

GURPS

Fourth Edition

Traveller[®]

PSIONICS INSTITUTES



An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS[®] Traveller[®] from Steve Jackson Games
Based on the award-winning Traveller science fiction universe by MARC MILLER

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INTRODUCTION

The official *Traveller* setting has two basic approaches to psionic powers: the Third Imperium and its allied client states officially suppress them, but secretly support psionic training institutes and the undercover use of psions. The Zhodani Consulate and its allied clients embrace psi powers, and promote psions to the highest levels of

their government. *Psionics Institutes* enables *Traveller* players and gamemasters to explore both approaches in their games, in greater detail than ever before. The book covers the institutes and types of institutional training available in both the Consulate and Imperium, as well as character templates and character creation information. It gives several sample

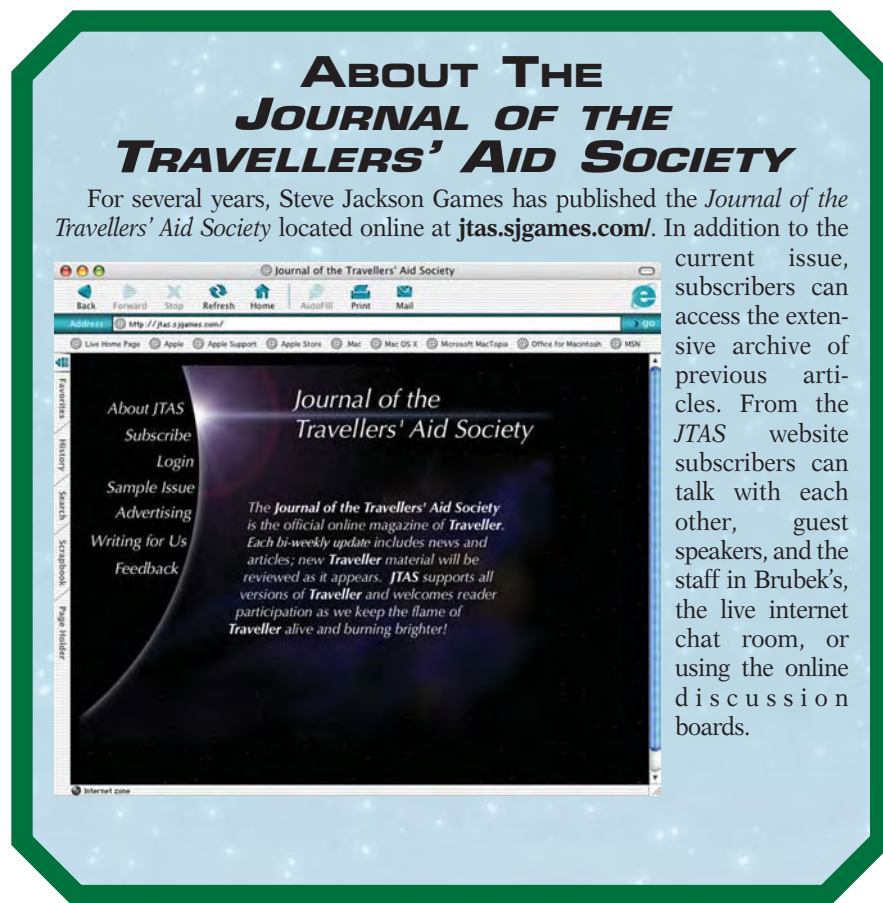
institutes, as well as psi-using corporations, mercenary units, and psi-friendly societies, worlds, and government agencies. Underground pro-psi societies (both within and outside the Imperium) are detailed. Using *Psionics Institutes*, players and game masters can add a sixth sense to their campaign.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Amanda Dickerson has played *Traveller* for years, and *GURPS Psionics* for much longer than that. After several articles she wrote for the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* were published, she moved on to roleplaying books. Her first book, *Dead Sea Murder*, is a complete RPG campaign for the *FUDGE Terra Incognita* game. More information is available from her website at www.angelfire.com/md/meadowlark.

Amanda lives in Ohio with her husband. Together they care for a dog (who apparently suffers from attention deficit disorder) and three cats (who have yet to find an earthly use for the dog). Her life-long interest in the paranormal led to her hobbies of tarot reading, magick, and psychic research. Her obsession with the latter finally found an outlet in this book.

Loren Wiseman has worked with *Traveller* in all its forms since the game's creation in 1977. He is currently *GURPS Traveller* line editor for SJ Games, and editor for the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, and was recently inducted into the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design's Hall of Fame.



For several years, Steve Jackson Games has published the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* located online at jtas.sjgames.com/. In addition to the current issue, subscribers can access the extensive archive of previous articles. From the JTAS website subscribers can talk with each other, guest speakers, and the staff in Brubek's, the live internet chat room, or using the online discussion boards.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be

reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers the *d20* system, *Ars Magica*, *BESM*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and

many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Transhuman Space*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also get opportunities to playtest new *GURPS* books!

New supplements and adventures. **GURPS** continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized SASE, or just visit www.warehouse23.com.

e23. Our e-publishing division offers **GURPS** adventures, play aids, and support not available anywhere else! Just head over to e23.sjgames.com.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of **GURPS**. To join, point your web browser to mail.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/.

PAGE REFERENCES

GURPS Compendium I lists all the title abbreviations for **GURPS** titles.

Wherever a page reference includes a GT, it refers to a page in **GURPS Traveller**; e.g., p. GT54 refers to page 54 of **GURPS Traveller**. P refers to **Psionics**, B to the **Basic Set**, T:AI to **Traveller: Alien Races 1**, T:FT to **Traveller: Far Trader**, T:GF to **Traveller: Ground Forces**, T:RF to **Traveller: Rim of Fire**, T:SM to **Traveller: Star Mercs** and T:ST to **Traveller: Starports**.

RESOURCES

The foundation for every **GURPS Traveller** campaign builds on the information in **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Compendium I**, and **GURPS Traveller**.

The following are recommended: **GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1** includes information on the psionically gifted Zhodani race and the initial detailed look at psionics in the **Traveller** universe. **GURPS Psionics** is the complete resource for creating and playing psionic characters.

Additional useful resources: **GURPS Traveller: Rim of Fire** discusses the Imperium's psionics institutes and the psionically empowered society on the Red Zone planet Heironymus. Depending on the type of campaign, **GURPS Traveller: Star Mercs**, **GURPS Traveller: Starports**, **GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces**, or **GURPS Traveller: Far Trader** may be useful.

For inspiration from fiction, there are many psi-themed SF novels to choose from. This brief list is a good starting point:

A Thousand Words For Stranger, Julie E. Czerneda.
Mind Game, Christine Feehan.
Shadow Game, Christine Feehan.
Mind of My Mind, Octavia E. Butler.
Kinsman's Oath, Susan Krinard.
Forge of the Titans, Steve White.
TNT: Telzey and Trigger, James H. Schmitz.
Gates of Hell, Susan Sizemore.

The Stars My Destination Aka Tiger! Tiger!, Alfred Bester.

Additionally, these series are recommended:

The *Pegasus* Series, Anne McCaffrey.
The *Rowan* Series, Anne McCaffrey.
The *Darkover* Series, Marion Zimmer Bradley.
The *Commonwealth* series, Alan Dean Foster.
And several novels of the *Babylon 5* series.



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CHAPTER ONE

FINDING A PSIONICS INSTITUTE

Finding a psionics institute depends on who you are, where you are, and what year it is. Children of the psionically gifted Zhodani noble and indentant classes (see p. GT 78-80) begin psionics training soon after they learn to speak and receive a comprehensive psionics curriculum in their schools. Although average Zhodani citizens (called proles) may possess latent psionic abilities, they do not receive training. Upward mobility is possible for prole children who demonstrate considerable psionic aptitude during standard testing. These fortunate few are adopted into an indentant family, and with that comes all the rights and responsibilities of that class.

Even within the Imperium prior to the PsionicSuppressions (800 to 826), finding an institute for psionics was no more challenging than locating any mundane college. During the Suppressions, institutes lost their charters and their

leaders were imprisoned. Whole families faced persecution and many fled to more sympathetic worlds outside the Imperium or to the Zhodani Consulate. The psions that remained in the Imperium went underground, changing their names, their occupations, and living double lives. In the nearly 300 years since, the use of psionics has remained ostensibly illegal and psionics institutes officially banned. However, the Imperium secretly established two psionics institutes of its own, disguising them as military installations, and continues the covert use of psions.

Worlds outside the Imperium and the Consulate vary from oppression to acceptance of psis, and everything in between.

A few isolated worlds within the Imperium developed cultures tolerant – or even supportive – of psionic abilities, despite the official ban on psionics.

These worlds are socially isolated (by choice or by tech level) from the Imperial community. In these cases, the Imperium often interdicts these systems, declaring them Red Zones.

The underground psionic community within the Imperium established many secret psionics institutes shortly after the end of the Suppressions. Citizens of the Imperium hear rumors of such facilities from time to time, but very few know where they are. Just as psions in the Imperium are searching for a place to learn and belong, the psionics institutes are searching for their next crop of students. The first of many challenges for a psion in the Imperium is to locate a psionics institute, a quest on which only the most persistent succeed (see p. GT:AR1 137). Those who fail must develop their talents in some other way – or not at all.

PRIMARY SOURCES

The first step is to find someone who knows where a psionics institute is located. Primary sources have direct knowledge either of an institute's location or how to contact its representatives.

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Scientists believe there may be a genetic factor determining who has psi potential. The existence of families with several generations of psions is evidence that this is true. For those lucky enough to be born into one of these bloodlines,

the matter of finding a psionics institute to attend is vastly simplified.

Traditionally, youngsters attend the alma mater of their gifted relative. Like-minded institutes pool resources so their students and graduates are aware of some of the other programs. Children of psionic families in the Imperium are sheltered from the hostilities faced by most psions. They are encouraged from a young age to discover and develop their unique capabilities, and trained in hiding their talents from their persecutors.

The most powerful and prestigious families are known in the psionics

community as *kites*. Kites created the first post-Suppressions psionics institutes and they remain one of the central influences regarding curriculum, protocols, and policies. One or two kites generally dominate the board of directors of any given institute. It is common for most of the faculty of an institute to be related by blood or marriage to the controlling kites.

In less blessed families, a relative who is secretly psionic watches the younger generation for signs of psionic talents. That relative will approach such a child at the right moment to guide them toward one of the institutes.

Newly emerging psions who trace their family lineage to the Suppressions may discover ancestors who attended the original institutes. Further investigation of the direct descendants of those relatives may reveal distant cousins dwelling within the Imperium or Zhodani Consulate with ties to present day institutes.

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

The deep-seated distrust of the Zhodani held by most Imperial citizens arises from a fear of the Consulate's overt use of psi, even in violation of the so-called right to privacy and free thought. Zhodani believe in neither. Their "thought police" (called *Tavrchedl'*) are responsible for maintaining "right thought" among the population (see p. GT 78-80).

Due to this inability to lie to trained Zhodani telepaths, what is a secret within the Imperium is common knowledge in the Zhodani Consulate. Many of the refugees who fled to the Consulate during the Suppressions kept in contact with the companions they left behind. Imperial psions aren't bothered by the lack of privacy within the Consulate and frequently travel there. A few Imperial psionics institutes even participate in the Psionics Games (see p. GT:AR1 18) held every three years within the Consulate.

Because the existence and location of psionics institutes within the Imperium are well known secrets in the Zhodani Consulate, a sincere individual can find an institute with only mild difficulty. Imperial spies are unable to disguise their intentions and always return empty-handed.

An Imperial citizen doesn't necessarily have to travel all the way to the Consulate for this information. Approximately 20 percent of Zhodani live outside the Consulate (although few live in the Imperium) and may confide in psions who gain their trust.

ZHODANI INSTITUTES

In Zhodani culture, only individuals born or adopted by noble and indentant families receive psionic training. Upper class Zhodani have on occasion adopted individuals from other races of Humaniti, making them eligible for training. All other non-Zhodani and proles (Zhodani of the lowest class) are not eligible for psionic training in the Zhodani system.

During the Psionic Suppressions in the Imperium, uncounted thousands fled to the Zhodani Consulate. These early immigrants established psionics institutes for their children and future generations of persecuted psions escaping the Imperium. Within the Consulate, non-Zhodani can legally receive training at these institutes. Zhodani, including proles, may attend these special institutes provided they get permission from the local world governing council. While nobles and indentants receive first consideration, few bother because they have already received similar training in school. There are waiting lists of proles petitioning to attend these institutes. Admission policies at institutes outside both the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate vary with local custom and regulations.

Because Imperial law forbids its citizens from seeking psionics training, anyone traveling toward the Zhodani

Consulate for that purpose is in violation of the law and subject to arrest and prosecution. The Imperium maintains records of citizens believed to have attended or have been employed by an institute while in Zhodani territory, and will charge them with those crimes if they are caught within the Imperium's borders. Hundreds of psions who have faced the risks and expense of travel to the Zhodani Consulate have been arrested en route. Starship crews caught transporting passengers to the Consulate for psionics training are subjected to severe fines and risk having their ships and cargo impounded.

THEY FIND YOU

A little indiscriminate use of psi goes a long way. Rumors start flying and before there is time to regret the indiscretion, someone comes knocking. The only problem is that there is no way to know who will show up first: an angry mob, a squad of well-armed police officers wearing dark face shields, or a pair of supportive psions offering relocation.

Anywhere inside the Imperium, local law enforcement will arrest citizens suspected of using psionic abilities. This is just the first step; Imperial military services try to get these individuals into their custody fairly quickly. Even if a psion manages to get out on bail before the military arrives, unscrupulous mercenary units eager to shanghai a promising psi for their own purposes lurk in the shadows. For those who manage to avoid these dangers (and occasionally for those who don't), the psionics institute's scouts will arrive as quickly as possible to recruit them.



Unfortunately, the scouts are not everywhere, and even if they should hear of a psion's plight, they may be in a different system several jumps away. Scouts spend less time chasing high profile psions in the center of an all-out manhunt, and more time quietly testing the masses. Genetic testing can reveal the potential for certain psi abilities. Aptitude tests disguised as memory or intelligence tests and administered under false pretenses to young adults net the lion's share of new students for the institutes. Test participants, whether they realize they possess psionic abilities or not, may receive admission into an institute. The scouts themselves have psychic talents, which they can use to narrow their search.

Each scout has a specific territory to work, covering several inhabited systems. As many as five scouts work in the most densely populated subsectors. Within their territory, scouts maintain a network of informants to clue them in on potential recruits. Some informants are graduates of the institutes themselves, working in a variety of fields while keeping their talents secret. The majority are not psionic, but are either sympathetic to the cause or easily swayed by bribes.

The network includes school counselors, planetary law enforcement, job placement advisers, hospital staff, members of the media, and mercenary recruiters. To protect the scout from exposure, the informants only know how to send him a message, but not his real identity or how to locate him. Even if a lone adventurer seeking admission to a psionics institute knew of such networks, it is nearly impossible to identify their members. The informants themselves don't know who else is in a network.

Dropping hints or confiding in individuals who may be informants is one way for a potential psion to initiate contact with a scout. Unfortunately, it is also a good way to attract the attention of the informants working for the military or mercenary units.

JOIN THE MILITARY, LEARN PSIONICS

The Imperium maintains two psionics institutes of its own, both under the

guise of military installations. (see p. T:RF132) Among the initial testing new recruits endure after joining the Imperial military services are covert psionic aptitude tests. Recruits that pass the screening are transferred to one of the psionics institutes for training.

The military also selects promising individuals who've been arrested for using psionics. Criteria for drafting those psions into service include health, fitness, age, the usefulness of their psionic talent, and the likelihood of successfully reforming the personality into a soldier.

Once individuals are identified as psions they are given a choice. Either decline the training and return to the ranks (or prison), knowing that from now on they are on the Imperium's watch list, or accept the training and the lifetime commitment to military service that comes with it.

MERCENARY RECRUITERS

A mercenary recruiter (they are often nicknamed *Jim*) earns his living by hooking up mercenaries and units desperate to replace the casualties of the last mission. While profitable in itself, recruiters handle more than just mercenaries.

Locating a possible psion and referring them to an institute only happens a few times in a recruiter's career, but it is lucrative enough to keep him on the lookout for promising potentials. The fee the recruiter can charge a psion for a referral is just a fraction of what an institute will pay. The Jims won't know the exact location of an institute, but they will know how to send one a message, and a scout will contact him to arrange to meet the prospective student.

The fee a recruiter charges varies according to the character's ability to pay, but most Jims are willing to take it in trade, especially if they can make use of the psion's unique abilities. In these cases he won't ask an unreasonable tenure of service, because he is just delaying his big payoff from the institute. He will only demand the psionic services until the scout arrives.

DIGGING THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND

The psionic underground is a subculture rarely glimpsed by the outside world. Only existing in significant numbers in large population centers, the underground itself is a kaleidoscope of

*Memo to Core Sector leader of the Imperial
Special Prosecutor's office:*

*Pursuant to your most recent report, I agree
with your assessment of prisoner L1298-Johobitz.
His minor animal empathy and advanced age dis-
qualifies him as a candidate. Proceed with standard
prosecution of his case.*

*Prisoner C8521-Kelt may be young, but her clear
potential overcomes my usual hesitation. Transport
her to Terra at the earliest convenience.*

*Recommend telepathic evaluation of prisoner
S3947-Grazer to determine if rehabilitation of his
deviant personality is possible and of prisoner
A2773-Yulii's possible status as a precognitive.*

*– Collin Richar, Imperial Special Prosecutor,
Psionic Crimes Division*

Facing the Gauntlet

Don't blow a neural cluster about the gauntlet. Almost no one gets maimed on the first level. The kinetics face off with zapbots. Mentals take the psibots. You better take a practice round in the cellar to get the hang of them if you don't want to shred in the first 30 seconds like most pupas.

Level one is an elimination arena bout. Five challengers and three bots. Kinetics dodge paint projectiles. You can use fancy gymnastics and other physical moves, but the glory is in the kinetics. Last kinetic standing goes to round two, and if you got by on your luck before, it won't help you in the one-on-one kinetic duels of level two.

Mentals get the same treatment except people operate the psibots. You got to read the drivers and make them miss or predict their moves. You'll get the stink scared off you in level two, no matter how good you are. The Ether is no joke, and if you've never even seen one before you better pray you don't win level one. I've seen grown men drool in the corner after level two, even when they won! In the worst cases, straightening them out can take months of 'pathic rehab.

And if you think that's abrasive, be grateful you aren't on Deneb. They toss the pupas right into level two combat without even screening them for potential. It's a slaughter. You best jump clear of gauntlets run by mercenaries in general. They collect scalps, psionically speaking.

overlapping factions. A gathering among the psionic underground can vary from wild "psychic raves" to militant activist meetings to small support group settings. Never meeting in the same place twice, the community is nearly impossible to track unless you are psychic, which is the whole point.

Self-regulation, or lack thereof, produces a variety of social attitudes from one planet to the next. While some communities will embrace emergent psions into the fold, others are not so benevolent. Some groups have adopted hazing rituals for would-be psions. These activities evolved from the traditional Psionic Games held in the Zhodani Consulate (p. 11). In some locations the rites are spiritual in nature and allow the petitioner to demonstrate their worthiness to join the collective. More often, inexperienced challengers, called *pupas*, run a gauntlet against more skilled psions while the onlookers lay bets on the outcome. Death has occurred on several occasions, especially if the contestant is suspected

of working for the authorities. Telepathic combat is especially dangerous, and is the cause of the most severe and enduring injuries.

Pupas, wannabes, and other hangers-on drift on the fringes of the underground. Earning trust among the naturally suspicious psions requires both patience and a willingness to prove one's self. An adventurer has to establish a place in the community before asking them for help, especially with regard to the actual location of a psionics institute. Openly speaking of an institute, particularly how to find one, is taboo. Asking about one is a sure way of getting censored, violently. Scouts patrol the fringes of the underground, and once they are satisfied with the sincerity and potential of a pupa, they will initiate contact.

RED ZONES

Of all the worlds given a Red Zone classification, none are officially

imposed for psionics. Unofficially, however, is an entirely different matter. Psionics-tolerating planets that lack the interest or technology to interact with Imperial community are classified Red Zones. The Imperium enforces this status as fervently as if these worlds harbored deadly plagues. Heironymus in the Solomani Rim (see p. T:RF90), for example, became a Red Zone after the Scout Service determined that ghost stories about the planet really evolved from the prevalence of psionics in the previously undiscovered culture. They possessed the ability to hide their entire civilization from a reconnaissance mission from the nearby world of Ludmilla, whose rulers were alarmed by stories of an entire psionic civilization so nearby.

Psions learning of the planet's true nature and hoping to find refuge or training are detained as soon as they jump into the system. The few who manage to reach the planet's surface find escape almost impossible.

SECONDARY SOURCES

When primary sources are unavailable, a potential student can find people who know the people in the know. These secondary sources can point the PCs in the right direction, or lead them into a trap. Using psionics is illegal, but so is harboring fugitives and withholding information from the authorities. Secondary sources keep their knowledge secret for more than just self-preservation, and very few will part with it merely from the goodness of their hearts.

PARAPSIONICS AND RELIGIONS

The supernatural isn't just the province of psionics. Religions and superstitions across the galaxy believe in everything from ghosts to gods to the primal forces of nature and space. Pontiffs proclaim their gods have shown them the future, channellers claim to be in communication with the dead, and old customs detail ways to "read" everything from bumps on the head to wrinkles of the skin to allow a peek into someone's soul.

As long as the source of their power is not psionics, they are free to practice their trade. Among the charlatans and the believers are some genuine psions. These gifted few walk a fine line to prevent arousing suspicion. Even if they have not trained in an institute, they may have acquaintances in the underground.

MEDIA SOURCES

Main Stream Sources: Unless a psion has been caught or suspected of a crime, mainstream media sources remain conspicuously mute about psionics in general, and with good reason. More than one reporter has vanished while investigating a suspected psionics institute. To survive in a society hostile toward them, those gifted with supernatural abilities value their privacy, and the faculty and students of an institute have more than enough power to back it up. So even when reporters suspect a location secretly houses an institute, they keep the information to themselves.



However, just because they don't publish the information, it doesn't mean they wouldn't talk about it. A little friendly coaxing, or telepathic probing, and journalists will banter about the rumors and suspicions they've heard, giving a few hints about locations or contacts to check out.

Independent Media: While mainstream media may turn a blind eye to the institutes of higher psionics, independent media sources aren't so easily intimidated. Their small circulation, inaccurate reporting, and wild conspiracy theories leave their credibility so low it protects them from repercussions from the institutes.

An adventurer seeking information from the independent media should pay close attention to the slant they give their stories. Paranoid groups who fear and hate psionics sponsor many of them. Strangers approaching one of these sources may be taken for infiltrators and disposed of accordingly.

The information from independent sources consists of three parts speculation to one part fact. Tips from these

journalists may lead adventurers down a couple of blind alleys before eventually leading to a real psionics institute.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Planetary Law Enforcement: Like the media, law enforcement knows more about the psionics institutes in their jurisdiction than they reveal. Officers face more than enough serious crime every day; they have better things to do than to go digging for trouble with the psionics institutes. Like other types of organized crime, the institutes face the occasional sting operation, but the psychics always see them coming so far in advance that the operations are fruitless. The police have all but given up trying to catch them. Some planetary law enforcement agencies unknowingly employ psions, who ensure continuous misinformation campaigns keep the police far from the institutes.

The last thing the cops want is to send another lawbreaker to one of these illegal institutes. Boldly approaching an

officer to inquire about the location of the nearest institute will land the questioner in jail. The police aren't stupid, and any mention of psychic abilities will raise their suspicions. Such attempts will gain the inquirer a tail and succeed in getting his communications bugged, but will produce no information. If a seeker manages to identify a fellow psion on the force, he may get a sympathetic nudge in the right direction. Additionally, psions finding themselves in jail may catch some rumors from the other criminals, but the accuracy is questionable.

Local Law Enforcement: While the planetary law enforcement agencies may have some idea where a psionics institute might be, most local agencies are clueless. The chances of a psionics institute being located in any particular district are so remote that the possibility isn't even considered on the local level. These smaller agencies may be aware of underground psionic communities or clubs in their area that stay mobile to avoid capture.

POLITICIANS

Certain politicians, especially those in the planetary, interplanetary, or Imperial political arenas, secretly avail themselves of psionic talent. Some of

these politicians represent a planet or system in which a psionics institute is located, and they receive the aid of the institute in exchange for a blind eye. If one suspects a certain duke or archduke employs such illegal methods, their territory is a good place to search for an institute.

In one example, a psion approached one of these shady politicians for assistance. In exchange for a referral to a psionics institute, she ended up indentured to her benefactor for life and blackmailed with the threat of exposure and arrest. The life she led was one of wealth and luxury, but it was a silken prison from which she couldn't leave. When she escaped, she became branded a criminal and a traitor with nowhere to hide. The underground couldn't risk protecting such a high profile fugitive, so she had to fend for herself.

Politicians not fortunate enough to have an institute in their region may free a criminal who is charged with using psionic abilities in exchange for services. A long-term arrangement sometimes results, but more often these rogue psions either escape or are killed in the attempt.

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

Even though the use of psionic talents is illegal, scientific research on those abilities is not. The Imperium, as well as a few planetary governments, sponsors research into ways to detect or suppress (or even increase) psychic powers. Law enforcement eagerly awaits new developments to make prosecuting psionic offenders easier.

Some members of the scientific community view paranormal capabilities as an evolutionary advancement, which should be studied and encouraged rather than feared and suppressed. Institute-sponsored research has resulted in highly sophisticated techniques for identifying psi potential in individuals, but these advances are seldom publicized. The technology used by local governments and law enforcement is two generations behind what is available to the institutes (including the Imperial ones).

Contacting a scientist without extensive investigation is risky. Not all psi researchers are sympathetic to psions – some are committed to saving society from the abuses of psi and those who possess it, and will report any psion who contacts them to the authorities.

ALTERNATIVES TO JOINING AN INSTITUTE

Not all psions attend an institute. Just because someone possesses a talent, it doesn't automatically mean that they will find the resources to develop it. Psions can teach themselves through trial and error how to control their abilities, but the learning process is longer (see p. GP8). While this is an option for those unable to find an institute, most who choose this route are not the "institute type," finding structured environments suffocating.

Apprenticeships: Informal apprenticeships are another option. An older psion can take a younger one under his wing. This arrangement is more frequent on planets off the major jump routes and in rural communities that aren't even aware that secret psionics institutes exist. Starship crews, which can become a community unto themselves, also tend toward the apprenticeship option. A crew discovering a psionic talent among their

companions may quietly trade him to a crew with a more experienced psion, hoping that he'll be in good hands.

Gangs: Urban communities, especially those far removed from an institute, give rise to psionic gangs. Outcast teenagers band together for mutual support, and the gang environment provides them with identity, safety, and a sense of belonging. Members of the gang quickly learn the basics and advance to specialized uses of their talent. So not only are they using their talents illegally, but they also use them to commit illegal acts, like theft and vandalism. Local law enforcement acts decisively against such gang activity, and uses lethal force if necessary. Gangs that are less aggressive and can stay out of trouble have lasted more than a generation. Psionics institute scouts recruit from the ranks of these gangs, and even encourage them to continue; the gangs invariably pick out the

emerging psions among their classmates more accurately than anyone else can.

Publications: Three underground publishers produce handbooks that the Imperium ban immediately. These books include instructions for developing psionic potential, ways to avoid detection, activist political commentary, and diaries of famous (and infamous) psions. Copies of these books pass from hand to hand and have been confiscated in every corner of the Imperium. Activists from the psionic underground leave copies of these illegal publications in schools, libraries, and other public places. Interested readers can glean enough from these works to learn some of the basics of mastering their powers, and even uncover clues on how to psionically locate the underground.

CHAPTER TWO

PSIONICS

INSTITUTES

For creating and playing psionics characters, *GURPS Psionics* is the definitive roleplaying resource. *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1* includes an overview of psionics institutes and the nature of psionics in the *Traveller* game universe. This chapter builds on the foundation of those texts.

Psionic characters created for the *Traveller* universe must follow certain guidelines, which include accepting disadvantages in exchange for the advantage of psi (see p. GT84-85). Briefly, all psions begin with Social Stigma. To acquire psionic powers and skills a character must take a 10-point Unusual Background disadvantage. By increasing that to a 15-point Unusual Background, the psion can gain access to a psionics institute. All other psions must embark on a quest to locate one. Without psionics institute training, characters can only purchase latent powers limited to +1 – and they are unreliable at that. Additional psionic advantages, disadvantages, limitations, enhancements, and quirks are covered in detail in *GURPS Psionics*.

Once an institute has been located, a potential student must pay for the testing that will determine what powers (if any) he possesses. This testing is conducted over a period of two weeks and costs Cr5,000 (which may be refunded if the results are inconclusive). Details for

roleplaying this testing is provided in *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1*. Individuals with at least one psionic power at level 1 or greater can ask to attend the institute.

Institutes charge an additional Cr100,000 for the required four month training period. This price includes room and board. Students unable to pay for the training may arrange to work off the debt by performing certain “favors” for the institute.

Psi powers can be improved as long as a character already has at least one point. Psionic skills can be acquired and improved like any other skill, through experience or study (see p. B82). Students at the institutes train 14 hours a day. At that rate a character point is earned every two weeks. By the end of four months the newly train psion has earned eight character points for improving psionic powers or skills. Additional training with a qualified instructor adds one character point per 200 training hours. They can also be earned through self study at a rate of 400 hours per point. Later, if the psion used his powers on an intensive daily basis, he can gain an additional two and a half character points in that power or skill annually (see p. P8).

While attending the institute, a psion can focus on one or two specific skills or

spread his character points across several skills. Some psionic powers only offer a few skills, such as teleportation, which enables the psion to concentrate on them to reach a high level of power and skill. With the many skills available to telepaths, the psionics institute could provide training in several areas to give the psion a solid base on which to build with later experiences.

To roleplay psionics institute training, the personality of the institute comes into play. Some institutes (particularly mercenary, military, and some underground institutes) will focus their training primarily on combat applications. Others will allow the psion more freedom of choice. Instructors discuss the student’s power and skill options so the training can be tailored to his personal goals. For the player and game master, this means dedicating a solid two weeks of game time during training on a single skill for each point that it will be increased.

In addition to skills training, other dynamics can come into play during the four month training period. Student rivalries, Imperial raids, underground faction wars, gauntlets, psionics games, and training missions are just a few of the challenges adventurers may encounter during their stay at an institute. Every institute has its own personality, and that gives its students a different experience. The following sections explore more deeply the differences between various types of psionics institutes and what their students can expect.

The names and other details of all of the sample institutes contained here may be revised and adapted to suit an individual campaign. Many locations have been only been generally sketched in, to make it easier for a game master to fit them in where desired.



OVERT INSTITUTES

Psionics institutes outside of the Imperium usually have the luxury of operating legally. While attending these institutes, psions have the freedom to openly use their psionics. Imperial citizens must use care when crossing the borders of Imperial space to attend such institutions.

INSTITUTES IN THE ZHODANI CONSULATE

The psions who fled to the Consulate during and after the Suppressions established psionics institutes for refugees of the Imperium and their children. The majority of these institutes were established in the Iadr Nsobl Province (see p. T:AI19), which is the Zhodani province that borders the Spinward Marches. Despite the Imperium's attempt to stop psions from traveling to the Consulate for training, most still succeed. To accommodate these students, moderate and high population planets closest to the narrow Zhodani-Imperium border have at least one psionics institute. The Zhodani do not permit psionics institutes on Forbidden or Unabsorbed worlds (see p. T:AI18).

A psion seeking training outside of the Imperium can also select from several institutes within the frequently disputed Human Client States wedged between the Consulate and the Imperium. The Human Client States that align themselves with the Imperium tend to follow their example and repress psionics. Psionics institutes on colonies aligned with the Zhodani Consulate can operate as freely as those inside the Zhodani borders and often times these worlds are highly populated with refugees from the Imperium and more restrictive states.

During the Zhodani and Imperium's many frontier wars, the Human Client States were dragged into the conflict. Even when the superpowers are not at war, the differing ideals of the Human Client States flare up into small wars periodically. By declaring neutrality, and staunchly defending that status, some states manage to dodge the storm. Psionics institutes are lightning rods that

attract accusations of Zhodani influence on neutral worlds.

The psionics institutes on neutral planets are careful to keep themselves independent of Zhodani influences, at least publicly, to protect themselves from being accused of bringing excessive Zhodani influence to their cultures. In more turbulent times, psionics institutes on neutral and even Zhodani administered client states suffer from off world raids or acts of terrorism from local insurrectionists.

While there are no actual political parties in the Zhodani government, certain factions take an interest in the psionics institutes in the Consulate and Human Client States they govern (see p. T:AI14-15). Anti-Imperialists have a mixed reaction to the psionics institutes in Consulate space that cater to non-Zhodani. Some are offended by the potential Imperial influences the foreigners introduce to Zhodani society. However, they do support the notion of training Imperial psions (and educating them in the rules of morality) and then sending them back to the Imperium where they may have a "positive effect" on Imperial culture and even help change it.

On the other hand, the Progressives strongly support the psionics institutes. They encourage the institutes to conduct research that increases an individual's psionic power and to further the training of the prole class.

Expansionists support psionics institutes in both the Consulate and the secret ones in the Imperium. They back pro-Zhodani movements in the Imperium and in the Human Client States. Toward this end Expansionists have even established the "Freedom Express," which is a small fleet of trading vessels with secret compartments in which to smuggle Imperial psionic potentials across the border for training and return them back to Imperial space.

The Progressives and Expansionists have close ties with the Psionics Underground operating in the Imperium. The psionics institutes throughout the Consulate, Human Client States, and even some in the

Imperium continue to operate successfully thanks to the efforts of these political supporters.

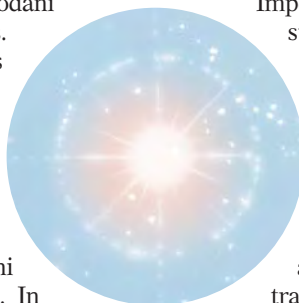
Adjusting to Zhodani

Culture: Non-Zhodani students must pass prerequisite courses in Zhodani culture, morality, and history prior to psionics training. The Consulate also

requires students who are not yet fluent to study the Zhodani language. Institutes conduct bilingual classes (in both Standard and Zhodani) when necessary. Psionics is considered an indistinguishable and integral element of Zhodani society. To teach the mechanics of psionics without the underlying morality and without the context of history is to denigrate psionic powers and their role in Zhodani culture. These prerequisite classes add another six months to the training period at no additional cost and are intended to assist the students to behave properly in Zhodani society.

An institute whose students frequently disrupt the surrounding community may lose its charter. While the Imperium may view those requirements as brainwashing, the Consulate considers it a minimum requirement for the institute to remain a "good neighbor" to the overall community of which it is a part.

Students at the psionics institutes must obey all of the rules that apply to Zhodani citizens, which include all planetary and local laws as well as the Consulate enforced policies. While non-Zhodani are permitted to practice their own religion in private, sharing religious teachings or attempting to convert others is discouraged. Regardless of an individual's religion, they are still expected to follow the *Tavrziانش* or "morality's path" while attending an institute. Part of following morality's path is to fulfill one's duty. As such, the institute, its faculty, and students are each expected to fulfill their duties. The Zhodani consider the increase in psionically talented individuals throughout the Zhodani Consulate (which has resulted in a growing number of nobles and intendants) as "proof" that the Consulate as a whole has been fulfilling its duty (see p. T:AI7).



Following this logic, the Consulate views training Imperial citizens in psionics (and “morality’s path”) and returning them home as an opportunity to improve the Imperium. In their view, this also raises the Consulate for initiating the Imperium’s improvement. Graduates of the psionics institutes are permitted to remain in the Consulate if they choose, but the ones who return to the Imperium are encouraged to assist the Consulate to improve the Imperium by sharing their philosophy, supporting psionic causes, and even by becoming Zhodani agents.

Students are also subject to correction by the “thought police” if warranted. Non-Zhodani students who commit a crime or whose psychological state becomes disruptive will have the choice between leaving the institute (and Zhodani space) or having their thoughts adjusted by the *Tavrchedl*. When non-Zhodani students enroll at the institutes, they are encouraged to remain positive, upbeat, and to stay out of trouble and they won’t have to worry about the thought police taking an interest in them.

Housing: Students live in single occupancy rooms in dorms on campus. Because of the Zhodani’s height, Imperial students will notice that all doorways and ceilings are a foot and a half higher than what they normally encounter in Imperial architecture. The beds are longer and firmer, intended for the heavier Zhodani physique. Other furnishings are also on a larger scale, but smaller items can be substituted if requested.

Students may help themselves to the pantry or avail themselves of the four meals prepared daily in the institute’s kitchen. Zhodani are able to metabolize certain proteins not digestible by other races of Humaniti. Warning labels appear on food edible only by Zhodani.

Social Events: Institute officials subscribe to the Zhodani position that extracurricular activities and sports contribute to an individual’s health and well being and therefore provide a variety in which students may participate. Sports teams from local community groups compete with the institute’s teams. At the end of each four-month training cycle several institutes in each region will have small psionic competitions. Students are encouraged to join clubs and other activities in their local community as long as it doesn’t interfere

with their training schedules. This gives students the chance to experience in real life the Zhodani culture and principles they’ve studied.

Aspers Demi Psionics Institute

Located in Aspers Demi’s port town, the psionics institute on this neutral Human Client State has survived a rough history. Initially an ally of the Zhodani, Aspers Demi has been one of the most disputed planets in the Human Client States region. After being overrun during the First Frontier War, Aspers Demi spent nearly 400 years (including the Psionics Suppressions) under the iron-fisted protection of Cassioparet, a nearby world strongly aligned with the Imperium. The Zhodani liberated Aspers Demi during the Third Frontier War, but the world suffered from several bombardments that destroyed most of its major cities.

Still recovering from the occupation, the devastation of the Third Frontier War and dealing with unrest within its own population, Aspers Demi declared itself neutral at the start of the Fourth Frontier War, and refused to aid either side. The planet has recovered nearly completely from the ordeal of war, but fearing future conflict between the superpowers will once again visit destruction upon their world, Aspers Demi remains staunchly neutral.

The psionics institute never completely disbanded, even during the dark times of the Cassioparet occupation, when it went underground. While presently permitted to operate openly, the Aspers Demi Psionics Institute is careful to hide its ties with the Zhodani Consulate, which quietly feeds funds into the school’s account.

The institute openly permits non-citizens to enroll, but students must sign a declaration of neutrality effective during the four months of training. A full third of their students are from offworld. Most of those are from other neutral- or Imperium-influenced Human Client States nearby without public psionics institutes of their own. While psionics is permitted on Aspers Demi, it is used with discretion and rarely in public.

Linyaree Psionics Institute

Located in the massive high port in stationary orbit above Linyaree, this psionics institute caters exclusively to

the Imperial psions smuggled into Zhodani space by the Expansionists’ Freedom Express. The psionics institute is located in a secured inner core of the starport. The psions are never told where they are. Once they arrive they are spirited into the covert location in fast windowless trams. Students remain within the psionics institute for the entire four-month training period. After the training is complete they are immediately smuggled back into the Imperium.

There are no official records of the psion’s presence aboard the station that may reveal to outsiders that the psion ever traveled to Zhodani space. This is done to protect graduates living in the Imperium. If spies were to discover the truth of the Linyaree Psionics Institute, not only would it endanger the psions, but also it might frighten the Imperium sufficiently to start another frontier war.

A number of scouts from the Underground recruit students for the Linyaree Psionics Institute. Individuals with psionic potential and grudges against the repressive Imperium are brought to the institute for training. After a scan to verify the psion’s temperament, they are molded into assets for the Zhodani intelligence corps. Graduates return to the Imperium to work for the greater good of all psions. They are directed by agents within the Underground into positions where their talents will be most useful. These agents use the psions primarily for intelligence gathering, as a link in the underground communications network, as recruiters, and occasionally as saboteurs. These assets are not actual agents and are on the low rung of the intelligence ladder. An asset has limited knowledge that could endanger the network in the event he is discovered and forced to reveal what he knows.

Nempany Psionics Institute

Deeper in Zhodani space than most other psionics institutes created for the Imperial refugees, Nempany’s student body averages 60 percent proles, most with very low power levels. Twenty percent of the students are descendants of Imperial refugees or recent permanent immigrants from the Imperium. Five percent come from the Human Client States and only 15 percent are Imperial psions intending to return to the Imperium.

Due to the demographics, this psionics institute is strongly oriented to Zhodani customs. Foreign students will notice a definite attempt to encourage conformity to Zhodani beliefs and behaviors. Zhodani businesses visit the school after graduation to hire the newly trained psions. Imperial students are encouraged to form friendships, join social and athletic clubs, and pursue romantic relationships.

Although Imperial influence on Zhodani culture is a concern, the ultimate goal of the socialization is to aid the students in melting into Zhodani society or to carry Zhodani qualities back into the Imperium. The thought police closely monitor the Zhodani citizens in frequent contact with the Imperial students (particularly the Zhodani students) and are quick to correct any Imperial influences that have infected them.

RED ZONE INSTITUTES

Worlds and systems the Imperium wants to keep isolated are declared Red Zones. To accomplish this the Imperium publishes an interdiction (see p. GT56-57). Developing societies on planets across the Imperium are allowed to evolve in isolation. This permits Red Zone planets autonomy from Imperial rule as long as these worlds don't possess a sufficient tech level to achieve interstellar travel. Throughout the Imperium, the Scout Service is aware of seven Red Zone planets with psionics institutes. While five of these planets are for the most part unaware of the Imperium's full existence, two Red Zone planets choose to limit their spacefaring technology to maintain their isolation status.

Even though Red Zone psionics institutes operate openly, there are some problems for Imperial citizens who wish to pursue training on these worlds. Seeking psionics training is illegal for Imperial citizens. Scout Service ships will attempt to detain all starships trying to slip onto or off of a Red Zone planet. Even if the psion manages to reach the planet's surface, he will need to disguise himself as a local. The low TL worlds with little or no experience with alien civilizations are unlikely to embrace a spacefaring stranger and then arm him with the secrets of psychic powers. The two worlds that consciously chose Red Zone isolation don't want to risk losing



their independent status for a handful of selfish foreigners trying to break the Imperium's laws at their expense.

Psions who successfully sidestep the Imperium and fool their host world into believing they are natives long enough to receive psionics training still must adjust to the lower tech level. Each Red Zone world has its own cultural variations that present challenges to foreign psis.

Psions who successfully complete their training (and who continue to maintain their secret identity) could pursue a life and career on the Red Zone planet. Outside this option, Red Zone trained psions are on their own to locate employment off world – assuming they manage to escape the Scout Service vessels blockading the Red Zone world.

Mermot

Scout Service investigations determined Mermot's population descended from a small Vilani colony that predates the Long Night. The population is aware of its history, particularly the negative side of interstellar empires. Determined to maintain isolation from the Imperium, Mermot agreed to an interdiction. While they are TL 8 in all other areas of technology, they enforce a strict law prohibiting the manufacture of starships. Satellites and high orbit crafts are the limits of their spacefaring exploration.

Because the Imperium doesn't insinuate itself in Mermot's affairs, the PsionicsSuppressions never came to this world. Besides its lack of space travel, Mermot is much like the Imperium prior to the Suppressions in the handling of their psionic population. Infrequent contact with the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service diplomats has enlightened the Mermot government

(and to a lesser extent its population) of what it considers the Imperium's Humaniti rights violations against a minority population. The continued oppression of the psions in the Imperium distresses Mermot.

While the government and administrators of the Mermot psionics institutes sympathize with persecuted psions fleeing to their world, they are reluctant to openly accept these refugees for fear of violating the agreed interdiction and losing their independence from the Imperium. Those psions who do manage to reach Mermot undetected by the Scout Service are permitted to stay and even receive training, however their ships are confiscated and the psions made citizens and therefore not permitted to leave Mermot.

Psionics institutes on Mermot are much like engineering colleges. The institutes work closely with employers to train students in the specialties in demand. Scholarships in exchange for a two-year post graduation contract are available to interested psions.

Carnia Mau

Decades of clan warfare over centuries old disputes keep Carnia Mau in political turmoil. After intermittent years waffling between Red Zone and Amber Zone status, the Imperium finally declared Carnia Mau a permanent Red Zone until the internal conflicts could be settled and a lasting peace established on the planet. This is not likely to occur soon. Dozens of racial factions fight amongst themselves in brushfire wars and insurgencies that rage even in the relatively more peaceful cities, effectively destroying the planetary government's power to rule.

Taking advantage of the interdiction, many of the larger tribes have established psionics institutes in their regions of influence to train their psionic potentials to use their abilities, particularly as a weapon. These institutes are favorite targets for terrorist attacks. Outsiders, even off-world bystanders, would find gaining access to these institutes very difficult. They are intended only for the young potentials of the controlling tribe and any outsider would be accused of spying for an enemy faction. Avoiding the Imperial blockade to come to and from the planet, risking life and limb simply visiting the planet, and the likelihood of being arrested (and possibly even executed) if discovered makes this planet very unattractive for psions looking for an institute.

Students of these institutes live and train in converted basements or warehouses with covered windows. Essentially any open workspace, enclosed within an inner city building is suitable. Students sleep on cots or piles of tarps, depending on what's available. There is very little privacy and students are not permitted to leave the building. Food is brought in when possible, but it is not always possible. Graduates are treasured resources to be protected, so even when on a mission armed guards always escort them. Psions attempting to escape are shot to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

Gnysa

Colonized by the Vilani prior to the Long Night and rediscovered by the Third Imperium, Gnysa is a low-tech agricultural world of exquisite beauty. The small population lost the records of the early colonization and rewrote the verbal histories into a creation myth. Rural communities blossom across the Temperate Zone and heavy, hearty forests cap the planet's Polar Regions. Unknown to the population of Gnysa, the Imperium declared their world a Red Zone. They are protected from development or even contact with the rest of the Imperium.

A single psionics institute, referred to as The Retreat for the Development of Magical Talents, was established in Spuru, the planet's largest city. A psion who manages to reach the planet may be able to pass himself off as a pilgrim from a small and distant village long enough to receive training. If the psion's belief

that he is from off world is discovered by the telepathic teachers they will attempt to heal his madness. If that fails, they will dismiss him.

Students of the retreat stay in their own lovely, wide-open suites that overlook the gardens. Beautiful and sensual surroundings are considered essential for magical studies. The suites are furnished in large, comfy furniture. Fragrant plants flourish inside and out. Waterfalls, fountains, art, and wind chimes are everywhere. Creatures believed to be endowed with magical qualities roam the grounds. Classes are conducted in the gardens when the weather permits. Graduates of the retreat are awarded a magical talisman that guarantees hospitality at every village they may visit. Of course, the hospitality is in exchange for the magical assistance the graduates are expected to offer freely as needed. Most of the psions on this world consider magic a calling too important to limit to a single village and travel widely as Fate dictates.

Bellex

A water world peopled by descendants of a mixture of Zhodani and non-Zhodani settlers, Bellex resides over two sectors away from the current Zhodani Consulate. While it is not clear how this mixed race of Humaniti came to populate this world, the Zhodani-like culture encourages a psionic tolerant society with several psionics institutes.

Nutritious sea life grows in colorful coral reefs over the surface of the world-spanning ocean. Towers rise above the water in a few places, but with no land to break the force of the storms, frequent and massive hurricanes rage above the water. To protect themselves from the chaos above water, the civilization dwells almost entirely in the underwater habitats. To reach this planet the ancestors of the current population must have had some form of space travel available to them, but the planet has no active space program at present. With the population essentially hidden from view by the storms and the oceans, few outside the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service are even aware of their existence. Unknown to the Imperium, the inhabitants of Bellex are aware of the Imperium, but make no attempt to contact them.

Starships will find only a few platforms (normally used for aerial craft) on

which to land. Fooling the part-Zhodani descendants for the length of time required to train at one of their institutes is nearly impossible. Not anxious to attract the attention of outsiders (either the Imperium or other psions seeking refuge) any off-world migrant would be arrested and imprisoned. They will remain in prison until they voluntarily submit to Bellex's version of the thought police and allow them to wipe all memories of the migrant's true origins. They are then reintroduced to Bellex society as an amnesiac.

Heironymus

Of all the Red Zone worlds in the Imperium, the seemingly innocent planet of Heironymus (see p. T:RF90) has made even the Scout Service nervous. Early reports of a psionic civilization on this world brought investigators from nearby Ludmilla, which found not a single living soul during weeks of scans and exploration. Not long after that the Scout Service discovered the thriving civilization.

Heironymus is the only world known to be able to detect the intentions of the crew of an orbiting vessel and to actively disguise their entire civilization at will – presumably all through the use of psionics. Since the civilization's tech level remains low, the decision was made to protect the planet (and the Imperium) by declaring it a Red Zone.

While the Imperium occasionally will catch a starship transporting a psion to other Red Zone planets, they have yet to catch a ship coming or going from Heironymus. Scout vessels have reported tracking inbound ships only to lose its signal as it approached the planet. The possibility that somehow the Heironymans are aiding and harboring psionic fugitives concerns the Imperium, but so far the number of incidents has remained low enough to avoid official intervention.

Officials always greet Imperial psions who reach Heironymus. If their intentions are deemed worthy, the Heironymus will allow them to attend a psionics institute and even invite them to remain as a citizen. If a psion chooses to leave, the local officials will psionically shield him from Scout Service notice until he reaches a safe distance, but he is instructed never to return unless it is to immigrate permanently.

Psionics institutes on Heironymus are regarded with the same nonchalance as any other trade school. While not only having a large number of psionic citizens, Heironymus also has a higher than normal occurrence of extremely high power and skill level psions. Heironyman archeologists suggest an ancient culture may have had an outpost on Heironymus hundreds of centuries ago and they somehow changed the world's environment in a way that increases the psionic potential in Humaniti.

Tamkarageena

The Human population of Tamkarageena shows little interest in developing technology. The simple, pre-industrial society has been monitored by the Scout Service since the beginning of the Third Imperium and no significant technological advancement has been made in all that time. The Imperium's Red Zone interdiction protects the perpetually fledgling society.

For the inhabitants of Tamkarageena spirituality and religion takes priority, even over the chores of daily survival. The spiritually gifted (those with telepathic or ESP powers) have the option to attend universities which include some psionic training in the otherwise theological curriculum. As telekinesis and teleportation are judged to be demonic manifestations there is no training provided for them.

Off world psions find it difficult to assimilate the religious doctrine

required to attend these universities. Students must also accumulate an adequate number of years in the lower levels of a religiously dedicated life prior to petitioning for enrollment. While the Tamkarageenans are not technically advanced, they are not a stupid people. Logic, philosophy, and deep religious belief characterize their culture and off-world outsiders won't easily fit in.

Living conditions at the religious universities are primitive by Imperial standards. There is no electricity. The large stone monasteries have no heating except fireplaces and no cooling except small paper fans that do little to ease the yearly variations in temperature. Students live in small, damp rooms with straw mattresses, simple wooden furniture and oil lamps or candles for illumination. There is no running water and little knowledge of hygiene. Students who bathe more than once a week are reprimanded for wasting water. All graduates are expected to continue on to lead a similarly austere life.

Forbegn Beta

Prior to the Long Night, the inhabitants of Forbegn Beta were just entering the digital age, but had yet to achieve the technology to send satellites into space. Because of this, at that time no spacefaring cultures contacted the planet's inhabitants. Sometime during the Long Night a huge asteroid struck the planet, changing its magnetic field and global climate. Adapting to the new, harsher environment, the inhabitants developed

psionic means to predict, control, and recover from the resulting string of violent natural disasters.

Since the Scout Service re-discovered the planet, the natural disasters have waned only slightly. Besides technology designed to deal with the new climate and disaster management, few developments have been made. Due to the disturbing prevalence of psionic activity on the planet, the Scout Service and Imperium are reluctant to contact the inhabitants until they spontaneously begin to approach FTL (faster than light) technology.

Offworld psions may find the frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and landslides a frightening environment in which to live. Anyone exhibiting any psionic potential is encouraged to receive training – no questions asked. Graduates who enlist in the various psionic emergency services receive tuition deferment. Psions are given priority and respect in this traumatized society which depends heavily upon them.

With the continuous stream of emergencies and a shortage of psions, students don't have the leisure of dawdling for four months in a classroom. Once the basics are learned (the psions accumulate at least one point in a psionic skill), the rest of their education comes from on-the-job training. Students are paired with experienced psions and work disaster scenes in teams.

COVERT INSTITUTES

Despite the Imperium's ban on psionics, institutes dedicated to educating psions to harness their powers still exist. Covert psionics institutes within the Imperium mask themselves in various ways for protection from law enforcement and a prejudiced society. Finding an institute is challenging, but surviving some of them is even tougher!

IMPERIAL INSTITUTES

The Imperium only runs two psionics institutes of its own (see p. T:RF132). One is on Terra in the Solomani Rim and the other is in the Spinward

Marches. These bases are disguised as typical military training facilities. Because there are only two locations, the facilities are the largest psionics institutes in the Imperium. Individuals of every power type and strength are transported to the training centers from all over the Imperium. Twenty newly trained psions graduate from each base every four months and are assigned to positions in various Imperium military branches (see *Military*, p. 25, and *Scout Service*, p. 28).

The Imperium does not usually bother to train self-healers. Recruits identified as potential self-healers attend the regular boot camps just like any non-psion.

Classified records regarding the self-healing potential remain in the soldier's medical file. If severely wounded, a self-healer is quietly shuttled off to a Quina Spa for recovery and training (see *Quina Spas*, p. 21).

Students at the Imperium's psionics institutes are not permitted to leave the base during their off-duty hours. Their quarters and training facilities are psionically shielded and located in high security underground rooms. Each soldier has a psionically shielded and windowless private room. They are discouraged from spending extra time socializing – especially amongst themselves.

The Imperium is leery of allowing their psions to form bonds with each other that might encourage a dangerous version of the Psionic Underground within their ranks. To prevent this from happening, trainees are kept busy and constantly supervised by both psionic and non-psionic instructors. Recruits are given code names for the duration of the training process to prevent them from seeking out their classmates after leaving the institute. When a class graduates from the institute, students are usually assigned to far-flung sectors and different branches, in a further attempt to prevent future contact between them.

Solomani Rim Psionics Institute

Even though one military base may superficially resemble another, there are differences in attitude and approach that arise over time. The Solomani Rim Psionics Institute is nestled in the heart of the Rule of Man territory. The instructors and commander of the psionics institute have adopted some of the Solomani arrogance and an elitist attitude regarding their psionics training unit. While unaware of the true nature of the unit (which is officially designated a Special Forces training unit) other soldiers notice the superior bearing of the unit's commander and instructors.

The students also pick up on this deportment in their superiors and mirror it. A large ego is one way to identify a Solomani Rim Psionics Institute trained soldier. Not only do they lean toward the Solomani view that Humaniti is better than other races, but they (as psions) are better than other, non-psionic soldiers. The special considerations psionic soldiers receive later only serves to increase this self-important attitude (see *Military*, p. 25).

During training, Zhodani psionic battle tactics and discussed briefly. Combat drills primarily focus on quick strike missions on high priority, but non-psionic targets. Graduates of the Solomani Rim Psionics Institute are unlikely to see combat with the Zhodani. Missions for psions on the rimward side of the Imperium involve dealing with insurrectionists, border defense, monitoring the Solomani Empire, apprehending pirates, and other adventures similar to what ordinary military units face. The primary difference is that psion-centered units' missions are higher priority, more

sensitive, or more clandestine than average.

Spinward Marches Institute

The psionics institute in the Spinward Marches is regarded as a necessary evil. The history of the frontier wars is a constant reminder of why this institute exists. Instructors lecture the students at length about Zhodani tactics and the cost that has befallen the Imperium and its civilians because of them.

Like any arms race, the Imperium trains psions not because they want to, but because they feel they must in order to prepare for and defend against another Zhodani attack. The base goes on high alert every time Zhodani troop movements are detected, when diplomatic relations are strained, and sometimes even just because of credible rumors. While the Imperium has been unable to exercise any influence in the Zhodani Consulate, they are aware of Zhodani efforts to infiltrate and erode Imperial control in certain segments of society and on certain worlds. This covert activity further confirms to the Imperium that the Zhodani are building alliances in preparation for war.

Training and working with the recruits at the institute grates on the nerves of many of the command staff. Military psions serving in the Spinward Marches are wise to keep a low profile. They are watched closely and their communications routinely monitored for any sign of Zhodani contact or sympathy.

Psionic soldiers serving in Imperial forces face the personal dilemma of perpetuating violence and enforcing restrictions on their own kind – others who only wish the freedom to use their powers. Unlike the military psions, other psions are branded criminals and targeted for detention or elimination. This inner conflict weighs heavily on some soldiers, leading them to resign or making them vulnerable for Zhodani or underground recruitment.

The task for graduates from the Spinward Marches Psionics Institute is primarily to hold the line against Zhodani attacks. They train to fight other psions, not only the Zhodani, but the underground as well. They use their power in training missions to teach normals how to combat psions. Some of the stronger telepaths may even be entrusted to go on brief undercover missions

within the Zhodani Consulate itself. Unlike serving in the rimward side of the Imperium, the alumni of the Spinward Marches Psionics Institute are in high stress, high danger situations all the time – risking their lives for a government that many feel doesn't trust them.

UNDERGROUND INSTITUTES

Underground psionics institutes come in a variety of manifestations, partly as a way to fool the Imperium and partly due to the Underground's eclectic nature. In regions with controlling kites, permanent campuses are built and maintained under various guises, from private universities to members-only health clubs to recreational resorts. While the kite institutes tend toward higher class, permanent establishments, non-kite institutes generally are more transient in nature and often set up in make-due facilities.

Underground institutes sometimes have the added benefit of Zhodani aid (in the form of credits and resources) smuggled across the border to help them establish and maintain psionic training centers. Institutes closer to the Consulate, have strong ties to the Zhodani and the psionic refugees who fled the Imperium.

Kite-Controlled Regions

Kite institutes are self-sufficient, thanks to resources funneled in from psionically-boosted business ventures. All kites strive to establish themselves in local government and ingratiate themselves to the local nobility. These important contacts protect the institutes from scrutiny and provide ample warning of potential crackdowns. To outsiders, kites appear to be the nobles of the psionic community, although that is not strictly true. While they are economically secure and politically connected the Psionic Underground feels no obligation to follow a kite's rule, nor do kites attempt to impose themselves in matters where their assistance has not been requested.

Children of kite families attend the kite-controlled psionics institutes. Nobles and wealthy merchants (at least those who can come to terms with having psionic children) also entrust their offspring to kite institutes. Catering to these higher classes, the kite-controlled

institutes resemble exclusive hotels rather than schools. Gourmet meals are delivered to each student's multi-room suite or served in the formal dining room. Institutes are surrounded by large, private grounds with monitored airspace, which allows the students to take classes outdoors when they choose.

Although designed for the comfort of the wealthy, anyone who passes the evaluation and who can afford training may attend these institutes. Kites maintain a constant presence in the underground in their region and immediate contact potentials as they emerge. The tuition for a kite institute is no greater than any other institute and the kites frequently grant scholarships and student loans to the less financially able. Kites expect their alumni to defend the underground, the institute, and their fellow psions. This expectation often takes the form of favors.

The institutes are the center of kite social activities, and students are allowed to participate. These special events range from formal alumni celebrations where psionic activity is conducted openly to mini psionic Olympics with competitors from other kites or even from the Zhodani Consulate. A cruise-type vacation to the Zhodani Consulate is a traditional gift from the kite to the graduating class for institutes in the Spinward Marches.

Graduates from kite-controlled institutes are offered employment in various kite business ventures. Some kites have foundations that make low-interest loans to their graduates who are starting their own businesses. Allies and carefully screened contacts are sometimes permitted to visit an institute to recruit psionic employees.

Cobalt Mountain Resort

The Haricomi Kite operates the Cobalt Mountain Resort on a small secondary planet in the Corridor Sector. The insignificant world offers little in the way of resources, except for a pleasant snowbound forest ecology and a mild year-round winter environment. Several resorts have sprung up all over the planet providing everything from inexpensive tourist towns to exclusive (and very expensive) retreats for the extremely wealthy.

Cobalt Mountain Resort hosts many of the kite's social functions and serves as a secondary headquarters for the family's business. Isolated and luxurious, the

resort houses one of the Haricomi Kite's two psionics institutes. Students may participate in a variety of winter sports or enjoy the cozy comforts of the resort's main building simply called "the cabin." The reference is so well known in the psionics underground in the Corridor Sector, that the simple message "meet me at the cabin," is clearly a request to come to the Cobalt Mountain Resort.

The psionics institute is housed in the long North Wing that extends from the back of the main cabin. Students live and attend classes in the North Wing but are free to interact with the resort's guests. Kite children attend the institute in their teenage years when their parents and the institute administrators feel they have reached an appropriate level of maturity. It is common for at least one family member of the younger students to remain at the resort for the duration of the training. During their stay at the institute, non-kite psions can embrace the opportunity to establish relationships with the kites visiting the resort. Psions with kite connections can take advantage of business opportunities, protection, or even simply social climb into the ranks of the psionic elite.

Jordan-Waite University

Typical of many of the private universities established by kites, Jordan-Waite University is a leading academic establishment in its home sector. Less than ten thousand students attend the university each year. Undergraduate degrees are offered in the usual array of topics for a university and many programs have post graduate degrees available as well.

Of course, only a fraction of the students and faculty are psionic. The Psionic Studies Department, a small branch of the Physics Department, conducts an intensive history of psionics course in the summer quarter (when most students are on break) that is actually a typical psionics institute training regimen. Most psions just attend that class and then drop out.

Like other kite universities, Jordan-Waite University is also the primary locations for kite children to continue their education. Therefore, the psionic population is higher here than at other colleges. Many of the professors are psions. A small paraphysics club acts as a support group for psionic students and professors.

The university also conducts covert psionics research studies sponsored by

the kites. Jordan-Waite University has produced groundbreaking research into genetics as a way of testing for psionic potential that has been quietly shared with other kite universities and the Zhodani. The discoveries from their research in the physics and paraphysics department have increased the interface potential for psionic circuitry and have been adapted for non-psionic applications. Despite these advancements, if information regarding these programs (and the sharing of the results with the Zhodani), or the kites' connection to the university were to be revealed the school would be shut down and many of its faculty imprisoned for treason.

The Mobile University

Several kites support a program they call The Mobile University. The "University" is a small, informal fleet of starships that travel in circuitous routes across several sub-sectors, a journey that takes about four months to complete. It picks up students selected by the kite's contacts and conducts psionic training while voyaging from world to world. Outwardly appearing as a high priced cruise vessel, the students are registered as crew during their four-month training tour.

The kite's underground contacts on low population worlds in a kite's region, or on high population worlds just outside a kite's region, can request a visit by the Mobile University. Psions who pass the contact's evaluation and a telepathic scan (for security reason only), are eligible for training with The Mobile University.

Flexible classes are conducted with new students rotating in as graduating students rotate out, so there are always a variety of skill levels among the students. More advanced students tutor their newer classmates as well as receiving formal training session from instructors. Students live in simple, double occupancy cabins and have access to the rations in the galley. Graduates are afforded the same employment opportunities as the students of other kite institutes.

The Mobile University forges one of the strongest links between the Psionics Underground from different planets within the kite's region. Today's classmates become tomorrow's contacts. By collecting young psions from the outlying planets and allowing them to interact with each other (and kite representatives) it creates a solid network for psions that other regions lack.

Non-Kite Regions

Kites are the elite among the Underground in their areas of influence, but the Psionics Underground is not limited to those regions. The underground in areas without kites usually doesn't have the resources for such high-class institutes. More transient than other institutes, the non-kite underground institutes sometimes disguise themselves as asylums, private campgrounds, religious retreats, or health spas. Whatever the public face of the institute, it must maintain this cover convincingly in case of an investigation by local or Imperial authorities.

These institutes are less lavish than their kite counterparts, but are just as effective. Students often bunk in small dorm-type facilities with two to four individuals per room. Classes are held in enclosed areas (often far from population centers) to protect the psions from outside notice. Inexpensive, catered meals or small kitchen facilities are usually provided as part of the tuition.

A well-maintained cover and contacts on the local police force are the institutes' best defenses. Raids, though infrequent, are an unpleasant fact in the underground. Facilities converted into permanent psionics institutes are upgraded with escape routes and students are drilled on emergency procedures on their first day of classes. Once a location has been compromised, the underground abandons it. Raided institutes usually remain disbanded for up to five years before rebuilding in a different city.

Non-kite controlled underground communities are fluid in nature. The personality of a psionics institute reflects the nature of the underground that sponsors it and the surrounding society. An anarchic society with violent Underground factions spawns mercenary types of institutes. On the opposite side of the spectrum, a dictatorship society with activist underground factions has institutes that resemble terrorist training camps. Most planets do not have such drastically extreme governments, which creates a fertile environment for several types of factions and institutes to flourish.

Unlike the kite institutes graduates, there are fewer job or business opportunities available upon graduation. The Underground operates a system of contacts. So merely passing the word around that a psion is searching for employment will usually result in several propositions

of various levels of legality. More often, the graduates of these non-kite institutes find regular careers in which they find ways of using their talents, rather than finding jobs specifically meant for psions.

Brightwood Asylum

The upper floors of the Brightwood Asylum are a dismal place to visit. The expert psychiatric staff cares for severely mentally ill patients, whose pitiable appearance and bizarre behavior disturbs even psionically-deaf visitors.

In the lower levels, well shielded from the disturbed mental chatter overhead, the Brightwood Asylum runs a psionics institute. The asylum's director, Dr. Alexia Corgov, established the institute with the assistance of the local underground. Unable to legally pursue her interest in the psionic learning process and in the unique brain functions of psions, Dr. Corgov runs the institute in exchange for permission to study the students using non-intrusive methods. She has also begun researching telepathic treatment methods for mental illness with the aid of some of the institute's graduates.

The underground watches her work closely to ensure the students are not endangered by the research. Over the years, they have come to trust the staff of the asylum. Through Dr. Corgov, the underground frequently seeks medical assistance for injured or sick psions. For a small fee, she will provide false medical records.

Students at the Brightwood Asylum's institute live in double capacity rooms in a psionically shielded building adjoining the main complex that also provides staff housing. The students are free to come and go from the complex and are issued employee credentials. Free food is available in the employee cafeteria, but most students choose to eat away from the complex grounds.

Grey Haven Technical Institute

Since before the Suppressions, the planet of Grey Haven has been an industrial world. Giant manufacturing companies established outposts on the hostile world to take advantage of the rich natural resources. Cities and trading centers soon grew up around the industrial complexes. The high methane gas

atmosphere and extreme cold temperatures make the planet uninhabitable outside the large bio-domes. Since the beginning, the manufacturing companies used psions to build their factories, to handle the dangerous materials, and to maintain the domes. Psions with ESP alert the authorities to potential dangers arising from the frequent meteorites, earthquakes, and methane storms that might imperil the dome inhabitants.

Because of the companies' tradition of hiring psions from off world (and later their descendants), a full sixth of the planet's small population has at least some psionic ability. The large companies use their influence with the Imperium to prevent investigations when the occasional rumor of psionic activity on their world arises. While a number of psions are still recruited from off planet, the Grey Haven Technical Institute was established as a psionics institute to train the native population.

The institute is independent of any corporation and run by the underground (which also acts like a psionic union during contract negotiations). Off world psions are welcome to train at the institute for the usual fee. Most graduates find employment with the various planetary corporations or local emergency services.

Students at Grey Haven Technical Institute live in one or two bedroom apartments off campus and may eat free at the school's cafeteria, courtesy of the Manufacturers' Guild (which hopes to entice the most talented psions to their employment rosters). Psions who test with high power levels are offered full scholarships by the Manufacturers' Guild in exchange for a contractual term of employment once they complete training.

The Waylay Caverns

The planet of Waylay was originally colonized as a port world between the Sooni Cluster, a collection of jump-1 worlds, and Trugadeju, a small empire spinward of the Sooni Cluster. A trading route was established in the early days of the Third Imperium, using Waylay as a refueling point. A colony settled on Waylay for merchants and others building on the profitable trade route. Particularly in the early decades, pirates plagued the merchant vessels passing through Waylay and a rough privateer culture developed. The Imperium

stepped in and squashed the pirate activity until the Sooni Cluster and Trugadeju built a navy to patrol the region themselves.

Although more civilized now, Waylay never completely lost its early pirate nature. The Psionic Underground on Waylay is but one of the many shady organizations that still operates there. It is the best bet in the sector when looking to contact mercenaries, loan sharks, smugglers, drug and arms dealers, and psions-for-hire. There is still piracy (kept below the level that will attract Imperial attention), a thriving black-market, and enormous gambling centers. The Imperium is aware of Waylay's reputation and allows it to exist as long as the trade continues to pass through unmo- lested. Occasional crackdowns by the Scout Service or Imperial Navy only temporarily derail the psionics institute on Waylay, which sprouts up again in a new location as soon as the Imperium isn't watching.

The underground on Waylay is more prominent than on other worlds and is easier to locate. By asking about it at the starport pub the searcher is as likely to receive an answer as to get punched. The underground on Waylay is as rough as the rest of the society, and it is one of the most dangerous undergrounds for pupas. The planet's reputation draws psionic potentials who either believe they are tough enough to handle it, or who are unable to locate institutes elsewhere. To earn the right to attend the institute the untrained psion must pass a gauntlet and participants are often seriously hurt in the attempt. Some potentials fail at the gauntlet several times before receiving an invitation to the institute. The contestant's success in the gauntlet is not as important as his strength of will and bravery. It is better to give it every ounce of effort and fail, rather than to win easily or without honor. The gauntlet is not the only way to gain access to the institute, just the most common. Bribes, threats, black-mail, and "favors" are other ways.

Once accepted, the psion is escorted to the institute hidden in the vast Waylay Caverns, in a desolate desert far from the port city of Araks. Students at this institute learn by combat. They pit pupas against more skilled students and instructors who take it easy on the psion until he "builds up his muscles." It is very difficult. The students are not abused, but not coddled either. The

focus of the training is in psionic combat and commercial uses of psi.

Large hollows in the damp under- ground caverns have been outfitted with plumbing, electricity, and rough stone walls. Students stay in small rooms on cots with only a locker and a heater at their disposal. It is dank and it is still an active habitat for native creatures, such as a variety of insects, small mammals, and avians of various types. Food rations are plentiful, but not particularly tasty. One of the common tasks for telekinetics and exoteleporters is the building of other cave dwellings that the under- ground can use and which gives the institute back-up locations in case of Imperial raids. Life in the caves is not terribly comfortable, and is not intended to be.



The Waylay Caverns Institute pro- duces some of the most skilled psionic warriors in the Imperium, outperform- ing all but the elite mercenary and mili- tary psions. The underground's frequent combat royales featuring psionic com- batants is a kind of non-lethal (usually), gladiatorial style combat that is the focus of gambling across the sector and a lucrative source of income for winning athletes.

Graduates of the institute have many employment opportunities. There are any number of illegal trades already flourishing on Waylay, and many merce- nary recruiters and others come here to hire psions. The underground itself is a fairly active employer with the gambling and athletic events as well as the insti- tute, which hires "sparring partners" for their students.

Aunt Jayne's Place

Despite what historians might sug- gest, psions knew that the Suppressions were coming. Precognitives had been predicting the disaster for decades. Treating them like doomsday prophets, some psions ignored the predictions. Others tried to prevent them from com-

ing true, and in the process of trying to force acceptance actually created further dissent between psions and the rest of the Imperium.

When the Suppressions finally began, Jayne Willowsong had foreseen the tragedy. She used her substantial precog- nition and clairvoyance to rescue psions and help them relocate under different identities. She traveled the subsector gathering and hiding her "flock," as she called the psions whose fate she foresaw and could change. To save more psions, she selected skilled precognitives and clairvoyants to send on rescue missions.

To protect her identity, everyone sim- ply called her Aunt Jayne. In what became the first steps in creating the Psionics Underground, Aunt Jayne set up safe houses on nearly every world in the subsector. The safe houses became known as "Aunt Jayne's Place." Even after the Suppressions ended, she con- tinued run the safe houses. Soon she and her precognitive and clairvoyant staff began to locate and approach emerging psions, sometimes even before the psions suspected they might be different. The staff at the safe house would train the latent psion before helping him relo- cate.

Even after Aunt Jayne died, several of her safe houses continued to operate. Psions who train at the institutes of Aunt Jayne's Place still live in the old large homes that were used in the Suppressions. Students are treated like part of an extended family and everyone is expected to pitch in and help keep the place cleaned and repaired. After train- ing is completed, psions receive assis- tance in establishing new lives, often with new identities. The precognitives still refer to their graduates as their "flock" and watch out for them when they can. When a psion from Aunt Jayne's Place receives a warning, they know to act on it quickly.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

Religion is a touchy subject and the Imperium remains as neutral as possible in the matter (see p. GT14). Tolerance of religious differences can vary widely from planet to planet, and even from government to government on each planet. For that reason, on some worlds religious organizations are given more leniency than secular institutes when it comes to psionics.

Certain religions regard psionic ability as a divine manifestation. To limit the blessed souls from using their talents for the greater good goes against the will of their particular deity. This is especially true of ESP powers, which can arguably be the result of divine communication. To silence these “prophets” due to some law is blasphemous.

Other spiritual paths direct individuals to realize their fullest potential. Stifling any gift is antitheistic to these religious groups. While there are several religions that incorporate some psionics, the Psionic Underground also uses religion as a shield against the Imperium. As long as violations are not too blatant, the religion is a legitimate one, and the local government is permissive of religious differences, religious establishments can be used as sanctuaries for the Psionics Underground.

The Green Tuhuir

The Vegan *tuhuir* philosophy (see p. T:RF32), which encourages living a life of self-discovery guided by one’s innermost principles, has spawned a Humaniti spiritual movement. Modeling themselves after Vegan *tuhuir*, several Humaniti *tuhuir* have emerged. Usually found in and around the Vegan Autonomous Region in the Solomani Rim sector, these religious groups support a psion’s right to fully realize his potential.

One Humaniti *tuhuir* in particular (known as the Green Tuhuir) has taken this view to the next level. They established a psionics institute in their compound on the Vegan world Tsunamis. Other Humaniti *tuhuir* are aware of the Green Tuhuir’s psionics institute, as are many Vegans. Any member of a *tuhuir* (or any psion with a member’s endorsement) can attend this institute. The Imperium disapproves of a Humaniti psionics institute in Vegan space, but the Vegans protect the Green Tuhuir’s right to exist and operate.

Individuals at the Green Tuhuir’s institute live in comfortable Vegan habitats and attend classes in a temple dedicated to their training. They participate in spiritual discussion groups and must complete a course in Vegan meditation. Students are encouraged to look deeper into themselves to develop spiritually as well as psionically. These extra classes are meant to aid the seeker to consider the overall spiritual context to their powers in view of the universal community.

With the assistance of the Humaniti *tuhuir* and the Vegans, psions are transported into and out of Vegan space without attracting too much notice. The Scout Service and Imperial Navy occasionally raid Green Tuhuir vessels, but usually to no avail. Psions of the Green Tuhuir are assisted in locating employment for their special talents in Vegan companies or working for the Humaniti *tuhuir*s in the Vegan Autonomous Region. They do not openly assist graduates in finding employment in the Imperium, but the Vegan spaceports along the Imperial border are known as a good place to post psionic “help wanted” notices.

Calburka Psionics Institutes

Calburka is an extremely restrictive religion with a history that can be traced back thousands of years on the planet Chuewa in the Core Sector. It is the sole religion permitted on the planet and the *domin* (religious leaders) control the dictatorship that governs this world and the nearby colony world of Howa Pae.

Contrary to Imperial wishes, the Calburkans operate a number of small psionics institutes. Only native Calburkan males of the Palamorg Lineage (the racial majority and ruling class) may attend the institutes. The Kowanee and other smaller lineages are denied access to any educational facilities beyond the early basic grades. Offworlders are strictly forbidden from attending the institutes.

The Calburka religion has spread beyond the home world and colony. Communities have been established on other worlds in the Core Sector. The larger of these communities form temporary institutes when a sufficient number of Palamorg Lineage males come of age. Smaller communities send their psions to the home world for a pilgrimage and training. It is rare for outsiders to request to attend these institutes. Strict religious practices are mandatory and anyone not passing as a male of the proper religion and lineage risks imprisonment for even applying.

The Psionics Underground from nearby systems (along with a few escaped Calburkans) sneak as many female and non-Palamorg Lineage psionic potentials off world as possible – at great personal risk. The escapees are subject to beatings and even execution if caught.

The legitimate graduates of the Calburka Psionics Institute are guaranteed political posts, royal titles, and estates. Alumni are fiercely loyal to their fellow graduates and government. Few ever leave the home world or colony where they rule without mercy.



The Taliza Communion

The Taliza Communion is not a religion in the usual sense, but rather a spiritual path for followers of “The Way” as defined in the Taliza Texts. The Taliza Texts were downloaded from a derelict starship recovered by archeologists floating in an asteroid belt. The reconstructed data files contained a library of spiritual texts from a sect that existed during the Long Night and called themselves The Taliza Communion.

“The Way” spoken of in the texts discusses the development of flesh-bound souls. In order to make the most of life individuals are encouraged to continue growing and learning from their experiences. Those teachings in themselves do not bother the Imperium. It is that the highest level of spiritual development includes learning and controlling “supernatural” (psionic) abilities. The texts even includes a rudimentary guide to begin to access those powers. After reading and practicing the exercises, some latent psions have learned the basics of how to use their powers.

Enchanted by the lessons of the Taliza Texts, some have followed The Way and recreated the Taliza Communion. The Communion Hall, developed as a spiritual retreat, has a small psionics institute, which they insist does not teach psionics, but only supernatural abilities. The Imperium is watching the group closely, but has so far refrained from closing the Communion Hall. Psions who attend the institute will only receive the training that was spelled out in the Taliza Text. The training only lasts one month and falls far short of the training one would receive at a real psionics institute.

Inner Light Sanctuary

The Inner Light Sanctuary is a non-denominational religious organization

that establishes shrines in port cities throughout the Imperium. Their goal is to provide religious sanctuaries open to all faiths, especially for travelers who may require special considerations in order to practice their religions. Services for common faiths are regularly scheduled and special services for minor faiths are performed upon request. The sanctuary also acts as a resource for individuals seeking religious information, which ranges from theological libraries to maps showing the location of other religious establishments.

The open nature of the sanctuary attracted the attention of kites across the Imperium. The kites are secretly a major financial supporter of the Inner Light Sanctuary. While (for the most part) the sanctuary is exactly what it is advertised to be, it is also a place where psions can come to make contact with the underground. Although not actively a part of the underground, the staff of the sanctuary can suggest where a psion might go for “enlightenment.”

The Inner Light Sanctuary has established a scattering of theological colleges across the Imperium. The majority of Humaniti religions and many alien religions are studied at these colleges. They also have a series of courses that are meant to explore the spiritual nature of psionics, but which effectively covers all the training a psion would receive at a psionics institute. These courses may be taken outside of a degree program, allowing psions to complete the training in a four-month period. Usually only psions with a strong spiritual base will uncover these college courses when visiting an Inner Light Sanctuary. While supported by the kites, they tend not to refer new psions to the Inner Light Sanctuary colleges, preferring to spare them the excessive spiritual rhetoric.

SPECIALIZED PSIONICS INSTITUTES

Specialized psionics institutes focus their training efforts on only one or two areas of psionic ability. Among the Psionic Underground, specialized institutes are generally smaller – sometimes with only a single instructor. If a lone telepath sets up an institute, then he can only train other telepaths. Many underground specialized psionics institutes only form when the need arises to

train a handful of pupas, then disband afterward.

Large specialized psionics institutes usually result not because of the needs of the potential psions, but because of the goals of the faculty that runs it. Businesses and mercenary units with specific psionic requirements sometimes set up their own institutes to train their future employees.

Transient Institutes

When a few potential psions of a certain power type accumulate on the fringes of a less active psionic underground, a small number of trained psions take it upon themselves to conduct a training camp of sorts. While there are exceptions, these intermittent specialized institutes are usually conducted at private residences as far away from populated areas as is prudent. Students and teachers live in the same house and transform the living areas into makeshift classrooms. Once the training is complete, the students receive no further assistance from the institute.

A special relationship sometimes forms over several months of training. Classmates can become important contacts for each other and former instructors sometimes become patrons of their favorite students. These contacts aid a psion in locating work, finding lodgings, and providing other forms of assistance (see *Underground Institutes*, p. 16).

Mercenary Institutes

Some large mercenary corps form specialized institutes with a focus on the military applications of psionic skills. These mercenary institutes primarily focus on the physical manifestations of psi, such as telekinesis or teleportation. The institutes are a small part of a larger merc training facility and the psionic students must pass both psionic and military training.

Skills and tactics taught at mercenary institutes focus on practical combat usage. Psionic mercenary recruits pass through the same evaluation, training, and missions as the non-psionic mercenary troops and are only separated from their squad during psionics institute training (see *Mercenary*, p. 36).

Living conditions are similar to military boot camp, with standardized training and bunk house quarters. Recruits learn fundamental skills and are drilled

on them repeatedly before building to more complex tasks. Slow learners are subject to disciplinary measures, including extra duty, extra calisthenics, mild humiliation, and KP. After graduation, recruits fight with their units for the duration of the mercenary contract.

Quina Spas

As a famous chain of health resorts with hundreds of locations throughout the Imperium, Quina Spas treads a fine legal line. For the most part, the spas are exactly as advertised: a relaxing vacation destination. Guests are pampered and treated to healing massages, herbal remedies, hot spring pools, low impact exercise classes, and guided meditations. Commercially, this company enjoys ample profits and a fabulous reputation for hosting some of the richest and most influential clients, including many nobles.

The fact that they operate a specialized psionics institute at nearly every location is a well-known “secret” about Quina Spas. The Imperium allows these institutes to continue to exist because the only psionic power for which these institutes cater is self-healing. Even though self-healing is technically a psionic power, it has no impact on anyone other than the psion. Because of the benign nature of the power, and the influential clientele, the Imperium has decided to overlook Quina Spas’ institutes.

Due to Quina Spas’ unique position, several kites have open franchises on the worlds where they have influence. When psions travel to unfamiliar planets, they can check in at a Quina Spa, express interest in the healing institute and be introduced to a representative of the local kite. After a brief telepathic scan to verify the questioner’s intentions, the psion can receive assistance, special considerations, and for pupas even an invitation to attend a kite-controlled psionics institute. Besides operating the self-healing institute and using the location for an initial meeting spot, no other business involving psionics is permitted on spa grounds.

Students at the Quina Spas’ institutes live in palatial suites, indulge in rich and healthy meals, and receive VIP treatment like any other guest. For those without the resources to pay for their training, they will be given the option to work as spa employees until they build up enough credits to afford the training.

CHAPTER THREE

PSIONICS

WITHIN THE

IMPERIUM

Anti-psi prejudice is widespread within the Imperium, a side-effect of the PsionicSuppressions. While the use of psionics is illegal within the Imperium, to simply be psionic is not. What this means in practice is that psions must exercise extreme caution in using their talents. Untrained psions have little control when they (intentionally or unintentionally) use their gifts. These latents sometimes utilize their low level of ability in their daily lives without realizing it.

Once trained, even those who didn't intend to use their powers except in an emergency give in to temptation. After all, why should a teleporter spend an hour commuting to and from work when he can avoid the hassle with a blink of an eye? Why should a telepath wonder if the attractive woman across the bar is interested when he can sneak a "peek" and find out for sure? Such harmless indulgences can lead to greater offenses, and end in disaster.

Psions across the Imperium pursue employment based on their interests and skills just like ordinary citizens. Almost every field presents opportunities for

clever psions to exploit. This unfair advantage is one reason that psionics became illegal in the first place. Illegal or not, psions continue to secretly use their abilities to get ahead in their chosen professions. To minimize the chances of getting caught, they gravitate toward situations where they work alone or with a small and trusted group of comrades. Self-employment is another option.

The moment an individual uses his powers he becomes a criminal. In the Imperium (where prejudice still runs rampant) even being suspected of possessing psionic abilities is reason enough for dismissal from employment, eviction from living quarters, and justification for social abuse. Many psions have given up any pretense at legality and plunged with both feet into a life of crime. Beyond using psionics, some choose to engage in other illegal activities. With a few precautions, psions can even commit murder and get away with it – which is another reason psionics has become so feared. The criminal acts of a few can spark widespread crackdowns.

Understanding this, some Psionic Underground communities self-police in order to reduce the number of law enforcement raids and to rehabilitate the image of psionics in general. The Psionic Underground is present to some degree on most high population planets. It is in the Underground where rogue psions can make contact with psionics institute scouts, purchase psionic drugs and equipment, find leads on employment opportunities which require psionic skill, and of course enjoy a social environment where psionics is acceptable – all activities which are considered illegal in the Imperium.

Through a quirk of genetics, destiny or just luck, the one tie that binds the people who make up the Underground is that they all happen to be psionic. Coming from all walks of life, these folks have discovered ways to use their abilities to their advantage – even in more mundane fields. Since the Suppressions, psionics has once again filtered back into mainstream society. This chapter examines some of the ways psionics secretly plays a role in the Imperium.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Despite its own ban on psionics, the Imperium covertly employs psions in several branches of public service. Psionics provides advantages too valuable to disregard simply on principle. The Imperium trains psions for military service and these retirees often continue to serve the government in non-military functions.

Outside of this secret but sanctioned use of psionics, other psions falsely present themselves as normal citizens in order to qualify for government jobs. The number of Imperial employees with psionic capabilities is on par with the estimated ratio of psions in the general population. Not only do the various branches of public service have psions in their ranks, but many of these

departments are charged with dealing with the "psionic problem," which includes establishing and enforcing laws on the subject.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Imperium secretly hires psions to work in law enforcement, primarily for

the Ministry of Justice (see *Military*, p. 25). Domestic threats are just as deadly as foreign ones, and often harder to defend against. Just as psionic soldiers are reserved for high priority missions, psionic criminal investigators are deployed to investigate cases of large scale terrorism, organized crime, and internal corruption in high level positions. Like the military, psionic investigators are assigned to work with non-psionic units. A subsector office usually will not employ more than a single psion, with the exception of the Spinward Marches, where the number increases to half a dozen. These "special investigators" are almost always telepaths, or possess one of the manifestations of ESP. These mental powers provide the valuable leads to crack cases.

The physical powers of telekinesis and teleportation do not add enough of an advantage over conventional weapons for the Imperium to grant them the exception to special investigator status. While these psions may be permitted to work for the Ministry of Justice, the use of their powers are (supposed to be) limited to self-defense or suspect apprehension. The psionic investigators of the Ministry of Justice walk a fine line, knowing they are subjected to random surveillance to ensure they are limiting their psionic activity to the line of duty.

The Ministry of Justice is not the only one to take advantage of psionics. Some planetary and local law enforcement agencies bend that particular rule as well. Not permitted to advertise for psionic agents or to train their own, lower-level law enforcement agencies either discover one of their own have special abilities, or they recruit from the psionic criminals they've caught or from psionic informants working with their undercover officers.

Psions in these law enforcement agencies who utilize their psychic abilities (even in the course of upholding the law) are technically breaking the law. Individual agencies develop their own guidelines for psions in their employ. Law enforcement agencies enjoy a clear advantage over the other areas of society, because they can choose to overlook an officer's unique methods of solving crime if it is in their best interest.

Not all psions working for law enforcement have revealed their illegal abilities to anyone. Many were drawn to the force for the same reasons as their

What the Commissioner doesn't seem to understand is, we can't cross into Startown to go after these gangs. We've found eleven dead psions so far this year in some faction war of theirs. Personally, I couldn't care less if they all shredded each other, but this time some kid of one of the Commissioner's friends was killed. We're not even allowed to suggest the punk was a psion.

So now we're supposed to clean up this mess. We haven't even seen, much less caught, a live psion in years. I'm pretty sure they stay in the downport, but we don't have jurisdiction there.

We've sent a request for aid to the MoJ and they are going to send some big-wig investigators. I don't know what they think they can do. These psions are like ghosts.

*– Detective Bill Wyant of the
Catania Police Department*

fellow officers: to uphold the law, to improve society, and to have some adventure in the process. Of course, not all of them have such altruistic intentions. The Underground on some worlds sends infiltrators into law enforcement agencies to keep tabs on investigations into psionic activity.

If a covert psion does decide to reveal his secret, beyond his partner and/or his immediate supervisor, most of the department doesn't need to know. In fact, such information almost certainly would result in negative reactions from prejudicial comments to psion bashing. Certainly, the mistrust and hostility will interfere with the psion's ability to function productively.

Psionic law enforcement agents will need to use tactics to cover their unusual activities, if not for the benefit of the rest of the department then to shield their true nature from the public. Information gathered with ESP abilities can be explained away as a hunch, the result of good observation, or deductive reasoning; all of these are popularly accepted and respected. Telekinesis can

simulate luck in certain situations: it could be used to jam a perpetrator's weapon, cause him to trip, have something fall on him, or even to lose control of his getaway air/raft and crash.

With the exception of the investigators working for the Ministry of Justice, other psions must work their way up the ranks. The first assignment for rookies is as patrolmen, which is the front line of law enforcement. Depending on the jurisdiction, these patrolmen may face life or death situations on a daily basis.

A psion with any degree of control over his abilities is likely to find himself in situations where his power is the deciding factor determining whether he or the perpetrator ends up in a body bag. Some departments only permit psionics in self-defense, and then only in rare cases of extreme consequence. However, a career-oriented patrolman needs to demonstrate that he is adept at solving crimes in order to earn a promotion. Psions who secretly take advantage of their natural edge can earn promotions more quickly than their fellow officers.

As a detective (which generally allows a greater degree of independence), a psion can follow up on leads gained by psionic means without the need to explain to his superiors every detail of the methods he used to discover that information. A detective could use his psionics (if deftly handled) in the course of his duties for years without discovery.

During undercover investigations, a telepathic detective can squash suspicious thoughts his target may have regarding his cover identity. Both telepathy and ESP proves invaluable when locating the information or evidence police need to solve their case. The physical powers of telekinesis or teleportation could help the detective enter areas that were otherwise inaccessible, such as inside a vault or secured compound.

The dangers to psions are no fewer than for other agents. Being fingered as a psion while undercover is as deadly (if not more so) than being identified as a law enforcement agent. Psionics may be needed to get an agent out of a sticky situation.

While a psion may be able to move up quickly to detective if his abilities are known (even to just the brass), he will almost never be promoted to a supervisory position. Mistrust in psions creates a glass ceiling to keep them out of positions of power. If a psion did manage to rise to a high rank, the prejudice of his officers would undermine his effectiveness should his secret ever be revealed.

Other areas of law enforcement offer greater flexibility for psions while limiting the danger of exposure. Rarely, if ever, are psionic forensic technicians discovered. The ESP talents of clairvoyance and precognition in particular can provide insight into the crime, victim, and perpetrator. As a forensic expert, a psion could locate a weapon, or body, or other missing piece of evidence needed to solve a crime. In addition to hunches and lucky guesses, a forensic technician can justify his finds with claims of psychological profiling, or obscure scientific tests whose results pointed him in the right direction.

On the other hand, a psionic lawyer or judge could never justify using his talent in the course of his duty. A psionic prosecutor may use psychic insights to determine if the accused is innocent and refuse to file charges in those cases. The reverse would not be possible. Chain of evidence for the prosecution requires disclosure of how each item was

obtained. Without the appropriate demonstration that an individual's rights were not violated, key pieces of evidence may be thrown out.

Judges themselves are not allowed to consider evidence that does not meet the previously mentioned criteria. They are to rule on matters of law, not fact or truth. That is they must follow the letter of the law even if it means throwing out key pieces of evidence obtained illegally – which includes through psionic methods. Individuals may violate these precepts to serve their own sense of justice, but these cases are easily overthrown on appeal.

We've finally got a lead on where that psionics institute might be located. Some old lady living near an abandoned air/raft dealership complained of strange noises coming from the warehouse.

We staked it out from across the street – all of us wearing psi-helmets – and we spotted several people coming and going. After a quick check with the starport authority, we verified that most of them are from off world.

We're raiding them tonight. Full body armor, psi-helmets, and ACRs. It'll be a slaughter. Either for them or for us.

Once the criminals have been incarcerated, only telepathy has an application in rehabilitation. Prior to the PsionicSuppressions, research at the psionics institutes suggested telepathically implanted post-hypnotic suggestion could alter the attitudes and perceptions of criminals to make violent behavior no longer an attractive option. Whenever the subjects were introduced to a situation to which they once would react with hostility, the criminal would feel a deep uneasiness, growing more intense until he walked away from the situation. Civil rights groups opposed the research, feeling that it would eventually lead to an Imperial version of the Zhodani thought police.

In a few documented cases vigilante telepaths have punished the guilty by making them experience their victims'

pain. Others have wiped the perpetrator's memory and installed new personality traits in hopes of changing his evil ways. These rogue telepaths are almost never as skilled as the Zhodani thought police and frequently botch the job. When the police identify that the criminal was himself the victim of a telepathic assault, the psion (and indeed the entire Psionic Underground) becomes the target of a manhunt.

Psion-on-psion crime doesn't receive the same attention as other forms of criminal activity. Psion-related attacks unofficially fall in the same category as drug-related attacks. "Let the scum kill

each other off" is a popular sentiment, if rarely publicly acknowledged.

In jurisdictions with an active psionic population, only a psionic undercover agent can successfully infiltrate the underground. The dilemma for the law enforcement agency is knowing how far they can trust their agent to betray his own in the name of justice. An agent that fails to make major arrests or to produce valuable intelligence will quickly fall under suspicion. Psionic agents not only have trouble in their own departments, but gatekeepers of the underground are on constant guard, trusting no one – not even fellow psions – without regular deep scans to verify their identity and intentions. Once discovered, an underground agent will almost never escape intact. Often as not, the mind is shredded and

the body provides little evidence that might be traced back to the killer.

Departments without psions on the rosters (as far as they know) may attempt to artificially simulate psionic activity using technology or trickery in the hopes of convincing a member of the underground to approach their operative. The charade won't last long, but once contact is initiated the psion is arrested (if possible). At the very least they hope for a name and a photograph which they can identify for future reference.

Arrested psions are questioned, often under the influence of medication designed to both block psi ability and act as a truth serum. These efforts (or abuses as the underground calls it) often fail to produce results. The underground moves its location regularly and does it automatically in the event one of its members is arrested. Deeply planted posthypnotic telepathic suggestion causes amnesia when a psion is drugged, until reversed by a subsequent deep telepathic scan.

The underground has its own forms of justice. Depending on the region, those internal laws range from nearly total permissiveness to capital punishment for violating social protocol. When these crimes spill over into the general population, law enforcement tends to react with large scale sweeps, wide spread crackdowns on all suspected psions and raids on suspected underground meeting places, which psions call *pavilions*.

Frontier worlds and some startowns resort to vigilante justice when it comes to dealing with the underground. Bands of defenders from the psionics underground will fight outright with law enforcement. These spats rarely last long. Despite the advantages of psionics, their numbers are too few against the general population. Imperial Marines are deployed to deal with any organized psionic militia that might threaten the safety and stability of a region.

MILITARY

From Testing Through the Draft:

Among the battery of tests all new recruits signing up for the Imperial military endure are several that covertly screen for psionic potential. Despite their psionic powers these recruits must still pass intelligence and physical tests like everyone else and preferably not have significant criminal records. Psions pass-

ing all these tests are transferred to the closer of the two Imperial psionics institutes. These institutes (disguised as military installations) are located at opposite ends of the Imperium. The first is in the Solomani Rim Sector and the other is in the Spinward Marches. Even hitching a ride aboard a J-6 courier, reaching one of the institutes from a central region of the Imperium can take more than a year. Weighing the expense versus the likelihood of recouping their investment, the Imperium does not bother to train self-healers. The same is true of individuals whose power levels are determined to be extremely low and unlikely to increase even with intensive training.

Especially for a soldier, the ability to self heal can save his life. Not only in combat, but also in training accidents or air/raft crashes. A self-healer recovers more quickly after excursions, and has greater endurance in survival situations. The Imperium doesn't provide training for self-healers, but quietly refers potentials to a Quina Spa (see *Quina Spas*, p. 21). Soldiers will need to use their leave or be wounded to receive time off to attend the Quina Spa Psionics Institute.

While a full third of the graduates of the Imperial psionics institutes are deployed to the IISS (see *Scouts*, p. 28), the majority enter one of a few select military assignments. It is a waste to train a psion and then assign him duty as a clerk or a cook's assistant. All psions in the Imperial military serve in the special forces or military intelligence on the border or other volatile regions of the Imperium.

Students at the Imperial psionics institutes with the aptitude receive special espionage training and enter the ranks of either the Army or Navy intelligence. These two military intelligence agencies are in fierce competition with each other (see p. T:GF32), and have instituted a draft selection system to claim the best cadets for their departments. Throughout a cadet's training, institute instructors (retired from the two intelligence agencies) report on the progress of the most promising students. At the end of each four-month training cycle the drafting agents for the Imperial Marine Commandos, the Navy and Army intelligence agencies, and the Scout Service conduct a conference to divide the better candidates equally among them. To settle arguments over a particularly impressive graduate the drafting agency may have to allow the

other departments to select two or three lesser psions.

In The Service: Once the most powerful and aggressive psions have been drafted, the remaining lower level psions who don't possess the temperament for intelligence work or front-line combat are assigned to the Office of the Inspector General. This organization investigates crimes committed either against the Imperium or by personnel in the Imperial services (see p. T:GF32). Psions in the OIG routinely investigate cases of corruption, terrorism, war crimes, and smuggling. Naval and Army Intelligence agencies work closely with the OIG, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Justice, and the Scout Service to prevent the trade of slaves, weapons of mass destruction, and psionic equipment (see p. T:FT5).

Psionic agents working for Navy or Army Intelligence work alone or in small teams. Spies for both agencies collect intelligence on the alien nations neighboring the Imperium, particularly the Zhodani. They also turn their information gathering efforts on planets within the Imperium. Volatile regions with hostile local governments not only disrupt trade, but risk the security of Imperial installations in their area. If a significant threat is discovered, the military uses the intelligence agencies to plan the attack and to design an interim government to take over planetary rule once the smoke clears.

Psions drafted into the Imperial Marine Commandos become the core of special units designed around them. Like scout units, the sector commander specially screens potential teammates for each psion assigned to his territory. Generally, these psion-centered units receive the most critical and difficult missions. Psions trained at the Spinward Marches Psionics Institute remain in that sector to work the Zhodani border and the nearby systems. The most experienced and skilled psionic Marine Commandos have the option to join the elite Scout Service unit known as the *Shivers* (see *Shivers*, p. 29).

Unlike the Imperial Marine Commandos and the S-3, the elite Sylean Rangers has a notable lack of psions among its troops. The psions that have slipped in among its ranks were trained in underground institutes or have no formal training at all. These rare few keep their skills a secret from their teammates and commanders.

Preparing for War: The benefit of psionic troops goes beyond just their battlefield application. In the Spinward Marches, Imperial troops and local militias train for potential Zhodani attacks. A team of psionic Marine Commandos travels from base to base to train the forces in techniques to battle psionic warriors. To protect the commandos' identity, they wear masks during the exercise.

The training team uses Zhodani techniques, like those used on Furandil during the Fifth Frontier War (see p. T:ST106-107 and 118-119). The Zhodani use teleportation for surprise attacks and to out-flank enemy forces. To counteract these battle tactics requires quick reflexes, a wide troop dispersal pattern, and diligent protection of rear and flanking positions.

Psionic helmets are standard troop issue in the Spinward Marches. If an attack comes while a soldier is off duty a helmet may not be close at hand. During the intensive training period soldiers are exposed to a variety of disorienting telepathic attacks without protection. They are taught to question sudden changes in perspective, which is a signal of telepathic trickery. Soldiers also learn to memorize their environments and their orientation within that space so that they can still be effective in the event of telepathically induced blindness or a hallucination.

In the event of a telekinetic barrage, the warriors' first instinct is to shoot the objects flying at them. During training sessions soldiers are instructed to dodge the attacks, but to shoot the psions. By the end of the two week training period, the Imperial troops are expected to be able to successfully withstand a simulated Zhodani attack long enough for reinforcements to arrive.

Strategies: The Imperial psionics institutes not only train their students in the use of their abilities, but they also concentrate on special psi-specific war tactics. Students study both Zhodani tactics for full psionic squads and Imperial tactics using a single psion or mixed normal/psion squads. Marine Commandos have developed specific tactics to take the greatest advantage of their limited psionic resources.

The variety of ESP-based abilities plays a role in the planning stages of a mission. Clairvoyance can verify the latest intelligence on the movement of the primary and secondary targets and warn

Truthfully, I never really had anything against psions. I guess that is why I was assigned to this unit, what with it being put together to work with one. My unit works with a TK. We don't know his real name, so we call him "Teke."

Training was pretty cool, just watching him heave stuff around. None of that meant much to me until the first time we saw action.

We hadn't even reached the rendezvous point and weren't expecting resistance. Suddenly a grenade bounced right to my feet. I was so shocked I just looked at it for a second. Then it blew.

Me and a couple other guys were thrown down by the force of it, but none of the shrapnel hit us. It all froze in midair for a second, then dropped harmlessly to the ground.

The grenade was just to shake us up. The real attack followed with blaster fire coming in from the rooftops. Suddenly six or seven guys were floating up there, their weapons stripped away by some unseen power. Then they dropped five stories to the ground where a couple of our guys finished them off.

I was OK, just a little dazed from the blast of the grenade. I was sent to the field hospital overnight because of a concussion. The whole time I was laying in that bed, I just kept seeing the grenade going off, and knowing if it hadn't been for Teke, I would have been dead.

of site security changes. A clairvoyant can also report on the progress of a mission while it is still underway. With a precognitive's help the command staff knows their enemies' plans in advance and how successful a mission will be before it is even undertaken. On the battlefield, a Marine Commando with precognition can foresee his opponent's next move during a fight. This "just in time" information enables the psion to

counter each attack and take advantage when the opponent's defenses are down.

For telekinetic centered squads Marine Commandos developed what they refer to as the "guardian" tactic. The telekinetic, or guardian, takes a position overlooking the battle. Communicating with radios, the telekinetic monitors the obstacles encountered by his team. He uses his ability to intervene as needed. When the

Commandos encounter a dangerous object, such as a land mine, the guardian can safely remove it from the area, detonate it remotely, or otherwise deal with it. If a comrade gets pinned down by a sniper or an entrenched enemy position, the telekinetic can physically pull the enemy from their cover into the line of fire. If he can't move the enemy, the psion can move objects into the zone to provide cover for his teammates. He might even move the cover with the team as they cross the enemy's field of fire. The psion can also disable the enemy troops' weapons or vehicles.

If a telepathic commando has the range he remains a safe distance from the action. Otherwise the telepath maintains a central position in the squad as it moves. A telepath can become aware of the enemies' next move as he plans it. Offensively the psion can confuse the enemies' perceptions long enough to eliminate them. A less powerful commando uses his telepathy only for his own benefit and possibly one other teammate.

In combat, a popular telepathic tactic is called Awareness. Awareness requires a high level of skill and power so that the telepath can maintain a link with every member of his squad. He instantly transmits to them his telepathic awareness of everyone in the area and enough information to determine if the individuals are friends, foes, or bystanders. The teammates experience Awareness like heat sensor goggles. They are able to see through walls at each person in range with each one outlined in a color code to distinguish the enemy, non-combatants, and teammates.

Retirement: The Imperium imposed a glass ceiling for psions in the military, limiting their advancement to the rank of Major. Career oriented soldiers have the option of retiring and joining the Scout Service, which permits psions to advance to the level of Station Commander (see *Scout Service*). Like many of their non-psyhic teammates, psions retiring from the military service frequently enlist in the Scout Service or the SPA (spaceport authority).

Once retired, unless he continues to work for another branch of the Imperial government, a psion is no longer permitted to use his powers. The top secret portion of a retiring soldier's personnel file sometimes fails to follow him to his new position so that his status as a psion may

be unknown to his new commander. A careful individual who prefers to work without the stigma of psionics hanging over him may choose to keep his abilities a secret. However, if the truth did come to light (particularly if the psion gets caught using his illegal talent) he will be subject to disciplinary action and possibly even dishonorably discharged.

Military Research: Besides deploying their psionic troops onto the battlefield, the Imperial Military also researches and designs psychotronic weapons and anti-psi technology. Behind the Zhodani in the development of such ordnance, researchers for the Imperial Military spend as much time reverse engineering captured Zhodani technology as developing new weapons. A number of such weapons have been described in *GURPS Psionics* on pages 70-76.

To test their advancements in these technologies, researchers require psionic volunteers, many of whom are retired or low-level psions. The development of psychotronic weapons is a task the Imperium grudgingly undertakes in an effort to keep pace with the Zhodani arsenal. Anti-psi technology is the primary and preferred focus of this research. Many of these developments carry over to domestic use. The Imperium shares anti-psi equipment designs with law enforcement agencies dealing with illegal psionic activity.

Colonial Navies: Colonial navies have developed a variety of their own policies regarding psionics in their ranks. The prevalence of paranoia regarding psions prevents them from enlisting in most colonial armed forces. Psionic soldiers whose secrets are exposed are dishonorably discharged and prosecuted. This is especially true in the Spinward Marches, where the wounds of the five Frontier Wars still fester. In the Spinward Marches and nearby sectors, psions risk arrest for being Zhodani spies, whether it is true or not. In the worse cases, soldiers suspected of being psychic have been physically abused by their own platoons.

A few planetary navies have adopted more flexible policies regarding psionics. These societies may even permit psions to use their talents openly while on duty. For example Prevanich in the Core Sector tolerates telekinetics and teleporters because those powers do not violate personal privacy like telepathy and clairvoyance. On the other hand,

Ludovic in the Solomani Rim (see p. T:RF97) secretly recruits precogs, clairvoyants, and telepaths to monitor its neighboring planet Sahingun, which is a member state within Ludovic's Assembly of Nations.

POLITICAL

Ruling Class: Throughout the history of the Imperium, politicians have grabbed every advantage to increase their power and influence. Among the elite where murder, blackmail, and espionage are viable options, psionics is merely another means to an end. Political entities, whether individuals or entire governments, always covet the strongest weapons for themselves and fear their enemies already stockpile it in their arsenals. To use psionics openly invites sanctions and even war. Applied judiciously and covertly it can shift the balance of power, especially in pivotal situations. Just as governments blatantly deny they employ spies and assassins, so too do they deny using psionics.

Nobles who are themselves psionic are better able to locate and afford a psionics institute. Once trained, they can use their political influence to protect themselves from accusations or even prosecution for psionic abuses.

On worlds with controlling governments (such as dictatorships), psionic nobles may not even attempt to disguise their abilities. Short of assassination or a bloody coup, there isn't much anyone can do about it.

On more democratic worlds or while traveling off world, psionic nobles are more cautious not to attract too much attention. Even so, they still receive more leniency than their non-noble psionic brethren do.

Psionics is as rare among the nobles as it is in the rest of the population. Non-psionic nobles not shy about bending the rules secretly employ psions. Sometimes they are permanent members of staff who perform other functions, but more often they are contracted on a per-job basis. While public outrage and trouble with law enforcement are problems a noble must deal with if discovered, the true danger from employing psions comes from political enemies. Once they discover such underhanded tactics were used against them, they may turn the tables and hire psions of their own.



Democratic and frontier planets are ruled largely by non-noble politicians. These individuals may feel disadvantaged by their common status. For them, hiring psions is a way to balance the scales or even tip the scales in their favor. Particularly underhanded politicians even enter secret arrangements with psionics institutes, allowing them to operate unmolested in exchange for favors.

Once they've solved a problem psionically, it is difficult to refrain from using the advantage again and again. A politician with access to telekinesis can arrange for an assassination that looks like an accident or an attack on an enemy's installation that appears like a natural disaster. A telekinetic bodyguard can place a protective shield around his employer. Precognitives can keep the politician on his toes, informing him which policies will succeed and what scandals will break. Telepathy and ESP can be used to discover what tactics his opponents are planning to use and uncover their dirty secrets. As public relations and press secretaries, telepaths are able to anticipate questions and sense what answer is best. As speechwriters, they can tweak the tone and pitch so it placates the widest segment of the population.

Psions, particularly those with ESP or telepathy, labor in many areas of public service where they are able to use their unique skills for the betterment (or detriment) of the community they serve. The typical character in *Traveller* will usually only deal with the Imperial and local governments through low-level, administrative employees. These are the various port authority officials in charge of the inspections, licenses, and tariffs a starship and its crew require, and the customs and security checks to which passengers are subjected.

As frustrating as dealing with these officials can be, a psionic official can be ten times worse. Telepaths can determine if someone is lying. Clairvoyants can peek at cargoes to verify their contents – saving them the time that it would have taken manually. Ports with a reputation among starship crews for being tough to smuggle contraband through might very well have a psionic port official to thank for that.

Journalism: While some psions try to make a difference from within the system, more often the politically-minded psion (already considered a threat by the

government) will work against those who would oppress and persecute him. The most legitimate option for doing that from outside the system is as a journalist. A journalist's commitment to inform the public can affect public opinion on policy issues. The power of the press, combined with the power of psionics, makes these reporters formidable enemies (or allies) to politicians. Press credentials won't protect journalists who make high-powered enemies. A reporter with a successful career forged with psionics may find himself the target of an anti-psionic blacklist campaign or even criminal investigation.

Used with care, psionics is a powerful tool for journalists. Telepathic or clairvoyant reporters can uncover a politician's scandalous behavior, or shady deals that can ruin his career. A precognitive can determine what stories are going to break and always be on hand just in time to get the scoop. A teleporter could pop into and out of locked offices in order to raid the files for juicy tidbits.

Many psions dream of the day when the Imperium will again permit them to use their gifts openly as they had prior to the Suppressions. Journalists in particular have the chance to portray psions in a positive light. Journalists with contacts in the Underground can help warn their fellow psions of upcoming investigation and crackdowns. They can also report on the discrimination against psionic citizens in an attempt to sway public opinion. On occasion, psionic journalists hide messages in the text of their stories in order to pass information along the Underground.

Activism and Terrorism: Beyond the standard picket lines and petitions, a psion has a lot to offer activist groups. Already an outcast from society, a psion might use his powers to help accomplish his group's goals. However, activists who don't mind applying illegal means to achieve their perceived moral ends are considered terrorists by some.

Telekinesis (like explosives and other means of sabotage) might temporarily derail a government's or corporation's plans, but rarely do those tactics provide a permanent solution. And, should the authorities determine the identity of the telekinetic terrorist, not even the psionic underground could guarantee his safety.

Telepathy offers a subtler weapon for terrorism. A telepath could force the leader of the opposing side to abandon his cause or change his course of action.

In these cases, cutting off the head doesn't always kill the body. Popular programs and policies will find someone else willing to take the reins. Additionally, a telepath risks exposure when, after spending a few minutes alone with the psion, a popular figure suddenly changes his stance.

Indirect psionic tactics are often more effective than terrorism. Knowing the strategies of their opponents can provide activist groups with the opportunity to block every move against them or their objectives before it can be made. And if nothing else, telepathy and ESP could provide information for blackmail.

SCOUT SERVICE

Some of the psions trained at the two Imperial psionics institutes are deployed with the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service (IISS). The IISS is the eyes and ears of the Imperium. Its missions range from the mundane collection of economic data from each sector for the monetary board (see p. T:FT7), to exploring new regions of space, and managing all aspects of first contact with new races (see p. T:SM24). It also maintains the secure lines of communication across the Imperium with an extensive Xboat network.

Like many of the members of this service, psionic scouts work alone or in small teams. Scout ships are limited to crews of three to five. S-3 teams are only 5-8 strong.

The Imperium doesn't spend thousands of credits to train a single psion without intending for him to use his abilities in the performance of his duties. To ensure team effectiveness, the IISS sector commander screens potential teammates for each psion under his command. A team needs to understand the strengths and limitations of each member to be effective. Most normals don't trust psions – and without trust a team is crippled. Like soldiers in the other military branches, S-3 psions study both Zhodani fighting strategies for full psionic platoons as well as tactics for a single psion-centered unit (see *Military*, p. 25). Usually only a single psion will be assigned to a team, and the team will be built around him to employ his talents to their fullest potential.

S-3: Every psion in the Scout Service with the required skills and temperament

is assigned to an S-3 unit. The Special Security Services (or S-3) branch of the IISS conducts high-risk missions in the frontier regions of the Imperium (see p. T:SM24). These troops are highly trained commandos specializing in covert ops on low-tech worlds. Their missions usually involve reconnaissance, rescuing other scouts, and recovering and destroying prohibited technology. A sector usually only has one or two S-3 platoons headquartered out of an IISS base.

Because these units are so small, and psions are channeled into S-3 whenever possible, some teams end up with nearly a third of their force made up of psions. These mixed units are extremely effective on rescue missions. The Scout Service usually will select a mixed unit for deployment in situations where they don't need to hide their psionics. During large-scale missions, S-3 works with Imperial Marine Commandos and the Sylean Rangers (see p. T:GF75-76).

Insurgencies are not limited to newly acquired worlds. When any planet in the Imperium violates Imperial standards they are subject to military intervention. S-3 is responsible for gathering intelligence to prepare the way for the Imperial military.

Shivers: In the Spinward Marches, the IISS maintains an S-3 psionic platoon known as the Shivers. This platoon consists of five eight-man teams. No one but the IISS High Command and the Spinward Marches Sector Commander knows of this unit's existence.

Only the most highly qualified and experienced psions make the cut into the ranks of the Shivers. These psions must have served S-3 in highly volatile regions and have extensive combat experience. Psions from the Army and Navy with combat experience are sometimes recruited to fill the ranks of the Shivers. Every member must have telepathy at a minimum power level of 3 in addition to at least one other psionic power – with one of those powers at least at a level of 5 or greater. Merely having the skills is not enough to join the Shivers. When considering a psion for a slot on the team, the other members drill and test the recruit extensively to ensure he has the stamina and personality to handle what will be required of him.

The platoon is often deployed outside the Imperium, although rarely in the Zhodani Consulate. Their primary mission is reconnaissance; watching for

possible military build-ups which might signal another invasion. By using psionic powers, the teams are better able to blend in while undercover. In the event of war, this platoon is prepared to execute high priority missions deep behind enemy lines.

The platoon's code name comes from the psionic enhancement drug (see p. P80) regularly used by these soldiers. While the medication gives them a +1 boost to all psi skills, it causes them to shake slightly for a short time.

The psi-drug shiver is a neurotransmitter and (as with all such drugs), taken regularly, it can actually change the user's brain chemistry. In time it will damage the brain's ability to generate the biochemicals naturally. Essentially, shiver users can become so dependent on the drug that they lose the ability to perform psionically without it.

After losing several soldiers to drug-related psionic burnout, S-3 limits the number of doses an individual may receive. At the first signs of dependency, soldiers are withdrawn from the drug (and active duty) for at least three months so their natural brain chemistry can recover.

Once a Shiver has been treated for dependency or burnout four times, they are officially retired from the service. However, during times of war or major crisis, these psions may be recalled to active duty and readministered the drug.

Reconnaissance: Psionic scouts who are unsuited for the combat action of S-3 still have a variety of options within the IISS. The Scout Service collects intel on numerous frontier worlds and Red Zone planets. They also monitor and prevent the importation of illegal technology as well as handle all first contact protocols.

Some cultures, like those on Heironymus in the Solomani Rim or Forbegn Beta in the Corridor Sector (see *Red Zone Institutes*, p. 13), have developed cultures tolerant of psionics. Psionic scouts often request duty on these tolerant worlds where they don't have to hide their abilities. In addition to their regular duties, these scouts will quietly remove rogue Imperial psions who have secretly come to these planets in order to access the psionics institutes. Captured psions are passed over to the military recruiters who will give them the option to enlist and attend the Imperial psionics institutes or be incarcerated.

Powers such as telepathy or ESP help scouts uncover information more quickly, which is vital when dealing with insurrectionists or technology traffickers. High-level telepathy skills such as Illusion can camouflage scout activities and change witness memories. This is particularly valuable on immature worlds that are not yet ready to be introduced to the Imperium or the interstellar community.

Scouts frequently find themselves in hostile or unpredictable situations. Teleporters and telekinetics rely on their talents to defend themselves without exposing the culture to high-tech weapons.

Because of the frequent travel to hostile regions, scout ships sometimes become damaged during missions. Telekinesis and teleportation have provided a vital edge during space combat. Telekinesis can help hold together or repair equipment that might not otherwise be accessible by normal means. Teleporters can use their power to escape a crippled ship and get to a nearby ship or station. Teleportation to a planet from orbit is nearly impossible due to the physics of acceleration and potential energy (see p. GT84-85). Even with ship to ship teleportation, only a highly skilled psion can successfully manage the change in orientation and acceleration unless the ships are in a stable, parallel orbit. Because of the risks, ship to ship teleportation is only attempted in emergency situations.

Couriers and Xboats: The IISS operates the Courier Service. High value cargo attracts pirates or hijackers, so the Scout Service must remain vigilant to protect their cargo over long distances. The most critical packages are entrusted to psionic scout teams. Clairvoyants and precogs can predict trouble and sidestep it. Telepaths can also sense inbound trouble and use their skills to disguise their vessels or make psychic decoys to draw away attackers. In direct combat situations telepaths, teleporters, and telekinetics can use their powers to tip the scales in their favor.

The Imperium depends on the IISS Xboat network, which speeds thousands of messages from way station to way station across the Imperium. Xboats don't require the extra muscle a psion provides, although routes passing near and through unstable regions may have a psionic team assigned.

Recruitment: Psionic scouts, while traveling all over the Imperium, are on permanent order to recruit psions. Early efforts to recruit from Red Zone planets with psi tolerant societies resulted in severe culture shock and few useful recruits, so Red Zones are now left for the Recruitment Corps. Sometimes, scouts come across psions illegally using their talents to smuggle contraband or to support rebel forces. Not all of these individuals are suitable for Imperial service, but those who are have the choice to either join the services or face imprisonment.

The problem of recruiting psions for the Imperial psionics institutes falls mainly to the Scout Recruitment Corps. To the public, the Scout Recruitment Corps is a public education unit encouraging citizens to enlist in the Scout Service. The preliminary aptitude and physicals they perform identify not only normals that might make good scouts, but also potential and latent psions. Because psionics is rare, the secret recruitment of psions is a slow process. An active team of recruiters is lucky to locate five psions a year, with most teams finding only one or two.

Scout Stations: While most psionic scouts work alone or in special teams built around their abilities, they do need to use discretion during layovers at scout stations or during shore leave. Except in

the performance of their duty or in self-defense, psions are not permitted to use their abilities. Only a psion's team and commanding officers are aware that he is anything but an ordinary scout. Those who repeatedly violate this ban while off duty are subjected to prosecution – and if found guilty will serve their imprisonment drugged to prevent the use of psionics.

When a psionic scout begins to burn out or (due to age or injury) becomes less effective in the field, he is reassigned to a scout station. Usually these scouts work security, where their abilities still provide them with an edge. Because scout bases usually share a starport with a commercial port (see p. T:ST11), Scout Service security assists the commercial station with contraband sweeps and cargo checks. Commercial ports (via the port's military liaison officer) can call on the scout base personnel in emergency situations.

The relationship between the Imperial Starport Authority (SPA) and the Scout Service is a close one, and frequently retirees from the Scout Service find jobs with the SPA. This holds true for psions who complete their tours of duty. Once a psion leaves the Scout Service, he is not permitted to use his skills except in emergency situations.

The Scout Service periodically monitors its retired psions, overlooking

infrequent minor infractions committed when the security of Imperium interests is at risk or in cases of self defense. However, flamboyant or repeated violations will result in warnings, sanctions, and eventual voluntary (or involuntary) administration of anti-psi medications, or possible imprisonment.

Another option for scouts leaving active duty in the field is to become an instructor at one of the Imperial psionics institutes. Veterans of the service are better able to prepare the recruits for the challenges they will face. Instructors play an instrumental roll in determining the future assignments of the graduates. They take into consideration the individuals' preferences and performance, then report to the Scout Service drafting committee. This committee uses those reports and requests from sector commanders to match the psions to the positions available.

A few psions remain within the Scout Services long enough to be promoted to command level positions. Due to top secret regulations, a psion may not achieve a rank higher than station commander, and even then he is subjected to frequent reviews to ensure he is not misusing his talent. At present, there are only three psionic station commanders in the entire Imperium, two of whom command stations in the Spinward Marches on the Zhodani Consulate border.

PRIVATE SERVICE

While the Imperium as a whole sanctions the limited use of psionics for its military advantage, private use of those same talents is expressly forbidden. This doesn't prevent a few determined businesses from seeking and employing psions, sometimes with the knowledge of less scrupulous politicians whose cooperation and protection has been secured through bribes or blackmail.

In order to earn a living, most psions never reveal their secret to their employers. This doesn't prevent them from using their powers in the workplace, they simply are more discreet. To protect their secret, they gravitate toward solitary work or self-employment.

COLONIAL

A special breed of adventurer trades the comforts of civilization to gamble on

the profits of an untamed planet. For psions, the colonial life offers a chance for a less regulated environment in which to practice their unique talents unobserved. At least, that is the hope when a psion chooses to brave the life of a colonist. Living more than jump-1 off a main trade or Xboat route (on strategically unimportant worlds), the Imperium finds few reasons to intervene with local governments with a relaxed attitude regarding psionics.

Colonial regulations vary with the personalities of the colonists who establish them. Some colonial governments dole out swift and harsh punishments for violations of the law. Others only loosely regulate behavior which takes place within a town's limits, not concerning themselves at all with transgressions that take place in the wilds. Luckily for psions, the

latter is usually the case. Most colonists are too preoccupied with carving out a living for themselves to bother with the personal matters of others. Only when the psions press their advantage to the detriment of their competition do they attract the ire of their neighbors.

Depending on the harshness of the environment, a psion may find using his abilities invaluable for mere survival. Clairvoyants can locate underground sources of water and find their way when traveling through the wilderness. Precogs can prepare for bad weather long before meteorologists predict it as well as determine which areas will offer the greatest future profit. Telekinetics can move supplies, prevent falls, and shield themselves from animal attacks. With telepathy a psion can "call for help," or become alerted immediately in

the event of a disaster befalling a fellow colonist and act quickly to bring help. Psions who use their skills to rescue other colonists may earn the right to act more freely with their talents.



Eclipse: The *Eclipse* was a passenger vessel packed with psions fleeing the Imperium at the start of the PsionicSuppressions. The ship misjumped, and the passengers found themselves in a remote, inhabited system. They lived in the ship's hold while they used the sensors to survey the area. In caverns below the surface, volcanic springs created enough heat and water to support a simple ecosystem. With the help of their equipment, they were able to extract nutrients from the plant life.

The psions built habitats in the caverns and managed to survive on their own for nearly three years with no contact. Finally, the clairvoyant sister of one of the survivors, along with others from the growing Psionics Underground, found them.

Instead of simply rescuing the survivors, the Underground brought additional equipment and modular habitats to the colony, which they named Eclipse, in memory of the survivors of the crashed starship. The secret colony became a hiding place for other psions and grew to a population of several hundred.

The colony still exists on the small world Jump-3 from the nearest inhabited planet. The Imperium is still unaware of the colony's presence. To protect it, the Underground is careful to limit the number of ships that visit the colony.

Roland Colony: Even though the agricultural planet of Roland is hospitable, it remains barely settled. Located Jump-4 from a main trade route and Jump-5 from the nearest Xboat station, few traders bother to travel to the distant planet. That is the way the inhabitants of Roland like it.

Many of them emigrated to Roland to live uncomplicated, rural lives away from the hustle and bustle of Imperial society. The planetary council issues a parcel of land large enough to grow the

necessities for a family to anyone settling permanently on the planet. Single family farms cluster around small population centers barely large enough to call cities. Agricultural firms are denied access to the planet.

During the Suppressions, several psionic families fled to Roland and were all issued plots in a region not yet inhabited. The psions quietly built their own little town and worked their individual farms. The town, which they called Rampart, is populated by the descendants of those first families. Psionics is openly used on the private farms and in the town of Rampart, with a small restriction on teleporters and telekinetics. While in town, they are only permitted to use their powers indoors. This convention is for the benefit of visitors from other villages that sometimes send traders.

While the fact that most of Rampart's citizens are psionic is fairly well known on Roland, the consensus is that as long as they keep it in their town, they can do as they like. The psions don't wish to do anything that might upset this balance, so they try not to make normals feel uncomfortable by startling them with grand displays of psionics.

The Psionics Underground in the subsector knows about the Roland colony. Psions still immigrate there occasionally, but to protect the colony the underground limits its contact with Rampart.

Valeese Colony: Like many of the small colonies founded during the Suppression, a community of psions fleeing persecution established Valeese. Originally nothing more than an asteroid field mining facility owned by a kite

family, the original habitat built on a 30-mile wide asteroid was expanded to house the refugees who were smuggled on board in small groups. By digging into the asteroid to create living space, the mining facility was able to hide the expansion.

After the Suppressions, new surface dwellings were added. A four-story mall a quarter-mile long was built as a star-town next to the small starport facilities. Loans were granted to psions to start businesses in the mall or to purchase small mining claims and equipment.

The colony blossomed and many non-psions soon moved to Valeese. While some psions left, non-psions continued to emigrate to the small colony. The surface of the Valeese asteroid is now 80 percent covered with habitats. New construction burrows deep into the asteroid. Currently only 10 percent of the population is psionic, but the colony government is still controlled by the kite.

Alta Colony: Shortly after the Alta Colony was established on a moon orbiting the gas giant Herlione the inhabitants discovered a field of valuable gemstones. Fortune hunters from across the sector swamped the colony to search for easy riches. The leaders of the Alta Colony never realized that along with the flood of gem-digging colonists, many psions hiding from the Psionic Suppressions settled among them.

The size of the gem fields had been grossly exaggerated and the moon was mined out of gems very quickly. Most of the fortune hunters drifted off in search of treasures elsewhere. The psions remained.

The Psionics Underground that developed took advantage of the lenient laws and soon began to operate openly. Laws against psionics came too late, and the psions fought the new restrictions. Unrest and rioting raged on and off for many years before the Imperium was called in to handle the insurgency. Several dozen psions were killed during a series of raids.

When no further uprisings or protests occurred, the Imperium declared the matter settled. The government of the Alta Colony is convinced psionic elements remain. No one is sure how many psions are still living on Alta Colony, but the planetary law enforcement agency has evidence that not only is there still a Psionic Underground on Alta Colony, but they believe they are running a psionics institute.

So you say Dliant told you to come see me about a working passage? Well, let me tell you right up front that you have to pay in advance. One favor for one jump.

Low passage is a smaller favor and more palpable to some. Otherwise, you bunk with the crew and get two basic meals a day. High passage is a bigger favor.

Now, to get to where you said you're going is three jumps. You can do three favors now, or do a favor at each layover. Don't matter much to me, I got a "to do" list for just about every port that I save for just these situations, but you definitely are looking at a favor now before we lift off. So your choice, if you want to stay with the crew you've got to read the cargo rep for Ginecorp and tell me when they will be taking bids on the Mineto Run. You want to stay in the stateroom and eat hearty for a week, you got to burn out the fuel regulator switch on that Tukera freighter over there so Ginecorp will need me to make that urgent delivery for them. What'll it be?

*– Captain Pyrrhic of the Oberlindes cargo liner **Vesper***

COMMERCIAL

Before the Psionics Suppressions, corporations specializing in psionic solutions flourished. Any psion straight out of a psionics institute could easily find employment or go into business for himself. The mentals (telepaths, precognitives, and clairvoyants) opened offices across the Imperium specializing in private investigation, financial planning, public relations, and advertising. Physicals (telekinetics and teleporters) established high-end courier services, security services, and construction and repair companies.

After the Suppressions, these companies crumbled and their psionic (and some of their non-psionic) employees fled. A very few companies that had not publicly acknowledged using psions managed to slip below the radar. After the Suppressions ended, psions slowly reemerged from hiding. Carefully, psionic businesses began to rebuild.

The Imperium strips licenses from any business that they discover uses illegal methods of operation, including psionics. Careful entrepreneurs who convincingly disguise their companies' true methods have managed to build businesses despite the ban. Bribes, blackmail, and extra precautions protecting a few kite-owned businesses have helped them to once again grow into

megacorporations. Most psions running small businesses are content to make a living and avoid Imperial notice.

Starship Crews: As the captain of his own starship, a psion has more freedom to use his skills than almost any other worker within the Imperium. With a loyal crew and a little discretion around passengers, no one would know what illegal psionic activity may have taken place onboard ship in the privacy of space. Only during port calls would a psionic starship captain need to employ some restraint. Daily challenges tempt a psionic captain to bend the law for convenience. After all, why not use telekinesis when the cargo loader is out of order? Why shouldn't you find the burnt out circuit in the navigational system with clairvoyance? Why shouldn't you use telepathy to defuse a fight between two crew members? The argument against this attitude is that once you become accustomed to breaking the law in harmless ways, you will be tempted to break them in harmful ones.

The same is true when a ship captain knowingly hires a psionic crewman. Not only would he be asked to help in emergencies and in minor harmless ways, but soon the captain becomes tempted to take unfair advantage by having his telepathic crewman read the minds of

potential customers during business deals. A telekinetic might be asked to sabotage the competition's ship in a trade war. Precogs could predict the best opportunities, leaving the competition with the less attractive ones. It is for these reasons some unscrupulous captains hire psions for working passages. A few have even established a reputation in the Psionic Underground, regularly providing passage in exchange for nothing more than a few psionic favors.

Independent Contractors: A psion, without revealing his abilities, could establish himself as an independent contractor in a variety of commercial areas. A teleporter could work as a courier, speeding packages from place to place within his range. As a ship's crewmember, he could collect and deliver cargo quickly and efficiently, reducing port layover times.

A telekinetic could work as a bodyguard or as a high security courier, using his talents to protect against theft or assault. Psions with a more delicate touch could work as repairmen, moving tools and parts deep within complicated mechanical or electrical equipment without the time, potential damage, or expense of deconstructing the device to access internal elements.

For clairvoyants, deep space salvage provides a lucrative opportunity to use

their ability unnoticed. For even riskier, but extremely lucrative work, clairvoyants can easily make good profits as a skip tracer – locating and repossessing starships from captains who have missed their payments. Collecting the bounty on wanted criminals is another option, since clairvoyants can locate them no matter how well they hide. Either finding ships as a skip tracer or finding people as a bounty hunter, clairvoyants in those dangerous lines of work often partner with mercenary units to deal with the actual repossession or apprehension.

Zhodani Trade Routes: Many free traders avoid the lucrative trade routes across the border simply out of the discomfort of dealing with telepaths. The traders with especially raging (and easily read) prejudice against psionics destroy any possible business dealings with the Zhodani before they've even spoken a word. The Zhodani don't bother with traders who are anything but open and straightforward in their dealings.

Starship captains carrying goods (even legal ones) back and forth across the border between the Imperium and Zhodani Consulate quickly discover the benefits of traveling with at least one psionic crewmember. Telepaths especially make good ship representatives when visiting Zhodani ports and negotiating with Zhodani businesses. A fellow telepath is less likely to be offended by the mental contact, better able to sense his customer's concerns, and explain his position in order to make negotiations a quick and pleasant experience for both parties.

Underground: As one might expect, the Psionics Underground is involved with a thriving black market. A shopper can find psionic drugs, Zhodani merchandise, psionic equipment, books and training vids on various psionic techniques, and even weapons. The black market is also the place to find headhunters with clients interested in hiring psions. These headhunters are often psions themselves with a network of contacts. The black market is a central pillar of the Psionics Underground community. Attending the transient affair (which usually only lasts an hour or two before folding up and vanishing) gives a psion the chance to hear the latest news and reconnect with acquaintances he may only see a few times a year.

Smuggling: In the Imperium, it is illegal to transport or sell psionic

equipment, weapons, or drugs. Smuggling such contraband is strictly forbidden. Any starship captain caught trafficking in psionic contraband risks losing his vessel, hefty fines, and even imprisonment. Because most psionic contraband originates in the Zhodani Consulate, where those items are legal, starport and customs officials on Imperial worlds near the Zhodani border are ever vigilant for smugglers. Cargo holds are routinely checked as well as ship records. The Imperium will seize vessels suspected of carrying contraband. Smaller starports in backwater systems are frequently used by smugglers, and therefore heavily patrolled by Imperial forces. Starships that regularly make runs on routes between the Zhodani Consulate and the Imperium are monitored closely. Knowingly transporting an Imperial citizen to the Zhodani Consulate for the purpose of psionic training is illegal.

Psionic Corporations

These are just a few samples of psionic corporations doing business in the Imperium. Psions who have risked finding and attending a psionics institute find the risk of starting their own business is nothing in comparison. Additionally, by working for themselves they have more freedom to use psionics, while reducing the likelihood that their special methods will be noticed.

Solomani Risk Management: This insurance company quietly employs precognitives to evaluate the risk for each policy application. When a prediction of danger arises, the company sends inspectors to perform routine checks, making sure to check on the specific problem predicted. They insure businesses, homes, vehicles, and starships at a very competitive rate.

Privately owned by the Greagor Kite, Solomani Risk Management does not have stockholders to which it must answer. Even with that precaution, the creative accounting department adjusts the books to cover how profitable the company has become.

Spinward Shipping Solutions: As an import/export company in the Spinward Marches, Spinward Shipping Solutions caters to clients who want the profits from trading with the Zhodani, without actually having to deal with them. The Trollers Kite established the trading company to take advantage of

the opportunity to make a profit off the prejudices of non-psions.

Companies in the Spinward Marches entrust their products to Spinward Shipping Solutions. They transport them across the Zhodani border, negotiate and sell the products to Zhodani merchants for a percentage. Zhodani companies do the same with products they'd like to sell in the Imperium without the unpleasantness of dealing with fearful clients. By acting as a middleman, Spinward Shipping Solutions increase profits for both its Imperial and Zhodani clients.

The popularity of the service has bolstered the company's bottom line. Offices are located on all the major planets in the Spinward Marches and on several Zhodani border worlds. Psionic employees work in the Zhodani offices, but most of the employees in the Spinward Marches are normals. The majority of the starship crews hired for the actual shipping process are not psionic. The Imperium watches this company closely, and so far has found no evidence of wrongdoing. The company does not import or export illegal items, nor does it transport passengers.

Selective Management: Selective Management is a unique company. Not only are all their employees psions, but so are all their clients. The Psionics Underground has spawned several new types of businesses based on the unique needs of psions. Special management agencies like Selective developed in response to law enforcement and unforeseeable (except by psychics) economic trends.

Part private investigators, part business planners, the agents of Selective Management help psions who either own, or are planning to open, a business. The service uses a network of precognitives and informants on the worlds where they do business. Psionic business owners hire Selective Management to warn them of complaints filed against them, as well as upcoming raids. The precognitives also compile reports on business and financial trends that will affect their clients.

Most clients simply receive reports quarterly, containing general information along with any specific matters directly affecting them. Larger companies hire full-time precognitive consultants to weigh in on every major business decision.

Jump-Drive Specialists, Inc.: Telekinetic owner/operator James Richard opened Jump-Drive Specialists, Inc., with a loan from the kite that ran the institute he attended. His business was so successful he was able to repay the loan in the first year.

James uses his telekinesis to manipulate tools deep within an engine without having to tear it apart. His skill as a mechanic is genuine. Most psions in the underground know James Richard and trust all their engine repairs to him. His business has become so successful that he hired a psionic business manager to warn him if his company becomes the target of a law enforcement investigation.

INDUSTRIAL

Even though psionics remains illegal within the Imperium, some companies have secretly retained psions in their workforce. For the managers of these companies the combination of reduced cost and increased worker safety outweighed any psionic prejudice and concern for Imperial sanctions.

In an industrial environment, particularly where hazardous materials are handled, telekinesis and teleportation come in very handy. Prior to the PsionicSuppressions, many companies hired psions to transport and manipulate radioactive, corrosive, toxic, and bio-hazardous material. Once psionics became illegal, most companies replaced them with robots.

The annual cost to purchase and maintain these robots is three times greater than the salaries formerly paid to the psions who performed the same functions. Hazardous materials (particularly the corrosive and radioactive ones) break down the robots' shielding, electrical systems, power supply, structural, and radio control components. Maintenance crews must use extra precautions when retrieving and repairing the robots.

Psions working for these companies usually have to mask their telekinesis and teleportation with technological disguises. By standing at a control panel and telekinetically manipulating a non-functioning robot to mime the appropriate actions, a telekinetic can fool the casual observer. Also, in order to limit the number of other employees in the area while a telekinetic performs his job, psions are usually assigned to the night shift.

While honest concerns for worker safety may motivate some companies to hire telekinetics, shadier motives generally lead to employment of telepaths, precogs, and clairvoyants. Industrial espionage is big business in the Imperium. Developments in manufacturing, particularly in advanced fuel and metal refining techniques, have made some corporations extremely wealthy. To remain competitive, executives sometimes turn to espionage. Some psions, unable or unwilling to market their abilities in less criminal areas, jump at the chance to make an easy profit for a mere few hours' work.

Prior to the Psionic Suppressions, manufacturers could freely research and develop psionic equipment and drugs. Most of those companies either went out of business or retooled for other purposes. A few continue to make those items in secret.

SuSAG: The pharmaceutical company SuSAG (*Schunamann und Sohn AG*) made their initial fortune by manufacturing psi-drugs (see p. T:RF15) before the Psionic Suppressions. They secretly continue to manufacture a small quantity of psi-drugs for the Imperium. They are the primary producer of the shiver drug used by some specialist units (see *Shivers*, p. 29) as well as a variety of anti-psi serums. As a megacorporation (with manufacturing facilities across the Imperium and beyond) SuSAG continues to produce and market psi-drugs in regions where it remains legal, including the Zhodani Consulate.

IBMEC: Researchers at the Spinward Marches branch of the Interstellar Bio-Medical Engineering Corp (IBMEC) receive multiple contracts from the Imperium to investigate and reverse engineer Zhodani psionic technology – their weapons and robotics, and the

I'm only mildly telepathic, but I know what they are thinking. They think they pass me around like a two hundred thousand credit prostitute. Some may believe I prostitute my clairvoyance, but it is not like that for me.

I am a highly trained consultant. The information I provide levels the playing field for corporations that can't afford a high-end research facility. For a one-time fee, a business can purchase its way back into the forefront of their industry. Do you know what that is worth to a CEO of a has-been, floundering company?

I only work once or twice a year. I don't even have to advertise, if you know what I mean. Word-of-mouth gives me more business than I could ever handle, so I can be selective when choosing whom I will work for. I even employ a few hand-picked institute graduates. Impress me with what you can do, and I may have a few jobs for you as well. I hope you don't mind traveling. You want to keep moving if you don't want the Imperium to catch on to you.

psionic interface components which allow psions to control various electrical devices.

Copying the designs for equipment of their own isn't the only goal of the research. They are also testing weapons that can interfere with the interface's ability to function. So far their efforts have yet to overcome Zhodani innovations. Management at IBMEC have begun to suspect a Zhodani spy may have infiltrated their company in order to pass their advancements on to Zhodani scientists, who seem too quick to implement new designs which defeat Imperial developments. IMBEC has begun researching ways to prevent clairvoyant and precognitive spies from accessing their labs.

New Market Research: This think tank hires the brightest programmers, designers, and inventors to develop next-generation commercial products. Unknown to the public (and the majority of the employees) NMR owners Mark Turner and Grace Tealvo are both precogs who graduated from the Black River Psionics Institute in The Old Expanses. With ties to the Psionics Underground, they recruit fellow precogs with technical training. Thanks to their combined psionic and technical skills, they routinely patent 30 or more groundbreaking inventions every year.

Suleiman Arms: Located in the Solomani Rim, this weapons manufacturing company also operates mercenary training camps and manages a freelance mercenary force. At a minor camp located on Rossyng (Suleiman: Solomani Rim), Suleiman Arms operates a small specialized psionics institute focusing only on telekinesis and telepathy skills. Suleiman Arms uses Jims to recruit for both its mercenary corporation and psionics institute. It operates several hundred merc squads for hire, including psion-centered and all-psionic units (see *Military*, p. 25).

MEDICAL

A dedicated medic frequently faces the decision between keeping his talents a secret and saving someone's life. He can hope that his coworkers and patients will overlook his psionic indiscretions when weighed against the alternative, but he can't count on that. The patient-caregiver relationship is based on trust. When a doctor's dirty little secret gets out, his coworkers and

patients lose faith. Not only is the doctor a dreaded psion, but a liar for keeping that fact hidden. Uncomfortable working conditions or threats keep many psions from settling in one place for very long.

One of the most valued rights in the Imperium is the right to privacy. That is but one reason psions are so objectionable to the average person's sensibilities. Most people don't trust psions, but a patient needs to trust his doctor in order to receive successful treatment. A doctor who is suspected of psionic abilities will lose his reputation and practice as his clients flee in droves to a normal physicians. This is especially true when a doctor has telepathy or ESP. Both of those skills carry the stigma of invading the privacy of others. If a doctor doesn't respect a person's right to private thought, what keeps him from violating other patients' rights, such as the confidentiality of medical records?

Moral considerations aside, psions who use their telepathy or ESP discreetly wield a powerful tool to help their patients. Telepaths can immediately detect where a patient hurts and how badly. Conversely, if the patient is faking illness (such as in cases of drug abuse or false disability claims), the telepath could determine that as well. By getting to the root of the problem quickly, a telepathic medical practitioner can gain a reputation as something of a miracle worker. Telepathic nurses and medical technicians can anticipate a doctor's order and respond more quickly, particularly during critical procedures. In emergency situations, a telepath can block the sensation of pain his patient feels until medication or sedation has time to work, but he risks exposing himself using such drastic measures.

ESP powers are the most useful in the medical field. A trained precognitive can predict the ailments his patients will develop, and which treatment options will produce the best results. Knowing



in advance which personnel and supplies will be needed helps prepare for emergencies.

Because clairvoyance and clairsentience only work in present time, their usefulness is limited to emergencies as they actually unfold. As members of medical rescue teams, these psions can locate victims in rubble piles or track down a wounded hiker in the wilderness. They can also locate the most seriously injured victims during large scale disasters and speed triage times. In a conventional medical setting, clairvoyants can locate the cause of disease without having to perform exploratory surgery or rely on medical scans that may not reveal the whole story. By keeping tabs on them, a clairvoyant knows immediately if his patients' condition changes, which could mean the difference between life and death in some critical cases.

A skilled telekinetic can perform medical miracles, but he can not actually heal a wound. With a careful application of pressure he can stop internal bleeding, but the artery can't be mended on a cellular level. Broken bones can be realigned, but the bones can't be knitted faster. A heart can be forced to pump, but the damaged heart muscle can't be made whole. To do those procedures, a telekinetic would require intimate knowledge of anatomy and have precise control over his psionic power, and even then he often causes more damage to the already compromised organs and tissues.



A better application of telekinesis in the medical field is during emergency situations. A medical first responder with telekinesis could rescue a victim from a mangled vehicle or from under a dangerously shifting pile of debris faster than conventional equipment – saving valuable time that could make the difference between life and death. In severe disaster scenarios, too, equipment and other resources are scarce. During those times, a short-handed medic can use his ability to grab an instrument from across the room. Such open displays of psionics might save lives, but once a psion is so publicly exposed, the hospital will be obligated to fire him and report the violations to the authorities.

Teleporters face the same sort of dilemma. An organ ready for transplant or a desperately needed antidote located hundreds of miles away might not arrive in time by conventional modes of transport to save a patient's life. The family of the patient may not question the miraculous arrival of life saving treatment, but certainly the medical staff will notice.

Psychiatry: Telepaths employed in the psychiatric or psychological fields of medicine find opportunities to use their skills to good advantage everyday. A sending telepath can fiddle with the minds of his clients, helping them to overcome phobias or move past issues, much like the Zhodani thought police. Rehabilitation, both drug and criminal, is another area where telepathic mental health workers make a big impact. While a compassionate telepath may be tempted to quickly adjust his patient, such tampering will quickly attract attention, especially if the results were unexpected or detrimental.

Receiving telepaths make good listeners in talk therapy. They pick up on the areas their clients are trying to suppress and draw out the source of problems quickly. They are also better at detecting which clients pose a threat to themselves or others and intercepting those patients before they can act on their impulses.

For telepaths in the mental health industry, more dangerous than discovery is the possibility of making a mistake while probing around in an unstable psyche. A mentally imbalanced person could react unexpectedly to a subliminal suggestion, causing him to perform dangerous acts he might not otherwise have considered. Almost as frequently, the telepath inadvertently exposes himself to mental illness that his subconscious might incorporate; this can result in the telepath becoming paranoid, neurotic, or depressed.

Side Effects: Doctors have a higher than average tendency toward drug abuse. Exposure to the ills of the world takes its toll on one's psychological and emotional health. Among telepathic and psychic health care professionals the likelihood of drug abuse quadruples. These sensitive individuals feel the pain of the world, and often times self-medicating is the only way to quiet those feelings they experience as powerfully as their own. They are more likely to make mistakes when using their abilities while impaired, and could cause severe and permanent damage to their patients' mental health. These drug addicted psions account for the majority of the publicized psionic abuse cases.

Because of the pain of dealing daily with constant misery on a psychic level, many psions leave medical practice in less than a year. Others choose areas where the stress levels are lower or less

frequent – such as family practice, wellness clinics, or as medics on starships.

Self-Healing: A character with healing abilities must accept the “self-only” limitation (see p. GT85). So while he can not heal plague victims, he can (within the limitations of his abilities) work in an aid station and not succumb to the infection himself. While self-healing can return someone to perfect health, it can not enhance a person's strength or speed to provide an unfair advantage (unlike artificial means such as steroids). Self-healing does improve endurance, as the character could recover from exertion or exposure more quickly.

Of all the psionic powers, self-healing is the least likely to result in criminal allegations. It is nearly impossible to prove (even with thorough psychic testing) that the healing abilities were actually used, and that the accused's excellent health isn't simply the result of good living and good genes. In the rare cases when self-healers were charged with the use of their powers, the courts dropped the matter since self-healing does not cause harm to another person.

The Imperium tends to turn a blind eye to self-healers unless they are a nuisance in other ways, and the accusation of psionics use provides enough leverage to keep them in line. Showy self-healers who make a spectacle of hurting themselves and then healing quickly tend to get locked up under the rationale that they present a danger to themselves.

Throughout history, self-healers have helped medical science – not always voluntarily. Researchers injure or infect psions to determine how their bodies aggressively heal. This information has provided valuable insights, and in some cases a template to emulate. Unfortunately, many self-healers were not volunteers, and some died when exposed to health hazards too dire for their abilities to overcome.

MERCENARY

Aspects of mercenary campaigns are covered in detail in *GURPS Traveller: Star Mercs*. This section explains how to add psionics to information already provided in that text.

I've seen what you can do, you know.

Don't get excited! I'm not with the Imperium and I'm not going to turn you in. I just want to chat, all right?

I caught your performance at the gauntlet last night. All you have to show for it is a bit of a shiner, which is very impressive considering how the other three guys look. You're fast and strong and you are not afraid to let loose on someone. I happen to know some people who are looking for a guy just like you.

Have you ever thought about going mercenary? There is good money in it, you know. Medical benefits, too, of course. But the best part about mercenaries is that they don't care if you are psionic. Heck, they like working with psions. You can pretty much do what you like. Most of the time you can even use your powers openly.

Here's my card. Contact me if you are interested. Just call me Jim, everyone does. I can get you a sign-on bonus that'll make the purse from last night's gig look like pocket change.

Outside of the institutes and the Underground, psions find acceptance among mercenaries more than in any other walk of life in the Imperium. As hired guns, mercenaries are mistrusted almost as much by whoever hired them as by the enemy. Mercenaries are loyal to their team first and foremost. As long as a psionic merc is highly trained and dedicated to the team, his fellow mercenaries don't care if "technically" he is breaking the law. After all, the life of a mercenary tends to cross into gray areas anyway.

Recruiting: Mercenary units actively seeking psions turn first to their network of recruiters, called Jims. The recruiters earn a commission of Cr500 for every decent new recruit they find. The com-

mission for a psion runs from an additional Cr500 for a latent to Cr5000 for an Institute-trained veteran fresh out of one of the Imperium's elite fighting forces. The latter are very difficult to come by. Only a few psionic veterans from the Imperial military and Scout Service manage to disappear after their term of service and resurface under a new name as a merc.

Many Jims have contacts in the Psionic Underground to assist them in recruiting top psionic athletes and warriors. Just as Jims tend to hang around near military bases looking to recruit recently discharged soldiers for merc units, a few recruiters in the know will do the same at discreet locations near a psionics institute.

Larger mercenary units have their own recruiting facilities at their main bases of operations. Among the tests all recruits endure, several are intended to spot psionic potential. If the applicant is a latent (which means his current level of psionic ability would be of little benefit) he will have the choice between enlisting as an ordinary merc or training at a psionics institute.

A few of the larger mercenary forces run small psionics institutes of their own. Usually these merc units don't have enough latents to run the institute continuously and will wait until they have a group of five or more before convening the training. The instructors are trained psions drawn from the mercenary unit's own ranks. A latent recruit must complete basic training before he will have the opportunity to train at the psionics institute. Because of the infrequent training schedule, many will fight with their merc unit on several tickets before finally receiving training.

Some of the medium-sized mercenary units will send a recruit with latent talents to an outside psionics institute, and even pay his fee in exchange for a minimum term of service. After the psion graduates from the institute, he is expected to return and complete basic training, orientation, and his contractual term of service. If he fails to return (or washes out during training) he must repay the institute training fees. Psions who do not fulfill those expectations will find themselves at the wrong end of a merc operation.

Small mercenary forces that identify a latent during recruitment simply refer him to an institute scout or a Jim with underground contacts. Often these latents never return, and the mercenary unit receives a finder's fee from the recruiter.

Training: All mercenary recruits who are not recently discharged from the armed forces are required to go through basic training and orientation. Psions are no exception. A psion who can't hold his own in a straight-up fight is of no use to his team. This is unlike the Imperial Military, that will coddle a psion by building a unit around him that will protect him in a firefight. Each member of a mercenary team is expected to maintain himself, his weapons, and his equipment in top shape, and to fight with ferocity. A psion who is unwilling or incapable of fulfilling his role as a warrior will wash out before he ever sees action.

As with weapons training and tactics, psions are expected to perform training drills with their special abilities between tickets. Because of this enforced regimen, some of the most skilled psions in the Imperium are mercenaries.

Psionic Mercenary Tactics: While the Zhodani make extensive use of trained psions in their Consular Commando units, and the Imperium utilizes small psion-centered squads, mercenaries take a completely different approach to psionics on the battlefield. Mercenary units do not have long-term objectives like the Consulate or the Imperium. Each ticket takes place in a limited space for a limited time and then is completely released, leaving the consequences of the situation for the client to deal with.

Each merc fights for his team, and there is no exception for a psion. Every team member has his own unique talents that he employs as needed during a mission. For a merc squad, psionics is just another specialty like explosives or martial arts.

Mercenaries value clear communication (see p. T:SM9) in battle situations. When other forms of communications are down or monitored, telepathy can save lives. Not only can it be used to call in air strikes and correct artillery trajectories, but it allows a merc squad to call for pick up or medical evacuation. A telepath can keep the group together and reduce friendly fire incidents. When sweeping for an embedded enemy, telepathy can be as valuable as electronic forms scanning.

Self-healers with their greater endurance and tolerance make excellent mercenaries. They keep their energy level up during long engagements, and can continue to fight effectively in hostile environments when others have fallen out. Healing quickly from battle wounds, these psions require shorter rest and recovery periods between missions.

Precognitive mercenaries are extremely effective in close quarters combat. They drill in their psionic skill precisely for that purpose. By anticipating an opponent's move in advance, a precog can counter it before the action has even been initiated. On a broader scale, precogs can warn of mission failures and future dangers before the team encounters them.

Clairvoyants have the advantage of seeing a mission's target and its security in advance, allowing the team to prepare

for hidden dangers. The area around the objective can be viewed for the best approach and for breaches in the defense. Once in combat, clairvoyants can monitor a target's movement and avoid ambushes.

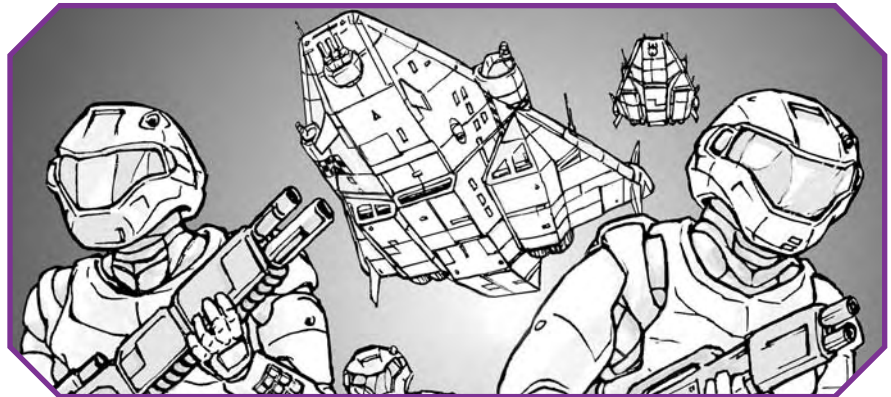
Mercenaries like to use teleporters in lightning strikes and for surprise attacks. Nothing brings a battle to a conclusion faster than a teleporter popping in beside the enemy commander and jamming a plasma gun in his face. Mercs get paid the same regardless of how they complete their missions. In combat, a teleporter can pop in behind a sniper or teleport an enemy's weapon right out of his hand.

Telekinetics use their abilities more openly as mercenaries than in any other field. In combat, too much is going on for anyone to be sure what they saw, and if any authority were to question a merc about suspected psionic activity, he could claim some anti-grav weapon was utilized or that witnesses were confused. Mercs rarely stick around long enough to answer questions, much less for a formal investigation. Telekinetic mercs don't pull punches either. They will blast enemy soldiers off of towers and

far from the action to use psionics in combat.

Because of the likelihood of close quarters and hand-to-hand combat, an infantryman, artillery forward observer (FO), and light cavalry can each benefit from any psionic power on nearly every ticket. Profors (protected forces) mercs not only frequently fight in close quarters, but in hostile vacuum and corrosive atmospheres where physical powers like telekinesis would be used in every mission for safety and maneuverability. Support units benefit the most from the cognitive powers of ESP and telepathy to react and process intelligence not available through other sources.

Depending on the type of warfare, psions may need to employ tactics to disguise their abilities. The Imperium sends observers to any conflict within their borders that involves corporate disputes or open warfare threatening interstellar trade. Most insurgencies and brush fire wars don't rate Imperial observers, but local authorities or even the enemy commanders may call them if they suspect the mercenary unit is employing any illegal tactics – which includes psionics.



rooftops and let gravity handle the rest. They will levitate snipers from their hiding places and let the merc team blast them while they float overhead. They will cast a blinding and deadly hailstorm of shrapnel into an enemy's position.

Not all areas of mercenary service provide opportunities to use psionics during a mission. Besides flashes of precognition, aerospace and starship pilots barely have a millisecond to concentrate on using a psionic power while dog fighting. The artillery and heavy cavalry, with their focus on a weapon or vehicle and its systems, keep a merc too preoccupied with technical duties and/or too

Mercenary Units

Skoreny's Tigers: As one of the largest and most famous mercenary units on the Solomani Rim (see p. T:RF10), Skoreny's Tigers utilize a fair number of psions in their ranks. Founded before the PsionicsSuppressions, Skoreny's Tigers pioneered some of the most demanding and comprehensive psionic battle training techniques ever developed in the Imperium. Most psionics institutes prior to the Suppressions adopted these rigorous training regimes.

During the Suppressions, Skoreny's Tigers officially ceased all psionics training and dismissed all of their psionic personnel. In truth, they shuffled their psionic mercs to different units and changed their records to hide their psionic history. Skoreny's Tigers moved their psionic training camp to a secret location inside the Vegan Autonomous District, where they presently still operate.

Jyark's Profors - All Psionic Mercenary Platoon: Consisting of a command squad, a support squad, and three profors squads, Jyark's Profors is an elite TL11 protected forces platoon. In addition to training for hostile environment operation in the vacuum of space, every member of this platoon is psionic. During his training at the Bellsharda Psionics Institute, Jacob Jyark became involved with the underground. He says his real training took place in the underground sporting arenas, and later during a short-lived period of psionic activism that ended with an Imperial raid. Jyark managed to save his activist companions, but not the movement nor the Underground, which had in one stroke been destroyed on his home world.

A Jim for the Macam Berserkers lured Jyark into a mercenary career. After a six-year stint as a vacc trooper with the Macam Berserkers he struck out on his own. Handpicking psions from the graduates of several psionics institutes and athletes from the sector's most notorious underground arenas, he assembled and trained an elite platoon of psionic profors troops. These psions use their telekinesis and teleportation to add a new degree of safety to vacuum warfare unmatched in the Imperium. His command and support squads now boasts the most experienced mercenary precogs, telepaths, and clairvoyants in the Imperium.

Due to the platoon's psionic complement, it could never grow beyond the scope of a specialized platoon. Like other successful mercenary units, the reputation of Jyark's Profors precedes it. As a result they frequently move immediately from one ticket to another. They usually operate as a subcontractor of established mercenary units requiring a profors platoon for specific missions.

Through these relationships with other merc units, Jacob Jyark began receiving requests to train latent psions. Not wishing to add any operations which might attract Imperial attention,



Jacob Jyark always forwards the latent and the request to one of the sector's psionics institute scouts.

Ramden's Strikers: Typical of most mercenary squads, Ramden's Strikers consists of a TL9 fast response team and a command team that include a medic and a sensor technician. What makes this merc squad different is their fast response team leader, Kevin Yogker. He trained as a telepath, precog, and telekinetic at the Imperium's Spinward Marches Psionics Institute, Yogker fought with the elite Shivers unit for six years before burning out from the psi-boosting drug that gave the unit its name. After a few years of treatment and observation at a veteran's hospital, the Imperium concluded he'd lost his psionic abilities and discharged Yogker.

Yogker accepted a few short-term mercenary tickets and wandered the Imperium for a few years before he noticed his abilities beginning to re-emerge. He signed a long-term contract with Ramden's Strikers, a new squad being formed by a mercenary he respected and with whom he'd worked with on previous tickets. Gradually, Yogker's abilities have returned to nearly the level they were prior to enlisting with the Shivers. His squad knows of his

telekinesis, but not of his telepathy and precognition. He prefers to attribute his accurate hunches to his experience.

Plitsiepr's Fist: Cvili Plitsiepr is an ethnic Zhodani, born and raised in one of the Client States between the Consulate and the Imperium. His first real taste of Zhodani culture came when he attended a psionics institute on a world near the Consulate. He was kicked out for his immoral thoughts and for refusing to submit to the thought police, and finished his education at a psionics institute in the Spinward Marches.

He spent a few years competing in gauntlets for cash prizes, working freelance for mercenary units, and getting in fights in bars for fun. Eventually he caught the attention of the Trollers Kite, who hired him to work as security for them. That lasted only a few years before the daily expectations got on his nerves and he quit.

He used the money he'd set aside to buy a ship and pull together a mercenary crew. The ship and the crew take mercenary gigs around the Spinward Marches and the client states bordering the Imperium. Many of his clients are referred to him from the Trollers Kite or from the Underground.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHARACTER

TEMPLATES

The following templates may be used by game masters to create NPCs or by players who wish to develop them as PCs. The details for **GURPS** character creation are found in **GURPS Basic Set** and **GURPS Compendium I**, with additional rules for creating psionic characters explained in **GURPS Psionics** and **GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1**.

These templates are merely a starting point and include suggestions for customization. The primary skills are required for that character's career type. The secondary skills are extremely useful but not mandatory, and background skills are included to add a deeper dimension to the characters.

Institute Scout

90 Points

Institute scouts are always on the hunt for latent psions, particularly ones searching for a psionics institute. They regularly interact with the psionic underground on several planets. Institute scouts act much like Jims (see p. T:SM25), searching for potential recruits for a fee (usually Cr1,000 per psion), but with the added difficulties of dodging the Imperial/local authorities and certain hostile factions of the underground. To locate enough recruits each year, institute scouts work territories spanning several systems.



Attributes: ST 11 [10], DX 11 [10], IQ 13 [30], HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Contacts (psionics institute) [3/contact]; and a total of 22 points in Alertness [5/level], Alternate Identity [15], Charisma [5/level], Collected or Imperturbable [5 or 10], Combat Reflexes [15], Common Sense [10], Contacts (underground or

mercenary) [3/contact], Danger Sense [15], Daredevil [15], ESP Power [3/level], Healing (includes self-only limitation) [2/level], Intuition [15], Language Talent [2/level], Luck [15], Psychokinesis [5/level], Strong Will [4/level], Telepathy [5/level], Teleportation [5/level], Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: Unusual Background [-15]; and a total of -10 points chosen from Duty (to recruits and institute) [-5], Enemy (Imperium agents, 6 or less) [-15], Loner [-5], Paranoia [-10], Reputation [varies], Secret [-5 to -20], Social Stigma [-15].

Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (any) (M/E) IQ [1]-13; Electronics Operation (psi detector) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; and spend a net of 20 points on any of the following: Carousing (P/A; HT) HT [2]-10, Escape (P/H) DX-1 [2]-12, Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14, Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-13, Shadowing (M/A) IQ [2]-13, Body Language (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, or any psionic skill for a selected psionic power (refer to the power packages for Institute Instructor, below, for a list of skills) each (M/H) IQ+0 [4]-13.

Secondary Skills: Computer Operation (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-12; Disguise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Holdout (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; plus one of Beam Weapons (any) or Guns (any), both (P/E) DX+1 [1/2]-14.

Background Skills: One of Driving (any) or Piloting (any), both (P/A)DX-1 [1]-12.

Customization Notes: While most scouts are psionic, not all of them are. Psionics provides a huge advantage, especially when dealing with the underground. The nature of the planets in a scout's territory and the type of institute he works for may suggest the skills which will best serve him.

Instructor

102 Points

This template can be used to build the entire faculty of a psionics institute or to design characters for players who opt to play current or former psionics institute instructors. The background and experiences of instructors are as variable as the institutes with whom they are employed. A self-healing mentor at a Quina Spa will necessarily differ from a Kite university professor or an Imperium military trainer.

Attributes: ST 10 [0], DX 10 [0], IQ 14 [45], HT 10 [0].

Advantages: A total of 15 points from Administrative Rank [5/level]; Charisma [5/level]; Claim to Hospitality (psionics institutes) [1 to 10]; Imperturbable [10]; Intuition [15]; Strong Will 4/level; Versatile [5].

Disadvantages: Unusual Background [-15]; and a total of -25 points from Duty (to students and institute) [-5], Enemy (Imperium agents, 6 or less) [-15], Paranoia [-10], Secret [-5 to -20], Social Stigma [-15], Telepathic Addiction (only available to telepaths) [-10/-20].

PSI Power and Skills: Pick one of the following packages for a total of 60 points. Powers are Advantages and are required before any psionics skills for that power can be purchased. All psionic skills are (M/H) IQ+0[4]-13.

Power: Telepathy 8 [40] (minimum) [5/level].
Skills: Telereceive and Telesend, each at 14 (IQ+1) [4] (minimum); plus 12 points selected from Emotion Sense, Illusion, Mental Blow, Mental Stab (requires Mental Blow at 15+), Mind Shield, Mindswitch, Mindsword (requires Mental Blow at 12+), Mindwipe, Psi Sense, Sleep, Suggest, Telecontrol (requires Telesend and Telereceive at 15+), Telescan.

Power: Psychokinesis 10 [50] (minimum) [5/level]. **Skills:** Telekinesis 14 (IQ+0) [4] (minimum); plus a total of 6 points selected from Cryokinesis, Levitation, PK Shield (require ESP Power 1 [3] minimum), Pyrokinesis.

Power: ESP Power 10 [30] (minimum) [3/level]. **Skills:** Select a total of 30 points from Clairaudience; Clairsentience; Clairvoyance; Combat Sense; Precognition; Psychometry; Retrocognition; Seekersense.

Power: Teleportation 10 [50](minimum) [5/level]. **Skills:** Spend 10 points among Autoteleport; Combat Teleport (requires a minimum of Autoteleport at 14+); Exoteleport.

Power: Healing 12 [24] (minimum, with self-only limitation) [2/level]. **Skills:** Spend 36 points among Healing, Life Extension (requires Metabolism Control 14+), and Metabolism Control.



Primary Skills: Computer Operation (psi detector) (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-13; Research (psionics) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Teaching (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-15, Psionics (M/VH) IQ+2 [8]-16.

Secondary Skills: Select one from Physician; Physics; Psychology; Theology; Xenology each (M/H) IQ+1 [8] -15; or Genetics, Physiology (M/VH) IQ+0 [8]-14.

Background Skills: select one from Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-13; Bard (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-12; Language (any, most likely Zhodani) (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-12.

Customization Notes: To qualify as an instructor at an institute, this character needs a minimum of 60 points primarily in a single power and with a variety of skills within that power. Minimum levels listed in the packages may be increased, but not decreased. Some skills are prerequisites for other skills, as noted above. The packages above represent a well-rounded instructor in their power type, using the template's attributes to calculate the points. Additional skills, limitations and enhancements are available in *GURPS Psionics*. Tweaking the skills and power level are permitted within limits.