline 'Grand Avenue'. The avenue threads its way down through the Warriors' quarter as well but its central stretch is within the Workers' quarter and this is where the vast majority of non-Minbari will make use of it. The Grand Avenue is a work more of poetry than passage. Designed to replicate the same, broad boulevards of Minbar, huge crystalline monoliths lean-in towards each other forming a huge, wide, angular passageway, with recessed fountains and other rippling water features, and gently scrolling

information displays inset into specially configured crystals. There is a sense of ordiliness and calm about this busy conduit - a refreshing contrast with the central concourses of other spaceports. There are no traders or hawkers; no hue and cry of announcements, just a calm sense of purpose and function set into a stunning array of crystalline beauty that runs for almost the entire length of Thorolost.

There are places for refreshment, relaxation and contemplation. Minbari workers operate crystal booths serving complimentary drinks and traditional Minbari snacks, including the delicious (to all palates) balls of meat and pasta, lightly spiced with Minbari specialties such as lakshal (akin to saffron) and delicate herbs. The Minbari philosophy is one of hospitality to all comers, hence such fine fare being complementary. The Workers do not mind how much one cares to eat or drink, taking this as a sign of hospitality being accepted with a generous spirit. However a quick glance at the way native Minbari act, taking one or two samples, thanking the vendor graciously, shows the way in which one should be acting.

For those who feel lost or overwhelmed by the Grand Avenue, Workers are on hand to act as guides. Diplomatically skilled, these workers take a genuine pride in assisting others, especially those from outside the Minbar system and are trained to spot the tell-tale signs of those who are unsure what to do or where to go. If someone simply wishes to see the sites, then the guides are only too happy to show them,



providing a polite, courteous and informed commentary on Thorolost's history, the aesthetics behind the port and fascinating details about what is being exhibited. It is part of the Worker psyche to assist and no errand or amount of shepherding is considered too troublesome.

Docking Area

The docking bay is an awe-inspiring sight; a massive incision along the belly of Thorolost, crammed with different kinds of shuttles and transports, neatly arranged into a curving array, almost resembling the way a male seahorse cares for its young. All shuttles and other small craft belonging to the Worker Caste and non-Minbari are docked at the main, lateral docking bay. This long, lipped docking area is open to vacuum but with individual docking bays and airlock tubes enabling passage to and from the spaceport. As with all approaches, tractor beams control the docking trajectories and docking order of incoming flights mitigating against any chance of collision. As the ship is manoeuvred into the magnetic docking port, an extensible tube snakes out to link with the ship's airlock, guided by a small AI and a variety of sensor arrays that gleam and glow like the eyes of a spider.

Beyond the docking bay is the Greeting Chamber where Workers formally welcome all new arrivals to Thorolost and assist with any questions. There is no security clearance process of any kind; any security concerns are addressed by refusing to allow disembarkation until a formal search conducted by a small team of Warrior Caste Minbari has been completed. Once through the Greeting Chamber, arrivals find themselves facing the Grand Avenue and the Common Areas of the spaceport.

Common Areas

A wide, crystal-floored plaza surrounded by more crystal and curving walls of what appears to be polished bone, bearing the ridged markings common to the head crests of the Minbari species. Display screens and holograms provide information and people can simply mingle, relax awhile or progress to the appropriate docking area for the next stage of their flight. If the onward flight involves boarding a much larger ship, such as a liner or war cruiser, passengers must proceed to the opposite side of Thorolost and the special docking spines designed to accommodate larger vessels. These are almost identical to the docking ports and Greeting Chambers of the shuttle docking bay but are external to Thorolost.

There are no accommodation facilities available in the common areas. Minbari are accommodated in the quarters appropriate to their caste. Non-Minbari, requiring somewhere to rest or sleep, must make-do either with the open facilities here in the

common areas or may be offered a temporary sleeping cell in the Workers' Quarters. Naturally enough, Minbari non-Worker castes would never entertain such an option but aliens to the Minbar system might and the Worker Guides never hesitate to arrange accommodation in the Workers' Quarter if that is what it takes to make visitors feel comfortable.

Inscribed into certain lengths of crystal are traditional Minbari poems wishing travellers welcome and safe passage. It is a custom for those passing through Thorolost to add their own messages of goodwill and the Worker guides can provide the laser-inscription tools needed to add to these epithets and advice on how to phrase and structure the message or poem. It matters little if the message is inscribed in Minbari or not, the Workers will happily do the inscribing and translating if asked and there are short and long poems and messages of good will in human, Centauri and occasionally, Narn tongues, however the majority are Minbari. One particular crystal monolith cannot be inscribed by others, however, although it bears many inscriptions. This is a crystal dedicated to the fallen of the Earth-Minbari war, particularly those who died aboard *The Black Star*. It is known as '*Dukhat's Crystal*' and is considered a reverential monument by all Minbari castes but by the Warriors especially. Those passing it are expected to pause and acknowledge the fallen, irrespective of their race. Opposite Dukhat's Crystal is a smaller but similar shaped monument that bears a simple epigram commemorating the bravery of the human adversaries in the Battle of the Line: it simply reads - *To the Honourable Fallen of Sol*.

Cargo Processing

Remote cargo drones unload cargo and transport it through the vacuum to the two cargo processing areas on either side of Thorolost. The smaller of the two areas is reserved for Thorolost's supplies whilst the larger area processes passenger cargo and Minbari-bound freight. Once unloaded, Workers take over from the drones, conducting security scans and cataloguing. Both areas are immense and cavernous, built over several levels and connected by a series of open platform elevators and automated moving pathways enabling Workers to get around the cargo easily and quickly.

The cargo areas are keyed to the specific and unique head crest designs of those with permission to access the area. Scanners built into the crystals of the main area read the pattern and complexity of the head crest as Workers enter and leave. Anyone attempting to enter the area without prior authorisation alerts the security system, which in turn alerts the Warrior Caste. Such security measures are as much a caste device as a security precaution. It is simply inappropriate for members of the Religious and Warrior Castes to enter the cargo areas, although, even amongst a race as honourable as the Minbari, the occasional transgression does take place.

Workers' Quarters

The Workers are the most numerous caste aboard Thorolost and their quarters, rising through four levels of the spaceport, are close to the busiest part of the facility. Workers do not seek any particular comforts or replications of home environments. They prefer function over form and consistency over the unique. Resembling the hive structure of the Warriors' quarters, the Workers' quarters are no more than sleeping cells, large enough to stand in and long enough to accommodate cleansing facilities, displays and clothes storage but are otherwise without other conveniences. The size of sleeping cell is determined by rank, somewhat, with higher ranks within the caste having larger quarters and sometimes even a second cell designed for entertaining. In general though, cells are identical in design and size, marked with an ideogram defining who the cell has been allocated to etched into the door hatch.

CONTROL CENTRE

Minbari technology has always been considerably more advanced than within other races and this is demonstrated in Thorolost's control centre. Crystalline science mingles with nanotechnology and highly advanced empathic interfaces allowing the Minbari Workers who handle all central controls, a uniquely delicate control over the entire spaceport.

The control centre resembles a crystal cathedral, with huge, deliberately placed outcroppings of crystal, punctuated by inset displays and touch-sensitive controls, arranged in great tiers throughout the control area. Workers do not perform their functions in discrete groups. Each member of the control crew is trained to the same standard in all operations and they co-operate to ensure the smooth running of Thorolost.

The essential key to all of this is Thorolost itself. Spanning the entire height of the control centre is the Thorolost column. This single, sapphire-blue crystal contains nothing less than the soul-personality of Thorolost himself, merged with the the crystal and nano systems to form a sentient system that truly controls the spaceport. Thorolost's wish was to be merged completely with his greatest architectural endeavour and the Religious Caste, wanting to honour his achievements, brought about that wish. The techniques used to integrate personality, soul and machine are secret to the Grey Council and certain scientists on Minbar. They have been used only on very rare occasions but Thorolost warranted that honour.

The Thorolost system-crystal thus controls every aspect of the spaceport. The Worker technicians who crew the control centre interface with Thorolost telepathically and empathically, sensing and anticipating all operations and needs, whilst assisting the Thorolost system with adjustments and delicate operations. Thorolost ensures mutual co-operation and even though its personality has changed, very subtly over the centuries, it is very much

the intelligent, feeling heart of the spaceport, sensing the emotional state of those within and those passing through and ensures their continued wellbeing.

Thorolost knows the operations crew as its children and that is how they refer to themselves: Thorolost's Children. Given the high degree of empathic interface they have with the Thorolost systems, they have developed their own empathic powers and a deep-seated spiritual understanding that the Religious Caste fully appreciates and respects. Indeed, those who have spent a considerable period of time as a Child of Thorolost may transcend the Worker Caste and move into the Religious, such is their degree of spiritual empathy with the cosmos, as well as the Thorolost system.

The Children of Thorolost are recognisable by the distinctive shape of their head crests, which are higher and more angular than is traditionally found amongst the Minbari. This is not a surgical alteration but a direct result of their daily interaction with Thorolost. Their personalities are also very different to traditional Workers. They speak little and when they do, sound almost detached from reality. The Children lose some of their self-identity, referring to themselves as 'We' rather than 'I'. This is considered amongst the Minbari, to reinforce the deeply-held notions of spiritual and communal development Valen sought to bring about 1000 years ago. The Children of Thorolost, amongst all the Workers, are perhaps the ones who come closest to reaching the degrees of enlightenment and empathic understanding out of all Minbari.

PERSONALITIES

Andaleth High Chulat

Born a Worker and once a Child of Thorolost, Andaleth has transcended her birth caste to become a member of the Religious caste. She is known as High Chulat because, although she now resides in the Religious quarter, she is responsible for and co-ordinates, the Chulat Workers, tending to their spiritual needs in much the same way they tend to the needs of the Religious caste members who arrive on Thorolost. She still has the same, detached demeanour of the control centre workers and has acutely developed empathic and telepathic powers but has made the transition to an able member of the Religious Caste despite her humble beginnings. Her head crest is high, intricately ridged and quite beautiful in a uniquely Minbari way. Her manner is serene and caring, although many find her difficult to communicate with verbally. It comes naturally to her to understand feelings first and verbal signals second. Quite often she does not speak, preferring to communicate either via telepathy or with those less receptive to mental communication, through emotional signals. She smiles frequently and her smile is pure radiance. The degree and depth of her smile is usually enough to communicate what she wants to convey, although when she does speak her voice, light and melodious, is eloquent and soothing. It is rare for



Andaleth to leave the Religious quarter these days, although she has special privilege to enter the Control Centre to commune directly with Thorolost, if she needs to.

A personal friend of many of the Grey Council and to Ambassador Delenn, she, out of all those who work and tend to Thorolost, embodies the spirit and heart of the spaceport, viewing everyone aboard it, from the lowliest Worker through to the highest VIP, as someone to be honoured and cared for.

6th Level Minbari Diplomat (Religious Caste)

Hit Points: 12

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 racial)

Speed: 30 ft

DV: 15 (+3 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +5 close combat, +5 ranged

Special Qualities: Improved Diplomacy, Religious Caste, Strong Influence, Swift Diplomacy.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +8

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15

Notable Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +8, Intrigue +4, Knowledge (Thorolost) +6, Knowledge (Minbari Federation) +6, Knowledge (Earth Alliance) +4, Knowledge (History) +4, Knowledge (Philosophy) +8, Linguistics +8, Sense Motive +7, Telepathy +6.

Feats: Ability Focus

(Communication), Adaptive Mind, Alien Empathy, Fluency (Human, Minbari: Lenn Ah, Fik and Adrenato), Iron Will, Resist Scan, Telepath (P4), Weapon Proficiency (pistol).

Standard Equipment: Diplomat's attire.

Thelann

Thelann is in command of the Warrior Caste aboard Thorolost. A veteran of the Earth-Minbari war he held high command of the Sharlin cruiser Margnessa and was part of the fleet that took the Minbari offensive up to the Battle of the Line. He firmly embodies the traditions and philosophies of the Warrior Caste: a regimented, strategically-thinking Minbari who is constantly concerned with the defence of the entire Minbari race and opposed to outside influence of any kind. He vocally opposed the Babylon Project and whilst he put forward eloquent and pertinent reasons for doing so, found himself in opposition to the likes of Delenn and thus in no strategic position to further his ideas. The Grey Council, feeling that Thelann needed duties that would suit his strategic skills but also soothe his post-war restless nature, placed him aboard Thorolost. At first he baulked at the idea but over the years he has come to appreciate the diversity of people coming through its halls and has seen for himself how well the Minbari Castes can co-operate to achieve a cohesive community, capable of welcoming outsiders, without having to sacrifice principles. Thelann remains deeply distrustful of humans and is completely

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distrustful of Centauri. Yet as the leading representative of the Warrior Caste on Thorolost he sets the example and tries to appear welcoming to all comers, although he remains fiercely protective of Minbari traditions and ensures that everyone travelling through Thorolost is in no doubt of Minbar's lengthy history and understanding of the galaxy. His Warriors view him with reverence and awe - any one of them would willingly die for Thelann - he is considered to be the material leader of Thorolost, acting as a counterpoint to the spiritual nature of the likes of Andaleth.

6th level Minbari Officer (Warrior Caste)

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 racial)

Speed: 30 ft

DV: 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +8/+3 close combat, +8/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call, Warrior Caste

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Athletics +8, Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Computer Use +8, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Astrophysics) +6, Knowledge (Thorolost) +6, Operations (Piloting) +8, Operations (Systems) +6, Pilot +8.

Feats: Evasive Action, Fluency (Human, Minbari: Lenn Ah, Fik and Adrenato), Skill Focus (Operations: Piloting), Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Commander, Way of the Warrior, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol), Wind Sword.

Standard Equipment: Hand-held communicator, Minbari battle armour, Minbari fighting knife, Minbari hold-out laser.

Huleth

Huleth leads the Worker Caste. All non-military operations come under his domain. Like Andaleth he is a Child of Thorolost and shares many of her spiritual characteristics but retains enough grounding to keep him within the Worker Caste and in touch with the everyday nature of the spaceport's business. He has the utmost respect for Thelann but none of his suspicions. Their paths rarely cross and the delineation of responsibilities between their two castes remains perfectly understood. Just as Thelann is concerned with preserving military purity, Huleth is concerned with maintaining civilian integrity. He can understand why the Warriors are so cautious but knows that the galaxy is an encompassing place and Minbar is at its very heart.

5th level Minbari Worker (Worker Caste)

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +2 (+2 racial)

Speed: 30 ft

DV: 12 (+2 class)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +2 ranged

Special Qualities: Worker Caste, Worker Type: white collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15

Notable Skills: Appraise +8, Diplomacy +8, Computer Use +6, Concentration +7, Intrigue +6, Investigate +8, Knowledge (Thorolost) +9, Knowledge (Minbari Federation) +7, Operations (systems) +7, Profession (white collar) +9, Technical (electronics) +7.

Feats: Data Access, Fluency (Human, Minbari: Lenn Ah, Fik and Adrenato), Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Electronic tool-kit.

Galdeth

Galdeth is a Ranger and frequent visitor to Tholorost, rather than being a permanent fixture. He serves the Grey Council and is generally to be found at the spaceport whenever Valen'Tha is docked but he visits at many other times as well. His personality is somewhat brooding and forthright, although when relaxed he is personable and sociable. His right is to use the Warrior Caste's quarters but he prefers to base himself in a simple sleeping cell within the Workers' Quarter. In fact, he displays many Worker-like qualities and this is somewhat confusing to people such as Thelann but quite understandable to someone like Andaleth, who has been able to move from one caste to another. Galdeth never discusses his Ranger activities with anyone but the Grey Council, although his role is known to the senior figures of Tholorost. As a frequent traveller across the galaxy he can bring important news and often does, although his references to certain places are sometimes veiled or left to trail off into ambiguity. Galdeth is thus a guarded figure that many Minbari find hard to fathom and that is the way Galdeth seems to like things.

6th Level Minbari Ranger (Warrior Caste)

Hit Points: 19

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +2 racial, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 ft

DV: 17 (+4 class, +3 Dex)

Attacks: +8/+3 close combat, +9/+4 ranged

Special Qualities: Application of Terror, Die for the One, Denn'Bok, Discipline of the Rangers, Fearless, Places Unseen, Standing on the Bridge, Warrior Caste

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +6

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Acrobatics +7, Athletics +6, Concentration +6, Intimidate +7, Intrigue +5, Investigate +8, Knowledge (Minbari Federation) +5, Knowledge (Earth Alliance) +3, Linguistics +3, Notice +6, Pilot +9, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +9, Subterfuge +7.

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Enhanced Speed, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Denn'Bok), Fluency (Human, Minbari: Lenn Ah, Fik and Adrenato), Improved Initiative, Martial Arts, Way of the Warrior Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Ranger robes (DR 2, +1 bonus to Stealth checks), Denn'bok, Ranger pin.

NARN

Having spent a vast amount of time under Centauri repression the Narn Regime has had little opportunity to develop its own network of spaceports; on Nar'Shal, the central spaceport is a converted Centauri facility stripped of all the Republic's trappings and replaced with the Narn's own, utilitarian functional designs.

This is found in other spaceports and the one detailed here, Dro'Tana, is a good example. Located near to the city of Dro'Tana on Dross III (see *Babylon 5 Galactic Guide*, page 106), the Dro'Tana cargo facility is another converted Centauri installation but one given over to cargo and commerce rather than passenger traffic. As Dross III is well suited to agriculture it forms a bread-basket world for the Narn Regime and Dro'Tana's importance as a transit hub lies in its ability to both process and efficiently transport food throughout the regime.

G'LOn'S BASKET

The Dro'Tana cargo spaceport is known as G'Lon's Basket, after a popular story in which the revered G'Lon brought a never-ending source of food to the starving of Nar'Shal's repressed children. It is an apt image. Occupying a dozen large buildings surrounded by a high perimeter wall, from the air the facility could resemble a basket laden with goods.

LOCATION AND FUNCTION

The Basket is located 15 kilometres north of Dro'Tana and is served by a network of roads and covered freight transit tubes, all bringing in goods for the spaceport to handle. The Basket is given over almost entirely to freight. The central control buildings are surrounded by warehouses and processing plants, which typically ship-in supplies from the agricultural hinterlands around the city and then process specifically for space transportation across the Regime. The whole facility is owned by the T'Shoth Corporation, a government subsidised but independently owned and operated business specialising in food production, transportation and logistics. The business model is borrowed almost wholesale from similar Centauri concerns but naturally adapted to the Narn's more prosaic cultural norms. Some passenger travel occurs from The Basket but the facility makes no attempt to pander to any kind of passenger comforts; this is a working, industrial spaceport, serving direct to Jump Gate freighters and a handful of shuttles taking freight to craft too large to enter the atmosphere.

Most ships using The Basket are from the Narn Regime and Centauri craft are strictly prohibited. Some Earth Alliance and League of Non-Aligned Worlds vessels do visit The Basket but it is not a common occurrence. Dro'Tana has a smaller, civilian spaceport located nearer to the metropolis where passenger needs are more readily catered for but the independent nature of The Basket means that the usual Narn security restrictions are not in evidence and this makes it an attractive place for underhand affairs, assuming the right palms can be greased in the right ways (not always financially).

The T'Shoth corporation is based on Nar'Shal and has considerable holdings across the Regime. It owns and operates its own freight fleet, orbitals and spaceports, such as The Basket and as such is a major player in the galactic economy. Its primary business is haulage through the Regime but its extensive experience in food processing means that it can take raw ingredients and produce final commodities either as processed ingredients for others or its own ready-to-eat foodstuffs. As a major buyer of raw product from across the Regime, many farmers and small producers depend on T'Shoth's patronage and for the most part, it is a healthy relationship. T'Shoth pays fair prices and grants access to far-flung markets, it also ensures that small producers are kept aware of the latest techniques and equipment, which might otherwise be denied to some of the Narn colony backwaters.

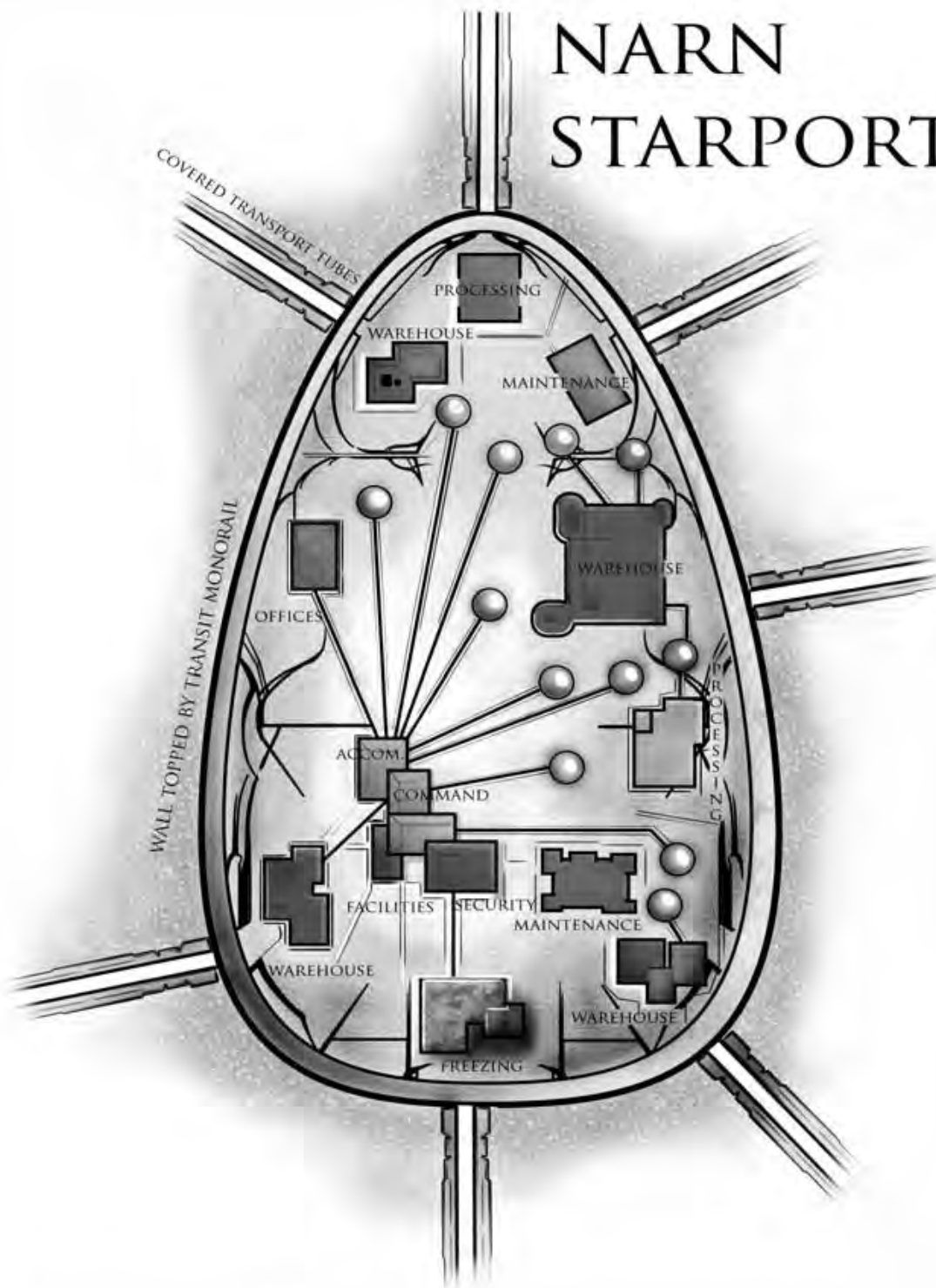
TRANSIT

The Basket is served by a high-speed tube transit network from Dro'Tana and the hinterland towns. There are seven terminals, located close to warehousing and processing plants. Road traffic is prohibited save for T'Shoth employees and visitors; all cargo and goods must come via the transit system.

On the inside of the perimeter wall is a secondary tube transit system that is used to move cargo around the spaceport without having to traverse the central service area. It is called the Loop and it moves both cargo and people on a continuous basis. It is MAGLEV powered, as is almost all tube transit and fully automated with central control residing in the command centre.

Clustered around the various warehouses and processing facilities are exoskeleton loaders of Narn design and used for hauling cargo from one spot to another. The operator straps into the control cage and uses the loader's powerful arms (it has four) as an extension of his own body; the loaders are a ubiquitous sight around the complex.

NARN STARPORT



The Miracle of the Wicker Basket

It is written in the Third Book of G'Lon that he looked upon the starving of Nar'Shal and wept. He went forth to the Governor of the City at the time and begged for food but the Governor just laughed and said he had none to spare because it was needed for a grand banquet. So G'Lon meditated upon the matter and looked up to a night sky filled with stars which appeared as scraps and these gave him hope. He fashioned for himself a basket of tough wicker and went back to the Governor's palace where he approached the kitchens and begged for the scraps from the banquet. These he was given and they filled his wicker basket and G'Lon went amongst the starving of the city and bid them to take as much as they wanted from the basket and make of it a fine meal. No matter how many people took from the basket, it never emptied and by the morning G'Lon, exhausted, had fed an entire city in one night on the remains of the Governor's banquet.

And this story has a happier ending. The legend has it that the Governor's guests at the banquet that night suffered acute stomach cramps for seven days and seven nights after their feast, whilst the starving of Narn found strength and vitality!

- G'Kar, to Susan Ivanova, on the Teachings of G'Lon

GENERAL USAGE PROCEDURES

T'Shoth controls all cargo into and out of The Basket and it follows tried and tested procedures used in T'Shoth facilities all over the Regime. Haulage services are sold to those who simply want goods transported, with the cargo being taken to a range of depots around Dro'Tana, where it is then signed over to the T'Shoth transit wing, given a security check and then shipped to The Basket by tube rail for loading and transport.

On arrival at The Basket, cargo is either taken directly to the designated spacecraft landing pad or transferred to a warehouse for storage until the vessel is ready to accept the payload. Despite the somewhat impetuous nature of the Narn, their logistics systems are first-rate with accurate labelling and tracking systems ensuring all goods are loaded to the right vessel at the right time. Workers using the power loaders labour around the clock loading and unloading ships, aiming for optimum turnaround time so that the worlds of the Narn Regime are supplied as promised. There is an unspoken code amongst the T'Shoth employees that every minute wasted is another belly unfilled. After so many years of Centauri oppression, there is a genuine desire to ensure that the Regime is kept fed and the T'Shoth workforce sees it as a personal duty to work hard to keep the Regime supplied.

There are no labour unions at The Basket; Narn workers know their role and co-operate to keep the cargo

loading, the ships flying and the Regime supplied. The work ethic inherent in Narn psychology and a communal need to continually prove oneself and one's place in the cosmos keeps The Basket efficient and industrious. Grumbles and mutterings occur but militancy is not the Narn way. The Narn way is to knuckle-down, bear the burden and concentrate on the Greater Good. For all its faults as a corporation (and the Narn have very few), T'Shoth is very much a community. The buzz of industry and co-operation, in the hard-working, stoic Narn style, is felt throughout the spaceport.

T'Shoth Fleet

The T'Shoth fleet consists of atmosphere-capable deep space freighters of the G'zel class, which are themselves converted Lias Class supply ships (*Babylon 5: Ships of the Galaxy*, page 51) inherited from the Centauri domination. Narn tinkering has reduced the crew capacity and increased the payload capacity but otherwise the G'zel are identical to their Lias cousins. T'Shoth operates about a hundred G'zel and around 50 Arcismus class supply ships, again modified for greater freight but still maintaining defensive capabilities. As the Arcismus are not atmosphere capable, only their shuttles are found at The Basket.

G'zel Class T'Shoth Freighter (modified Lias Class Centauri vessel)

Large Spacecraft

Defence Value: 10 (-2 size, +2 Handling)

Armour: 12;

Narn

Handling: +2; Sensors: + 2; Stealth: 6; Stress: 10
Features: Gravitic Engine, Targeting Computer (+3)
Crew: Officers, 2; Pilots, 2; Sensor Operators, 1; Crewmen, 8 (T'Shoth workers)
Structural Spaces: 45 (Cargo 20, Control 4, Crew 4, Engine 7, Hangar 6, Weapons 4)
Fore Arc Weapons: Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, 2 weapon spaces)
Aft Arc Weapons: Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, 2 weapon spaces)
Craft (6): 8 Cargo Shuttles, 2 Centauri Shuttles

Arcismus Class T'Shoth Freighter

Large Spacecraft
Defence Value: 12 (-2 size, +4 Handling)
Armour: 16;
Handling: +4; Sensors: + 1; Stealth: 6; Stress: 10
Features: Fusion Engine, Targeting Computer (+2)
Crew: Officers, 5; Pilots, 4; Sensor Operators, 4; Crewmen 20 (T'Shoth workers)
Structural Spaces: 46 (Cargo 21, Control 4, Crew 5, Engine 12, Hangar 2, Weapons 2)
Fore Arc Weapons: Burst Beam (Close, Offence 10+Special, Electro-Pulse, 1 weapon space)
Aft Arc Weapons: Burst Beam (Close, Offence 10+Special, Electro-Pulse, 1 weapon space)
Craft (1): 4 Cargo Shuttles

Ships land and depart from 12 service pads located around the facility. Each landing pad can accommodate a single G'Zel freighter or four standard cargo shuttles. The service pad used depends on the cargo being imported and/or exported, with the ships being guided to the pad closest to the storage or processing building for their payload. Landing and departure operations are a mixture of manual and automatic systems but it is a smooth procedure with fixed landing and departure slots based on a typical T'Shoth timetable used in other facilities.

SECURITY

All security is in the hands of the T'Shoth Security Bureau, which is effectively a private army employed by the corporation and relies on battle veterans and other ex-military to maintain its ranks. The Basket has 100 security personnel based in the Security Wing of the Command Centre. The bulk of their work is routine patrol of the perimeter and facilities buildings, occasional, random searches of incoming and outgoing spacecraft but not a great deal else. Even given the legendary Narn tenacity, the security personnel find it difficult to fend-off boredom, even though their routine tasks are completed with a reasonable degree of diligence. This means that security in The Basket is of a routine level and not especially rigorous – certainly nowhere near as comprehensive as the security procedures for military or civilian facilities.



Centauri Legacy

Before the Centauri left The Basket, they considered the probability that the Narn would undo all their good work. Scattered throughout the facility, in every building and on every launch pad, is a dormant explosive device that has been very cunningly concealed to evade detection. The devices are hidden in walls, in ceilings, beneath floors, within support columns and in service conduits. At a time to be determined by the Centauri, possibly in response to any overt Narn aggression, these devices can be made live by a simple remote command from a spacecraft in communications range with Dross III. The explosives have been set with staggered timers so that a wave of detonations will course through the facility at 30 second intervals. The explosives are designed to maximise property damage and disable functional and operational infrastructures but there is no doubt lives would be lost as fires start and buildings suffer partial collapse. There are 50 such hidden devices in total and when activated would render The Basket completely useless within 25 minutes.

The explosives deliver 3d8 damage with a radius of 15 feet. For detection purposes they have a DR of 25 and for deactivation purposes a DR of 22 (Mechanical).

The timing for the devices to be activated (or not...) is left to individual GMs to determine, as their campaign dictates.

The Security personnel are lightly armed and armoured. Weapons are usually sheathed and holstered. The standard sidearm is the Narn stun gun although perimeter patrols carry a Ka'toc slung across the back in addition to the stun gun: padded armour is worn across the body. Patrols are conducted in threes and on foot, with the perimeter wall divided in sectors that are patrolled on a rotating shift. For the buildings, security patrols are generally conducted in pairs, with the security staff carrying electronic keys for the buildings in their remit. Searches and checks are cursory, and it would take something truly suspicious to arouse interest. The security staff generally know all the incumbent personnel and a fair few of the crews regularly passing through The Basket. When ship searches are conducted four security officers are assigned, usually accompanied by the ship's captain or XO. Again much is cursory although every now and then, a security team will request a full strip-down of a cargo bay just to alleviate the general tedium.

Typical T'Shoth Security Guard

2nd Level Narn Soldier

Hit Points: 15

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (20 ft.)

DV: 13

Attack: +4 close combat or +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, Co-ordinated Unit +1

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8

Notable Skills: Acrobatics +4 (+2), Athletics +4 (+2), Computer Use +1, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Human) +2, Knowledge (Narn) +4, Knowledge (tactics) +2, Operations (gunnery) +3, Stealth +3 (+1), Technical (electronics) +2

Feats: Armour Familiarity, Brawling, Fluency (Narn and Dro'Tana dialect), Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol & rifle)

Standard Equipment: Narn Stun Gun (+3, damage: save vs Fort at DR 15 or be rendered unconscious for 6-CON modifier hours, 5 shots), knife (+4, 1d4+2 dam, 19-20 crit, 1-h), Ka'Toc (1d8 damage), Narn padded armour (DR 2)

Getting into The Basket from outside is possible only via the transit network. All entrances are pass coded and only T'Shoth personnel can enter without challenge. A security officer is stationed at each transit terminus who checks passes and verifies the identities of visitors, communicating with the patrol trio for the sector every now and again.

OPERATIONS

The Command Centre is at the heart of The Basket's operation. Built in the typical Centauri style of grand architectural flourish, designed to make as much of a style statement as provide a functional edifice, the Command Centre has been systematically stripped of all Centauri trappings so that it is now a

Narn

curiously bland, blocky building that retains the shape but none of the identity, of its former self.

The Command Centre has three wings attached to its central, five-floored structure. These are used for accommodation, maintenance facilities, office space and security. The fifth floor of the main building is the traffic control dome, a huge transparent sphere topped with communications and scanning antennae. It monitors all atmospheric traffic in the Dro'Tana airspace and all traffic emerging from the Dross system Jump Gate transmitting the T'Shoth/Dro'Tana identity code. Incoming and outgoing ship movements are co-ordinated on separate flightpaths by the operations team, whilst a separate ground operations team co-ordinates launch and landing services at the various pads, alerting the ground crews to flight status and docking/departure requirements.

T'Shoth employs experienced space and atmospheric operations specialists for all its spaceports and The Basket is no exception. The 60 strong operations crew is a mixture of military veterans and civilian personnel but each member is highly competent at what they do. T'Shoth has a reputation for employing the very best in whatever

endeavours it is involved and The Basket's operations centre is arguably one of the best anywhere in the Regime.

Each outlying facility has its own small operations team co-ordinating local works. This generally involves cargo and freight handling but there is a formal handover process from central control to local control once a ship has landed and cleared down engines and back again in preparation for take-off. The process is rigorous and seamless, irrespective of the size of ship or complexity of the payload. Local operations centres co-operate to move cargo around, communicating with the Loop's own control team (located, naturally enough, in the Command Centre) to ensure co-ordinated rapid transit of freight around the facility.

CARGO AND COMMERCE

Solid logistics lies at the heart of The Basket. This is a busy commercial centre and a key part of the T'Shoth infrastructure. The Basket's activities influence most worlds in the Narn Regime and even military outposts. Key commerce flowing through The Basket is detailed below.

Agricultural Produce

(produced on Dross III)

B'traz hide

B'traz meat

Ember Grass

G'kil meat

Gever Leaves

N'thast Grain

Sho'thal meat

Slow fruit

Sovalak pulp and juice

V'thel root

T'Shoth Processed Foods

Vacuum sealed ready meals

Processed fruit juices (typically Sovalak)

Longevity-treated vegetables

N'thast bread

Ground Gever spice

Hard Goods

B'traz Leather

Dro'Tana produced electronics (T'Shoth brand)

Dro'Tana textiles

Industrial components

Nano-electronics components

B'traz hide and meat: The B'traz is a docile Dross herd beast with vaguely bovine characteristics but preferring swampy ground. Its naturally thick hide is used extensively in clothing, footwear and a huge variety of other areas. It is very tough, hard-wearing and superior to other forms of Narn leather. The Basket does not have tanning or hide preparation facilities but prepares hides for export from the Dro'Tana abattoirs. The meat is very strong in taste and texture, much like mutton and whilst an acquired taste to most races, is a popular staple amongst the Narn. Centauri shun the meat of the B'traz claiming it is inedible, as their digestive system certainly has difficulty dealing with it, which may explain its popularity amongst the Narn.

Ember Grass: a delicate, yellow grass found all across Dross III. It is highly nutritious with a nutty flavour. Dried and ground it is used as a seasoning agent.

G'kil meat: The G'kil is a native Dross bird similar in size to an ostrich but with a shorter neck, sleek pale feathers and longer legs. The meat is bland but when seasoned with Ember Grass takes on a luxurious taste quite unlike any other fowl. Narn cook G'kil for a variety of special occasions and holy days in much the same way that turkey and goose is served in Earth feast times.

Gever Leaves: a seven pointed leaf from the Dross III Gever tree, these leaves are extremely hot, surpassing the strength and heat of most chilli peppers rating some 900,000 Scoville units. A Narn delicacy and used widely in Regime cuisine.

N'thast Grain: a thick and yeasty grain used in making N'thast bread, an open textured, honey-tasting leavened bread eaten as a staple across the Regime.



Sho'thal meat: the Sho'thal is a small Drossian antelope with four short horns and toes rather than hooves. Its meat is sweet and delicate but loses texture and flavour quickly unless frozen within hours after being butchered.

Slow fruit: so named because a single fruit takes a Narn year to ripen. Ripe Slow fruit resembles a purple grapefruit with a texture like banana and a taste like apricot. Its juice is used in many liquers and wines.

Sovalak pulp and juice: the sovalak is a bright green berry about the size of a blueberry but with an intensely sweet and dry taste. The sovalak berry does not travel well once picked and so is processed almost immediately into pulp and juice, which is then used as a cooking ingredient and to flavour a variety of Narn drinks.

V'thel root: a spiny, tough tube tasting not unlike ginger. Dried slivers of v'thel chewed over time, is the Narn equivalent of chewing gum.

perimeter wall. These are a mixture of warehouses and processing centres with rapid connections to the central service area which where the launch/landing pads are situated.

Command Centre

Operations

The five floors of the 'L' shaped command centre accommodate offices, operations rooms, communication equipment and the control/co-ordination facilities for the whole of The Basket. Most areas are open-plan, in keeping with the Narn innate desire for freedom of movement but also to enhance open communications and co-operation. As is preferred by Narn, red lighting is used throughout the interior of the command centre, making the whole building feel somewhat claustrophobic to outsiders.

The ground and first floors house port administration and T'Shoth Corporation management. It is a featureless, utilitarian environment placing the hardworking employees in communication with T'Shoth headquarters in Dro'Tana

FACILITIES

The Basket has some two dozen buildings built close to the 10 metre high

Narn

and the various suppliers scattered around the continent. The second and third floors house logistics centres for the Loop and the external transit systems, with a complex three dimensional display showing the whereabouts of all tracked cargo within the spaceport facility and details of any cargo is coming in from the hinterlands. Here, the spaceport also liaises with the discrete operations centres for the rest of the facility, tracking, logging and clearing cargo movements in preparation for either departure or arrival.

The fourth and fifth floors are consumed with atmospheric and space operations, with busy teams of operations staff monitoring and co-ordinating traffic using ex-Centauri displays and projections. The Fifth floor, the core operations room, gazes out across The Basket, monitoring all vessel manoeuvres before agreeing clearance and handing control over to the land-side crews in the other areas of the operation.

Accommodation

The accommodation wing provides onsite quarters for the duty personnel and security teams. Rooms are small, comfortable and meet basic, short-term needs. Most have permanent homes in Dro'Tana but a few remain onsite almost permanently, dedicated to their work. The accommodation wing has relaxation facilities, including

a pool, sports court, duelling area and gymnasium. The upper level of the five storey annex is the cafeteria/restaurant facility serving Narn speciality dishes produced onsite.

Facilities and Maintenance Wing

This wing contains all the core computer, AI and power systems for the whole complex is the most secure part of The Basket. Occupying three floors above ground and three levels below, it is always patrolled by the security personnel and is locked against all but those engineering staff with the correct level of T'Shoth security clearance.

Naturally the Centauri ensured that this wing was laced liberally with their booby trap devices, cunningly worked into various mechanisms so as to be invisible amongst the kilometres of cabling, machinery and read-outs filling this wing.

Security Wing

All security operations occur from here. Daily briefings, monitoring stations, patrol rostering, quarter mastering and so forth. Its two floors are drab, red-suffused centres of monotony deliberately structured that way to keep the security personnel out on their duties and feel no inclination to relax. The security wing has four small



holding cells beneath the ground floor but these are rarely used. Any serious infractions would result in the Dro'Tana militia being summoned and the holding cells are now used simply for equipment storage.

The Loop

If the Command Centre is the heart, then the Loop is the artery of The Basket. This tube enclosed transit system runs around the complete perimeter of the spaceport ferrying goods to each part of the installation. The Loop is an enclosed MAGLEV system, fully automated and controlled from the Command Centre. Its carriages are long, wide, box-like affairs with huge doors permitting maximum access to the interior. The only passenger seats are fold-down affairs, to maximise cargo space.

There are terminals positioned at each major building. The terminals are wide, functional spaces allowing loaders to move in and transfer cargo from the carriages. Once goods have been moved, the Loop's Command Centre team is notified and the train whisks itself silently onto the next destination.

Service Pads

The service pads are spread across the facility and are static units; little more than concrete and metal landing/take-off plinths. Each pad is able to accommodate up to four cargo shuttles or a single G'zel. Fueling operations are co-ordinated by the Command Centre with the fuel reservoirs located below ground. Ship maintenance is carried out on the pad, with service units being called out from the two maintenance buildings on either side of the service area.

Each service pad has an underground single track tube MAGLEV, similar to the Loop, connecting it with the Command Centre. This allows crew to leave their craft and gain access to the accommodation facilities within the Command Centre without having to cross the service area. Some service pads are connected by a similar link directly to warehouses or processing buildings, permitting further rapid transit of cargo.

Warehouses

Each warehouse is a vast area filled with crates, cargo pods, loaders, cranes and a small army of workers making sure everything is loaded, secured and tagged correctly. There are four warehouse units with different configurations and generally, serving different commodities: foodstuffs, textiles and so forth.

A control centre is located on the upper level of the warehouse building, looking after local operations in

concert with the Command Centre and other warehouses and processing centres. The team is small, with most staff given over to the manual work involved in processing the cargo being stored or moved for transit. Also above the warehouse area are crew relaxation facilities; basic and utilitarian in the accepted Narn tradition.

Processing Centres

The three processing centres are self contained factories, taking raw materials and producing goods and foodstuffs under the T'Shoth banner. T'Shoth prides itself on quality at reasonable cost and the processing centres found at The Basket have well-developed production techniques and equipment to produce everything from military rations to clothing, according to the commodities flowing through the spaceport.

Production is controlled to tight schedules dictated by transit requirements, with an emphasis on producing only as much as has been ordered or is required. It is not in the Narn tradition to over-produce because this inevitably generates waste and T'Shoth as an organisation aims to minimise waste for economic as well as for cultural reasons. The processing centres are thus focused on efficiency and quality with any over production done on a small scale and used to supplement the inevitable smuggling that is an inherent part of The Basket's make-up.

Completed goods are loaded onto the Loop and sent either for despatch or storage in preparation for despatch. Like the warehouses, each processing centre has a control team for production and a control team for logistics, ensuring a smooth transition between receipt, production and shipment. Delays or snarl-ups would produce a domino effect rippling throughout the production/distribution system and neither T'Shoth or the Narn population in general, want to run such risks.

HIGH LIFE AND LOW LIFE

The Basket is very much a blue-collar operation, with a focus on productivity, efficiency and the need to keep the Regime supplied. There is no room for luxury and the Narn do not expect it. Decadence is a Centauri trait and the Narn need to prove that the centuries of Centauri domination have not perverted their inherent sensibilities and created a need or desire for wasteful fripperies. The Basket is a working spaceport and a hard-working one at that. The closest one gets to a high life are celebrations in local canteens to mark the completion of a complex or difficult shipment, processed ahead of time and loaded into a shuttle ahead of schedule.

In terms of low life, Narn do not have such a concept. They consider themselves an honourable race that has had to develop certain clandestine methods (though this is not considered dishonourable) to

reassert their society in the wake of Centauri domination. Smuggling (see below) is an inevitable consequence of this approach but is considered to happen invisibly and with good reason. Narn seek a reasonable profit from smuggling endeavours; not wholesale exploitation.

Smuggling

Despite being a T'Shoth facility, The Basket is an ideal place for smuggling and it occurs on a daily basis. Whilst Centauri produce is forbidden in the Narn Regime, many have developed either a taste for the finer things the Republic produces or require banned Centauri components (including weapons) to keep various salvaged pieces going or in good order. The various processing plants and warehouses in The Basket also have a sideline in smuggling goods to private dealers who share a cut of their profits with those in charge of The Basket facilities.

Smuggling is, of course, against Narn law and T'Shoth policy, especially Centauri goods but Narn pragmatism dictates it a necessity. The anti-smuggling laws are a necessary principle but the reality is that certain goods are needed and the principle needs to be circumvented whilst still being upheld. For this reason smuggling and side-line operations are discrete, small-scale and steer clear of things such as narcotics. Weapons are, occasionally, diverted into the black market but never anything of great consequence, such as battlefield technology.

The warehouse and processing crews have excellent cover procedures in place to cover most signs of illegal activity when the security staff come to make their checks and every smuggling operation has a set of fake records ready to account for any product diversion or embezzlement. Naturally enough the security staff know that smuggling happens and every now and again make an example of someone (usually an agreeing scapegoat) just to demonstrate that principles and laws need to be upheld but otherwise they turn a blind eye. T'Shoth auditors are a different matter though. Auditing teams descend on The Basket every so often to scrutinise records and account for stock, so it is important that those involved in the sideline economy can cover their tracks perfectly and rely on the unspoken code of silence from those who might have something to benefit by exposing illegal activities to the Auditors.

PERSONNEL OF THE BASKET

Installation Commander K'Vath

K'Vath is an ageing, scarred veteran of several conflicts but considered to be a logistical genius, which made him a natural choice for The Basket's command when he joined

T'Shoth eight years ago. He is a spiritual man who follows the teachings of G'Lon and believes that the command of The Basket is actually a certain form of spiritual fulfilment after long years of fighting. He has a chance to give and promote life after too long taking it and he has come to view The Basket (although he always calls it G'Lon's Basket) as his true home.

K'Vath was born in Dro'Tana but has no home in the city. The Basket is his home now and he considers every sunrise in the spaceport a privilege. At dawn each day he can be found on the roof of the accommodation wing, facing the rising sun, giving thanks to G'Lon for the gifts he has helped bestow. K'Vath has complete faith in those who work with him and might be considered too trusting. He certainly does not command universal respect within The Basket as many of the workers find it hard to accept his somewhat spiritual approach to the facility but his competence as a commander is not questioned. He is thus something of an aloof figure, isolated from most but eager to rectify that by being as open as he can. K'Vath spent a great deal of time helping to engineer death and he is tired of it. He wants to be a part of the great tapestry of life.

6th Level Narn Officer (Ground Forces)

Hit Points: 21

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+4 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +8/+3 close combat, +7/+2 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +5

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Athletics +6, Computer Use +10, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Dro'Tana) +6, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +5, Knowledge (Philosophy) +5, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Notice +6, Operations (Systems) +7.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Fluency (Human, Narn), Liturgies of the Heart, Nerves of Steel, Priestly Devotion, Surface Vehicle Proficiency, Toughness, Veteran GROPOS, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Model 10 PPG, hand-held communicator.

Security Counsel N'Gen

N'Gen is in charge of the security operations for The Basket. He is a lifelong employee of T'Shoth and has worked in many of its facilities. His loyalty is always to the company and he finds K'Vath's spirituality disconcertingly out of place in so commercial an operation. Despite projecting a dynamic, hard-working persona, N'Gen is all for an easy life. Security works well throughout The Basket; workers are happy, commissions are completed and that's how it should be. He files flowing security reports to T'Shoth central in



Dro'Tana and receives glowing praise in reply. Every now and again he breaks a small-scale smuggling racket to show that his people are on top of things but ensures that nothing is broken too far beyond repair. N'Gen considers all this part of how commerce works and if it makes for an easy working life he is content with that.

His complacency may be his undoing. A few months ago a routine security patrol of one of the service pads was asked to take a look at a component wired into a landing support rig that didn't seem quite right. Instead of going into this with a technical team, as he should have done, N'Gen dismissed the incident as something the Narn had probably had to improvise when converting the facility over from Centauri control. It is a shame he did not pay may more attention. This was a timer for one of the hidden explosive devices scattered around The Basket.

5th Level Narn Soldier

Hit Points: 24

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+4 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +8/+3 close combat, +6/+1 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Co-ordinate Unit +1.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12

Notable Skills: Athletics +8, Computer Use +5, Drive +9, Intimidate +9, Intrigue +5, Investigate +7, Knowledge (Dro'Tana) +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +7, Operations (Driving) +7, Stealth +7.

Feats: Dodge, Fluency (Human, Narn), Great Fortitude, Martial Arts, Surface Vehicle Proficiency, Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Model 10 PPG, hand-held communicator.

Production Counsel Sh'Nir

Another T'Shoth-groomed officer, Sh'Nir is an ambitious Narn from Nar'Shal who is desperate to prove her worth within the company and ascend to greater things. Her responsibility is for the processing centres around The Basket and she takes her responsibilities as seriously as K'Vath takes his faith. She tolerates no excuses, no failures, no slippages and no nonsense. She is certainly competent but her zeal is somewhat misplaced because The Basket ran to her standards before she even arrived and the energy she pores into ensuring efficiency could be put to better use. Her attitude is down to a lack of personal confidence and the need to prove (to the T'Shoth powers-that-be) that she is ready for ever greater assignments.

Sh'Nir demands daily reports from each production facility control centre and works long hours comparing performance statistics and cross referencing with targets. Perceived slippages result in a personal visit to the local command and a frank reminder of how crucial the operation is to the Regime. This endears her to no one.

5th Level Narn Worker (white collar)

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +3 close combat, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Worker Type: white collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 11

Notable Skills: Appraise +10, Diplomacy +6, Computer Use +8, Concentration +9, Intrigue +5, Investigate +7, Knowledge (Dro'Tana) +7, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +8, Operations (systems) +8, Profession (white collar) +8, Technical (electronics) +8.

Feats: Data Access, Contact, Fluency (Human, Narn), Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Warehouse Counsel M'Knar

M'Knar controls all warehousing operations and is the polar opposite of Sh'Nir. He knows how well the operation runs and sees no need to continually push its capabilities. He has faith in his people and know that getting the best from them is not to continually raise targets, but to congratulate them on a job well done.

Maintaining the status quo is M'Knar's speciality. It is also fundamental to his position. M'Knar controls the various smuggling operations happening through The Basket. It is all low-key but best that it remains secret. One thing that absolutely must remain secret is his relationship with a Brakiri freighter captain who is behind a lucrative off-world smuggling ring for Centauri produce. M'Knar has been dealing with this captain for years, always managing to hide the true extent of their relationship but if it became public, it would expose almost every other smuggling sideline to T'Shoth deep scrutiny; attention no one would want.

5th Level Narn Worker (blue collar)

Hit Points: 15

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)

Attacks: +4 close combat, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Worker Type: blue collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11

Notable Skills: Athletics +5, Computer Use +7, Concentration +12, Drive +7, Knowledge (Dro'Tana) +7, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +9, Notice +7, Operations (systems) +9, Profession (white collar) +7, Technical (Mechanical) +9.

Feats: Brawler, Contact (Brakiri smuggler), Fluency (Human, Narn), Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (coveralls, pistol).

Worker V'Nen

V'Nen works in the Freezer processing plant. A diligent, hard working Narn who lives in the suburbs of Dro'Tana and is a proud T'Shoth employee. He is loyal to the company and the reputation of his family. He is an archetypal Narn male. He accepts criticism stoically but takes insults and slights badly. He is impetuous and not able to read subtle signals and thus know when to hold his temper.

A week ago, in the cafeteria of the Accommodation Wing of the Command Centre, V'Nen was insulted (so he believes) by one of the Command Centre landing co-ordinators. It was a chance remark about how pressured their respective jobs were and not intentionally offered as an insult but this is how V'Nen has taken it. He has spent days brooding on what was said to him by Controller C'Nel and sincerely believes his honour, the honour of his co-workers and the honour of all those who slave in the processing centres has been challenged by an arrogant button-pusher who has spent too long talking to spaceship captains and not enough time listening to those with their feet on the ground. As he has brooded, so he has become angrier. V'Nen is about to snap.

His first action will be to initiate Chon-Kar against Controller C'Nel. He intends to steal a Ka'Toc from somewhere and perform the ritual killing in the same cafeteria where the slight took place. Anyone resisting him or aiding C'Nel will also incur Chon-Kar.

The ramifications of this are enormous. Each silo of workers in The Basket is fiercely proud of their traditions and duties. The processing workers, whilst perhaps not supporting V'Nen's interpretation of the supposed slight will nevertheless rally to him if he is opposed. Similarly the central control staff will rally to C'Nel. If blood is spilled, it will open a rift in the workings of The Basket as surely as any of the secret Centauri explosives hidden around the base.

2nd Level Narn Worker (blue collar)

Hit Points: 11

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+1 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +4 close combat, +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Worker Type: blue collar, Vocation Bonus.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13

Notable Skills: Athletics +7, Computer Use +4, Concentration



+6, Drive +6, Knowledge (Dro'Tana) +4, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +4, Notice +3, Operations (systems) +2, Profession (white collar) +5, Technical (Mechanical) +4.

Feats: Blood Oath, Fluency (Human, Narn), Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Coveralls, Ka'Toc, tool-kit.

Captain G'Haal, G'Zel Freighter Officer

G'Haal is a regular visitor to The Basket, since his G'Zel freighter, 'Random Knife', is responsible for the Babylon 5 supply run on behalf of T'Shoth. Curiously G'Haal is not a T'Shoth employee but a freelancer kept on a retainer by T'Shoth because he knows Babylon 5 well and has excellent relations with the cargo crews there and is a friend of Ambassador G'Kar.

G'Haal visits The Basket generally every month, bringing with him all kinds of expected commodities for Narn needs but also a few special items that he channels through M'Knal. G'Haal knows a great deal of the Babylon 5 gossip and is popular amongst the workers in the canteens where he happily shares stories of the space station in return for free drinks. Whilst working for T'Shoth, G'Haal is quite happy to perform cargo services for anyone willing to pay. His status within T'Shoth lends him credibility and so he is a highly effective smuggler as well as a vital

conduit between Dross III and Babylon 5. He is outgoing, outspoken and brash but recognises the spiritual connection K'Vath feels for The Basket and shares it to some extent.

6th level Narn Officer (Fleet)

Hit Points: 20

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex)

Attacks: +7/+2 close combat, +8/+3 ranged

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, +1 bonus to attack rolls against Centauri, Branch Specialisation, Rallying Call.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14

Notable Skills: Athletics +8, Computer Use +12, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (Dro'Tana) +4, Knowledge (Babylon 5) +6, Knowledge (Narn Regime) +8, Knowledge (tactics) +8, Operations Sensors +6, Operations (Systems) +6, Pilot +6.

Feats: Fire Control, Fluency (Human, Narn), Iron Will, Spacecraft Proficiency, Toughness, Veteran Commander, Veteran Spacehand, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, rifle, pistol).

Standard Equipment: Model 10 PPG, hand-held communicator.

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