

# TRAVELLER

NAVAL ADVENTURE 2: SHOWING THE SUNBURST



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

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## NAVAL ADVENTURE 2: SHOWING THE SUNBURST

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# INTRODUCTION

In *Showing the Sunburst*, the captain and crew of an Imperial naval vessel are ordered to undertake a cruise among the neutral worlds between the Imperium's territories in the Spinward Marches and the Zhodani Consulate. Flag-showing missions of this sort are commonplace, reminding friends and potential foes alike that the navy is ready to respond to trouble. Flag-showing is also used as a cover for intelligence gathering and the occasional covert operation is supported along the way. With tensions running high between the Imperium and Consulate, the Travellers will need to tread carefully – but at the same time the Imperium cannot afford to seem weak or ineffectual.

During the course of their mission, the Travellers will encounter complex situations that cannot be solved by violence; naval officers must be diplomats, warriors, lawyers and anything else that may be required. Assistance will usually be several weeks away and in any case a navy crew are expected to get the job done without yelling for help every time they encounter a setback.

The mission is one of flag-showing in a neutral area, so a small escort might not be suitable – the mission requires a vessel large enough to undertake an extended deployment and capable enough to impress the populations it visits.

A large escort such as the *Kinunir*-class in *High Guard* is perhaps the smallest vessel that might be suitable and destroyer-sized ships are even better. An *Amara*-class heavy cruiser would be an excellent choice for the mission, if one could be spared from the sector fleet's deployments.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book presents the framework of a naval mission, with guidance on how to use the rules presented in the *Naval Campaign Guide*. It differs from a conventional Traveller adventure in that the mission can spawn a multitude of adventures, some of which could be quite lengthy. Most will, however, be quite short.



There is no requirement to play out every given incident or situation. The entire mission could be abstracted using the *Naval Campaign Guide* if desired. However, most Travellers will want to play out at least some of the situations. Each such incidence is referred to as an Adventure.

Adventures are resolved using a combination of the *Traveller Core Rulebook* and *Naval Campaign Guide*. Whenever an individual crewmember or officer performs a task, the *Traveller Core Rulebook* is used. The actions of larger groups are dealt with using the *Naval Campaign Guide* rules. By way of example, if the captain's bodyguard takes a shot at an attacker with his sidearm this is resolved with the combat rules in the *Traveller Core Rulebook*, whereas a skirmish between a band of raiders and the ship's marines can be resolved in detail but the *Naval Campaign Guide* provides a quick resolution system for such encounters.

## REFEREE'S OUTLINE

This mission is presented as information for the Referee, along with a set of objectives the Travellers are expected to complete. These will give some structure to the flow of events but it is the Travellers who will decide what they want to do and when. The Travellers may decide to completely ignore some goals or make bad decisions that do not leave sufficient time to complete their objectives. This is their choice; indeed it is what a naval campaign is all about. The Travellers are given a mission and have to decide how to go about accomplishing it. The Referee might offer some advice – perhaps by way of a non-player officer – but ultimately the Travellers make their own choices. If those choices give them no chance for success then the Travellers will have to accept the consequences and learn from them.

This means that naval missions can be very 'freeform'. The Referee has information on the places the Travellers will visit and activities of rivals and enemies but how these intersect with the plans of the Travellers will be determined as it happens. Thus this outline is an overview of the events of the mission but not necessarily in the order they will happen. It should be considered to be no more than guidance; the Referee's judgement is of vastly greater importance than adherence to a pre-scripted adventure outline.

The mission takes place in distinct phases. The first is reasonably safe, with an opportunity to ask questions and get advice. During this phase the Travellers evaluate their command and the mission ahead, and *should* do some advance planning on how to deal with likely challenges. They will ready their ship at the naval base at Extolay and learn about the situation on the border.

The second phase of the mission involves a great deal of Traveller discretion. Their vessel is required to proceed to the world of Arden where they will undertake diplomatic duties and show the flag in ports around the region. This will lead to the third phase of the mission, in which the Travellers will have to retrieve vessels from an owner who does not want to give them up.

**Mission Brief:** The Travellers are given their mission through the normal chain of command, along with the available intelligence.

**Extolay Naval Base:** The Travellers have a chance to ready their ship and its crew for the mission. Anything they forget about during this phase will have to be done without and the Referee should not give the Travellers too long. They have a mission to be getting on with, whether their ship is in perfect readiness or not.

**Diplomatic Duty:** The Travellers must pay a visit to Arden and check in with the Imperial officials stationed there, who may have duties for them to perform. The timing of this visit is not fixed; the Travellers could undertake part of their cruise then go to Arden or go to Arden first. At Arden the Travellers are asked to assist in a complex diplomatic matter regarding the possibly illegal court-martial of a Zhodani officer named Commander Izshittl. This will be awkward, given the political tensions between the Imperium and Consulate, and the Travellers must find a way to discharge their duty without assisting a potential enemy too much.

**Showing the Sunburst:** The Travellers are required by their mission to show the flag in various ports around the region and make sure they are seen to efficiently carry out the role of a patrolling Imperial Navy vessel. The Travellers can decide which systems to visit and in what order, so long as their overall mission brief is carried out. Along the way they will encounter a number of vessels in systems with varying attitudes to the Imperium and must decide how best to deal with them without causing an interstellar incident.

**Locate and Retrieve:** The Travellers are aware that one or more surplus Imperial warships have been sold through inappropriate channels and are in the wrong hands. They are ordered to locate these vessels and return them to the naval base at Extolay, ideally without any details of the incident coming to light outside of naval circles.

**Mission Completion:** The Travellers are ordered to return to base, where their performance will be evaluated.

# C H A P T E R - O N E

# SHIPS AND CREWS

The Referee should decide what sort of vessel the Travellers will crew during this mission. It will need to be a warship, and one large enough to carry out an extended patrol, but beyond that the Referee has discretion. The selected vessel might be the INS *Sharshana*, redeployed after her shakedown cruise in Deneb sector (see *Naval Adventure 1: Shakedown Cruise*) or a vessel assigned to the Travellers as part of an ongoing naval campaign. Command of a vessel can be temporary; the Travellers may have taken over a ship for this one mission or might be assigned to it on an ongoing basis.

The characteristics of INS *Sharshana* were detailed in *Naval Adventure 1: Shakedown Cruise* and can be used without alteration. However, whether or not the Travellers have a new ship they must determine its status before the mission can begin. If traits and quirks are already known, they should not be redetermined. Likewise, Crew Efficiency Index (CEI) will be the same as at the end of the last mission, unless some major change has occurred. Effective Crew Efficiency Index (ECEI) will revert to the same value as CEI unless events between missions have caused some major change. Morale (MOR) will revert to its normal value as the effects of any mission events from the last cruise will have faded by the time this mission starts.

The supply situation must be generated anew. The navy always tries to ensure its ships have everything necessary but what a supply officer at the sector depot thinks the Travellers need may not match their own opinion on the subject. Rules for determining supply status and other necessary characteristics are found in the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*.

There are no major surprises at this stage. The supply chain is functioning as well as it usually does, which is to say there are shortages of a few components and items, excesses of various things that nobody seems to have a use for, and a few irritating glitches that still have not been ironed out. Although that shipment of Mk-204 jump drive coolant pipe connectors has been on back order for two years there are still none to be had... although there are rumours that an officer from the Jewell subsector fleet knows someone who has a way of getting them.

The Referee should determine the ship's supply status as normal and if the Travellers want to work the system to try to get more fully stocked they can do so. However, they are supposed to be out on patrol so there is a limit to how long the Travellers can be permitted to spend scrounging for supplies.

The Referee may choose to implement a Campaign Event at the beginning of the mission if this seems desirable but it is probably best to let the Travellers begin their mission without too many complications. Those will arise in due course.



# REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The following information is for the use of the Referee. How much of it is revealed to the Travellers, and in what form, is as always a decision for individual Referees. The Travellers will have access to an up-to-date database of information on star systems, naval deployments and so forth, and will have access to data not normally available to civilians. However, intelligence is not always perfect and some matters are kept secret even within the navy. So, although command of a warship is a position of great trust that brings with it many benefits, the Travellers will never have 100% accurate and complete information and must often determine the facts of a situation for themselves.

## ATTITUDE AND COOPERATION

The attitude of a world's population and level of legal cooperation the Travellers can expect from its government, are not always the same. For example, a population (and government) that despises and hates the Imperium may have treaties in place that require cooperation with navy patrols and law enforcement officials pursuing fugitives. Cooperation in this case will be reluctant and the Travellers may have to remind the government about its treaty obligations before receiving aid. The following levels of attitude and cooperation indicate the degree of trouble the Traveller may have to go to in order to carry out their duties.

### ATTITUDE

The attitude of a population towards the Imperium is typically displayed in the form of enthusiastic greetings to a ship, dragging of feet over supply requests and other relatively nebulous indicators. An anti-Imperial population might harass crews in port; a pro-Imperial one may have discounts for personnel in uniform. Attitude does not describe the population's obligations towards the Imperium but does indicate how willingly they are discharged. Note that extreme views are rare and will be immediately obvious unless the population is secretly plotting revolt.

The attitude of a population imposes a DM on appropriate checks and mission segment resolution. For example, trying to obtain information from a port

authority run by an anti-Imperial government would require an Investigate check at DM-4. The attitude towards another state might impose a DM at the Referee's discretion, such as a situation where the Travellers point out that if they are not permitted to carry out an action the locally unpopular Zhodani Consulate will benefit.

### Attitude Modifiers

Attitude	Effect
Extremely Anti-Imperial	DM-8 on appropriate checks
Anti-Imperial	DM-4 on appropriate checks
Slightly Anti-Imperial	DM-2 on appropriate checks
Neutral	None
Slightly Pro-Imperial	DM+2 on appropriate checks
Pro-Imperial	DM+4 on appropriate checks
Extremely Pro-Imperial	DM+8 on appropriate checks

### COOPERATION

The degree of cooperation the Travellers can expect is dictated by treaties, precedents, long-standing informal agreements and simple habit, as well as the impression the local government has of the Imperium – which is one reason for flag-showing cruises. A world government that cannot detect and track vessels in its system will be unaware of events in space, so for the most part its degree of cooperation does not matter. However, the Imperial Navy must still be seen to respect world governments' sovereign territory, so blatant action on the planetary surface or in low orbit could still cause an incident.

A world's degree of cooperation can be ignored if necessary but the action must be justified at the end of the mission. For example, a navy ship might blast a known pirate over a world that expressly forbids any interference with ships in its local space. Whilst within the remit of the Imperial Navy, this will cause an incident that must be smoothed over by diplomats. The decision to act despite local attitudes is a tough one but if the Travellers can demonstrate a need that outweighs the harm done to interstellar relations their actions will be acceptable.

However, an action of this sort concerns more than just the local system government as it displays a level of contempt for world governments outside the Imperium, so 'one pirate less' is not always a good enough reason. Sometimes a navy ship will need to let a suspect vessel go in order to preserve interstellar diplomacy. Galling as it is, this sort of decision is necessary when commanding a warship.

Note that cooperation is not always helpful. A world that dislikes the Imperium but has multiple treaties in place might 'cooperate' by finding obscure treaty clauses that require a visiting navy ship to jump through hoops or provide assistance with trivial problems that could just as easily have been dealt with locally.

In general, low-key, discreet actions combined with a policy of politely informing the local world government of the Travellers' actions or intentions will keep governments from taking exception. Asking permission, even if it is not required, is often a good way to avoid antagonising a government when operating in their home system.

If the Travellers take some action that is opposed by the world government, there is a chance of a diplomatic incident. It may seem to the Travellers that upsetting the rulers of 8,000 people on some rockball is of no

consequence but their superiors will be concerned about the message it sends to the wider interstellar community and also what it indicates about the Travellers' propensity for starting wars the Imperium does not want.

Any time the Travellers board a ship or otherwise use the authority of the navy in a system that does not have at least passive cooperation, there is a chance of an incident. If the situation involves weapons fire or particularly blatant actions on the part of the Travellers, this chance is subject to DM+4 on the Cooperation & Opposition table. Blatant actions include threatening to fire on a vessel without good cause, aggressive actions towards crews or planetside populations, ignoring local space traffic laws in a way that puts other ships in danger or refusing to comply with a direct instruction not to take action.

If an incident occurs, it can be smoothed over by the Travellers by making an Average (8+) Diplomat check with a DM determined by the world's attitude. Success indicates a tense situation defused into grumbling and irritation. Failure will result in the world's attitude and cooperation becoming temporarily one category worse, which will affect all Imperial vessels in the area and require some explaining when the Travellers return to port.

## Cooperation & Opposition

Level of Cooperation	Effect	Chance of Incident (2D check)
War or Open Hostility	Open hostility, refusal to cooperate at all, possible military action	Irrelevant
Highly Active Opposition	Constant interference and harassment	3+
Active Opposition	Frequent demands for information and clarification, slow or partial cooperation with requests	6+
Passive Opposition	Occasional interference by officials, slow response to requests	9+
Neutral	General acceptance of most actions, providing the Travellers are polite and discreet	12+
Passive Cooperation	Acceptance of most actions, even quite robust use of naval authority	None
Active Cooperation	Active support of the Travellers' actions	None
Highly Active Cooperation	Strong approval of most actions, including robust or even aggressive action against disliked powers	None

## THE IRKUNAKA SITUATION

When an Imperial Navy vessel reaches the end of its service life it may be 'mothballed' against future need or disposed of by a variety of means. Often, older vessels are stripped of their most sensitive systems and offered for sale. The navy is careful about who is permitted to buy surplus ships, as it does not want the damage to its reputation that might result from a former navy ship turning raider. Acceptable clients are normally world governments, shipping lines and licensed mercenaries.

In this mission, the process has gone awry. One or more former naval vessels have been purchased by an apparently reputable client, only to turn up in the Imperium/Consulate frontier region behaving suspiciously. Back tracking paperwork has indicated the vessels were purchased by a shell corporation and are now being operated by an unknown group. Sightings have been reported in the Arden region. It is possible that the ships are being used by Arden itself, in an effort to increase its naval power, or by a group with a political agenda. Whether pro-Imperial or not, the situation is unacceptable and the vessels must be returned to Imperial ownership.

One of these ships is named *Irkunaka*. The Referee should decide if this vessel is the only one or whether there are several and their specific identities. Ideally, the missing ships should be sufficient to pose a modest threat to the Travellers' vessel. If the Travellers have a cruiser then the missing vessel should be a light cruiser or large destroyer; a Mercenary Cruiser or three Patrol Corvettes would be sufficient to pose a threat to a *Kinunir*-class colonial cruiser and so forth.

One advantage of being in the navy is that you have firepower on your side, most of the time. However, naval adventures are not so much about using the big guns as deciding when and how to use them... or not. The Travellers will have to do some detective work to find this ship (or ships) and decide how to tackle the problem. Hoping for a chance encounter is one option but this may occur in a system where taking action would cause diplomatic problems. The Travellers will have to choose between letting their target go or causing an incident.

*Irkunaka*, and any consorts she may have, are now owned and operated by a group opposed to any Zhodani presence in the area. Some crewmembers are actively anti-Zhodani, others merely collecting a generous salary

to crew the vessels but their senior officers and backers are all politically motivated. Most consider the Imperial stance in the region to be far too soft and feel the navy should put the 'Joes' in their place to keep them on the defensive.

Most of the time these vessels are used to protect local traffic and create a good impression with their smartness and professionalism. Beneath the surface, however, is an anti-Zhodani message and stance that – at its mildest – borders on confrontational. These people are not concerned about the niceties of diplomacy and feel that trying to avoid another Frontier War is the best way to ensure one breaks out. The Imperium should stand strong, they believe, and they are prepared to lead by example.

Whilst the Travellers might actually agree with some of these sentiments, the misappropriated ships are a threat to the stability of the region. If war really is coming, it will come, but it would be better if it were not triggered by a bunch of loose cannon ship operators causing incidents on the frontier.

There is also the question of the backers behind this group. An investigation might lead to some uncomfortable places if senior naval or political officials are assisting groups like this to foment trouble on the frontier. However, that is above the Travellers' pay grade. They have been ordered to bring these ships in and arrest officers for investigation. They might even be acquitted but the process must be carried out and the threat to local stability eliminated.

The missing ships are based on one of the minor worlds in the region, at an improvised spaceport away from the world's main port. The crews have the support of the local population and have generally acted honourably, although they harass Zhodani shipping and crews suspected to have pro-Zhodani leanings. Overall, these vessels and their operators are well-respected, and even liked, and are not 'bad guys' in the usual sense. But all the same, the Travellers must bring them in.

It might be possible to negotiate a return to Extolay naval base and surrender to investigation, or encourage mutiny among the less political of the crew. Failing this, the Travellers may have to fight people who are basically on their side and might in so doing 'prove' the point that the navy is too soft on enemies of the Imperium. Such is the nature of naval command; orders must be obeyed and officers need to have faith that their superiors are making the best choice in a complex situation.

## Where Are They Based?

The Referee might decide at the beginning of the adventure which world is hosting the rogue ships or could leave it open. That way the Travellers have no way of knowing where they need to search and must use the intel-gathering process described in this mission. If they visited the rogue ships' base whilst they were away, it might not be apparent that anything unusual was happening; the base is simply a place where the crews take downtime and obtain supplies. It is not in any way a major facility.

Likely candidates for a base are pro-Imperial or pro-Arden worlds, outsystem planets with no population other than a small mining camp or the like, or divided worlds where events at one city are unlikely to be heard about at others or the main port.

## THE JEWELL-VILIS FRONTIER

The Jewell and Vilis subsectors represent the primary frontier between the Imperium and Zhodani Consulate. They are different in strategic and political character, each presenting their own challenges to Imperial planners. The 'Fortress Worlds' of the Jewell Cluster are within a single jump of Zhodani territory, facing the formidable Zhodani bases of the so-called Riverland Wall. In any future conflict these systems are likely to be attacked without warning.

Imperial strategic thinking on this matter has varied over time. Once, the Fortress World systems were used as forward bases for heavy elements of the Spinward Marches sector fleet but the possibility of defeat in detail by an overwhelming surprise attack caused a change to a defend-and-reinforce strategy. The system defence forces maintained by the worlds of the Jewell Cluster are heavily subsidised with Imperial funds and additional defensive vessels, such as non-jump-capable Imperial Navy battle riders, are assigned to these systems. Whether or not these forces are sufficient to prevent the fall of the Jewell Cluster is an oft-debated question but they are certainly sufficient to inflict heavy losses on an invader.

The rimward end of Jewell subsector and all of Vilis subsector are outside Zhodani territory, creating a buffer zone through which an attacking fleet would have to advance. This translates into warning time – although not much in the case of some systems – providing a good watch is kept on neutral systems. Imperial and Zhodani vessels patrol frontier systems, both openly and covertly. In addition to naval vessels, spy ships posing as innocent merchants collect data as they ply the local spacelanes.

Both the Imperium and Consulate have contingency plans in place for an offensive or defensive war – and for many other eventualities too. Both seek an advantage exploitable in the event of war, knowing that possession of such an advantage might be a useful bargaining tool for concessions elsewhere. If either the Imperium or Consulate were to obtain a forward naval base in the frontier area, the opposition's warning time would be greatly reduced, so both powers expend considerable resources on preventing the other from establishing treaties with neutral worlds that might allow a forward base to be constructed.

This game is played at many levels and in a variety of ways. Diplomats maintain friendly relations and the navy reminds local governments of the Imperium's power. Investors help friends of the Imperium become more prosperous or counter Zhodani offers. News reports are spun and twisted, and whilst all this is going on the agents of both powers try to keep tabs on what the other is up to.

### Arden

Although it is only just a starfaring power, the world of Arden is powerful locally. Its position on the Spinward Main between Zhodani and Imperial territory makes Arden a prime location for a forward naval base and both powers have long desired to create one. Arden, in turn, benefits from concessions and investments made by greater powers wishing to prevent the world becoming too friendly with the other.

Arden has begun to extend its influence over the surrounding worlds, apparently intent on creating a small alliance or economic empire. There is much debate as to whether this 'Federation of Arden', as it is popularly called, already exists. Certainly the attitudes of local world governments have changed in recent years, generally falling into line with Arden's position.

Naturally, this makes Arden even more important in the strategic planning of both the Imperium and Consulate. Occasional goodwill visits by naval vessels to the region have now become near-constant patrols, with Imperial embassies expanded and often surrounded by a small Imperial Economic Zone. The Consulate similarly maintains an increasingly large presence on worlds of the region, offering aid for projects from infrastructure construction to artistic endeavours.

The ruling oligarchs of Arden are divided on whether the Imperium or Consulate is the most useful friend to have. Some are positively inclined towards one or the other, whilst the remainder are suspicious of the motivations of both. Open conflict between them would be bad for Arden but a 'cold war' situation can be manipulated to Arden's benefit.

### **The Spinward Main**

An arm of the Spinward Main runs spinward from Extolay, though it sees far less jump-1 traffic than the arm running coreward towards Efate. Many worlds on the spinward arm are unimportant, with no profits to be made on trade. The arm serves as a link between Imperial space and the Consulate, so there is money to be made at each end for those willing to make the trip.

Most trade moving along the arm uses the jump-2 route running from Sheyou via Rapp's World, Caloran, Zircon, Tremous Dex and Tionale to Extolay. Some vessels plod back and forth through all systems of the arm but most jump-1 traffic is localised to one of the Class B ports on the route, typically operating on a two-jumps-out/two-jumps-back basis rather than making the long haul from one end to the other. This has the effect of creating distinct economic zones around Arden and Tremous Dex, with cultural influences following suit.

Many of the jump-2 ships plying the route terminate at Tremous Dex, conducting trade there and turning back for Extolay or Sheyou. Tremous Dex is thus the most important trade port on the arm, despite efforts on the part of the government of Arden to become the local trade hub.

### **Extolay Naval Base**

Extolay naval base is a small installation intended to support patrol operations along the Spinward Main and act as a staging point for missions to spinward. Heavy fleet elements such as cruisers and battleships are based at Regina, two parsecs away, enabling the base's considerable in-system defence force to call on their support at need.

The base is entirely capable of supporting large ships for a short time but lacks the extensive repair and refit facilities of a major fleet base. Its own forces are a collection of escorts and handful of destroyers which operate primarily on the local section of the Spinward Main. Standing patrols are maintained on both sides of the Imperial border, not least to conduct checks on vessels passing in and out of Imperial space

### **Stave (E7667A8-2)**

Stave is considered a very low-priority location by the Admiralty. As a low-tech world with no significant industrial capability it has no ability to influence the course of any future conflict or actions of any power in its star system. An advanced base built there would benefit the Consulate little as Stave is directly on their border and there is already a base at neighbouring Sheyou.

### **Fronde (E9C3000-9)**

Fronde is a hostile world inhabited only by a few thousand workers and their families. However, these people are, for the most part, Imperial citizens employed by corporations registered in the Imperium and therefore entitled to the protection of the Imperial Navy. Fronde is of low priority but a visit from time-to-time is desirable as a counter to discontent arising from being 'forgotten' by the Imperium.

### **Caloran (C796746-5)**

Caloran is an agricultural world of little direct significance. However, it would be a breadbasket for any expansion programme in the region, including Arden, and is thus a target for diplomatic initiatives. An appraisal of current attempts by Arden to increase its influence would be useful to Imperial planners.

Although officially non-aligned, Caloran is at present extremely pro-Arden in outlook as a result of investment projects and long-term diplomacy. It is also friendly to the Consulate and rather cool towards the Imperium.

### **899-076 (E201300-8)**

899-076 is a rockball world with a few thousand inhabitants living in scattered mining settlements. It has no political or economic significance but could be expanded into a major resource extraction site with enough effort. The various communities are independent of one another and have differing outlooks towards the powers of the region. Settlements of this sort are sometimes raided by pirates, seeking saleable machinery, or forced to support their operations.

### **Zenopit (D430546-7)**

Little more than a rockball, Zenopit is home to slightly more than half a million people, most employed in resource extraction industries or supporting businesses. The starport, although of very basic quality, brings in a modest income from passing jump-1 ships headed for Arden or the Consulate end of the Spinward Main. Zenopit is strongly inclined towards Arden, a little less so towards the Consulate and downright unfriendly towards Imperials.

### **Arden (B5549CB-9)**

Arden is a habitable world, with water and a thin atmosphere. Development was slow after colonisation, both in terms of population growth and technological development, and with each step forward came ever more bureaucracy. Arden's social order is based upon regulations, laws and codes of practice governing all activities, overseen by an entrenched oligarchical elite who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Arden's starport is notorious for its stragulous bureaucracy which makes the simplest of tasks a maddening to-and-fro between administrative offices.

Arden is officially neutral towards all other governments, including the Imperium and Consulate. Its degree of favour towards one or the other can vary, and initiatives to improve relations with Arden always seem to involve investment or concessions that benefit the ruling elite. If Arden were to permit long-term Zhodani naval deployments or a base, the available response time for Imperial forces in Vilis subsector would be significantly reduced. This is an unacceptable situation which must be prevented.

### **Zircon (C792678-8)**

With a dense, tainted atmosphere and little surface water, Zircon is not the jewel it was named for. Nevertheless, it is home to around six million people divided into several loose polities. This is less about conflict and confrontation than social fragmentation; most communities are self-sufficient and have little contact with one another. As a result, there is no real world government as such and little social unity. Nor is there violence between the communities; most lack the capability to harm the others even if it seemed desirable.

Some of Zircon's settlements are heavily influenced by Arden, and Imperial analysts predict a diplomatic and economic takeover in the next few years. It is not clear at this time what the implications for the local strategic situation might be.

### **Utoland (C573474-7)**

Like many similar worlds, Utoland has a single major city – if it can be called that – and several smaller communities located atop mineral deposits. The world is largely dependent upon imports for equipment and consumer goods, exporting raw minerals in return. The population is roughly divided into three small polities; the 'capital' population around the starport are very pro-Arden and anti-Zhodani, whilst the main clusters of smaller settlements are more neutral in outlook. There is also a significant population of Imperial expatriates working on Utoland, who retain a favourable disposition towards the Imperium.

### **Pequan (E5656B9-4)**

Pequan is a habitable world populated by around seven million people, a mid-tech society ruled by an oppressive dictatorship that maintains cool but cordial relations with all local powers. Pequan does not seem to favour one over another but has been the site of a series of incidents involving attacks on shipping or harassment of trader crews on-planet. Some of these incidents have led to periods of poor relations with other worlds but ultimately Pequan's dictator needs what little trade comes through and cannot risk alienating too many ship operators.

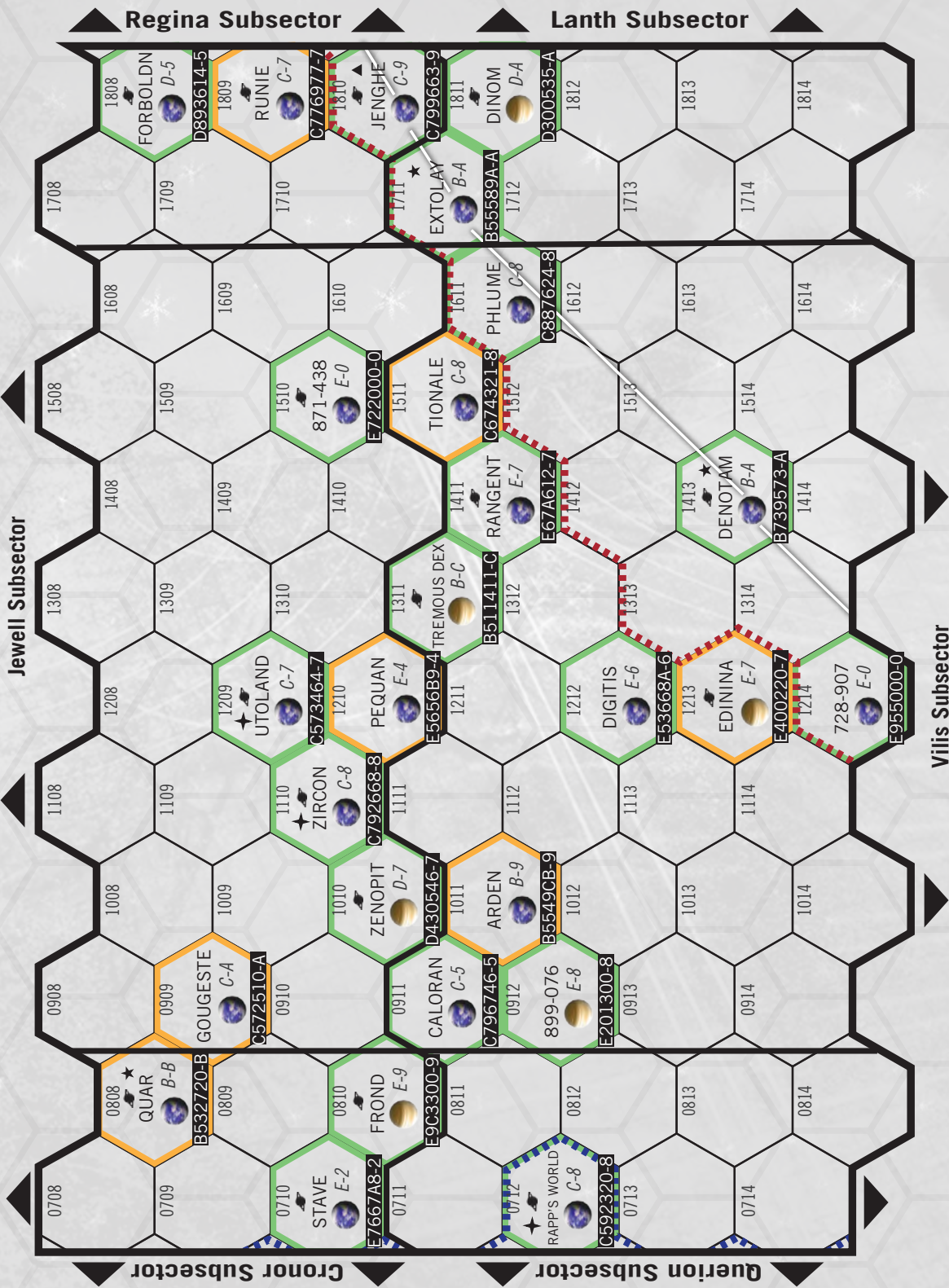
### **Tremous Dex (B511411-C)**

Tremous Dex is a barely inhabited rockball of a world, with only a trace atmosphere and a little surface ice that can be cracked for fuel. Most shipping ignores the downport and stops at the large orbital facility. Run by the Tremous Dex Starport Corporation, the port mainly serves the jump-2 route between the Imperium and Consulate.

There is no population on-planet other than starport workers and their families, and only a little industry geared to reducing the need for imported spares and components. Despite the lack of a local economy, Tremous Dex is prosperous due to the amount of trade conducted at the highport and provision of services to passing ships.

### **Rangent (E67A612-7)**

Rangent is almost entirely covered in seas, which are farmed to provide the world's only exports. A few small cities exist on the available land masses and in shallow water, from which huge factory-ships make long cruises and submersibles tend the world's extensive aquaculture industry. There is no starport as such, just landing sites on some of the larger islands where seafood and seaweed products can be trans-shipped.



- Gas Giant
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Imperial Naval Base
- Scout Base
- Military base/Garrison
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- Third Imperium
- Zhodani Consulate

Smaller starships can land directly on the factory-ships as they ply the world's oceans, taking on cargo without ever interacting with the world's population. As a result, the five million or so inhabitants are largely isolated from the wider universe and uninterested in offworld events. Almost the entire population is employed by the Rangent Corporation, which provides a governmental function but is first and foremost a commercial entity.

### Tionale (C674321-8)

Tionale lacks the population to be an important world economically but its position on the jump-2 route from Extolay to Sheyou brings in significant income from vessels using the port. For complex historical reasons, which do not seem entirely valid to most outsiders, Arden is viewed with great suspicion by the people of Tionale and ships of Arden registry are less than enthusiastically welcomed. Tionale is a client state of the Imperium and will probably become a member world at some point. At present visiting naval personnel can expect a warm welcome accompanied by inflated drinks prices in the starport bars.

### Phlume (C887624-8)

Phlume lies just within the Imperial border and can be described in socio-economic terms as a typical 'market world'. Its own technology is of the late pre-starfaring era, which creates ideal conditions for Imperial corporations to sell higher-tech goods at lucrative prices to a population with enough money to buy them in quantity. Phlume's modest starport sees considerable numbers of jump-1 trade ships from Extolay, some of which push on to Tionale before turning around.

The system gets regular visits from vessels out of Extolay naval base, typically small escorts. The navy is popular on Phlume and a visit by a more impressive ship can

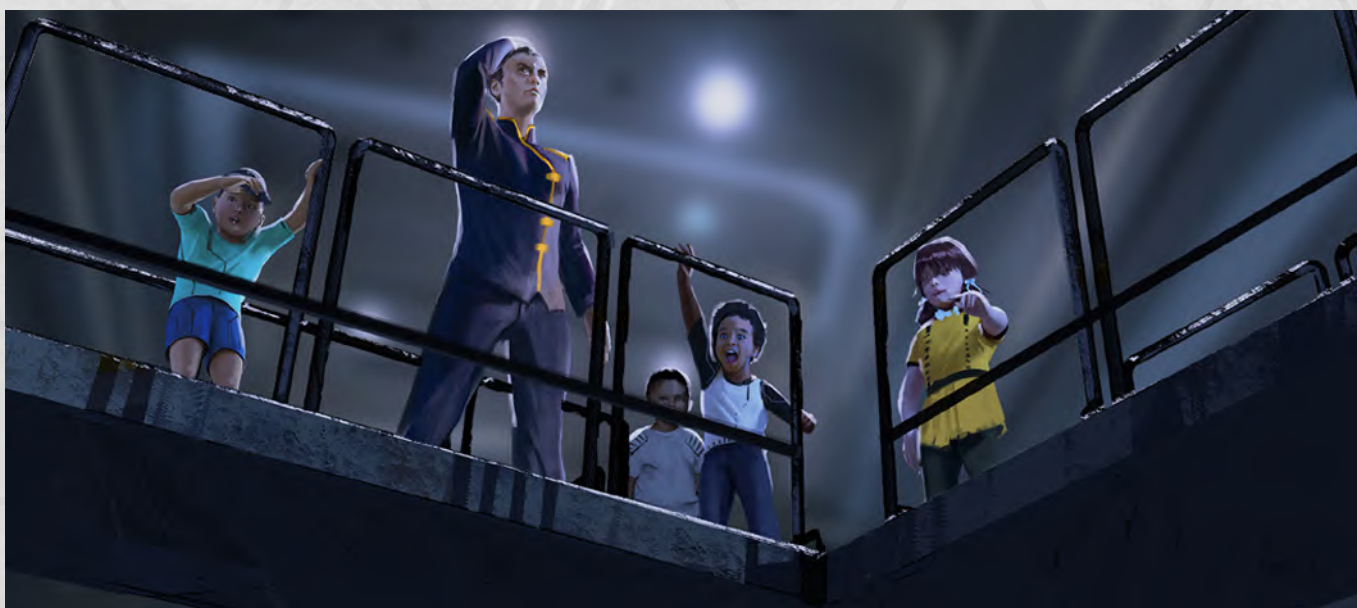
be something of an occasion. It is not uncommon for captains to be bombarded with requests for visits-aboard. Some come from government officials, some from community groups and some from every wise captain's nightmare... the school party. For officers assigned to usher a mob of 7-year-olds around the vessel, a visit can be something of a trial. It is considered good for public relations and recruitment, however, and crews are encouraged to accommodate requests where possible.

### Attitude Summary Table

The following table indicates the general attitude of the world government towards the Imperium and the level of legal cooperation in place

#### Attitude Summary

System	Attitude	Cooperation
Stave	Neutral	Neutral
Fronf	Slightly Pro-Imperial	Passive Cooperation
Caloran	Slightly Anti-Imperial	Neutral
899-076	Varies	Passive Opposition
Zenopit	Anti-Imperial	Active Opposition
Arden	Neutral	Passive Opposition
Zircon	Varies	Passive Opposition
Utoland	Slightly Pro-Imperial	Passive Cooperation
Pequan	Slightly Anti-Imperial	Passive Opposition
Tremous Dex	Neutral	Neutral
Rangent	Neutral	Passive Opposition
Tionale	Pro-Imperial	Passive Cooperation
Phlume	Pro-Imperial	Active Cooperation



# C H A P T E R - T H R E E

# GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES

Running a naval campaign can be a tricky business. The Travellers need to make their own decisions, even if those are questionable, but at the same time they may need guidance on how to proceed within the guidelines of naval service. A successful naval mission also requires a greater degree of forward planning on the part of the Travellers than the typical happy-go-lucky adventuring band might be used to.

Once out on the mission the Travellers are very much masters of their own fate but they cannot ignore their orders without ultimately facing censure. Nor can they treat their crew as automatons without eventually running into trouble. The Referee should make available some indication of how things are going in the form of overheard comments from crew and officers or even an outspoken subordinate adversely comparing the Travellers to her last command team. Similarly, hints should be made that things are going well. The crew are experienced navy personnel for the most part and will know when everything is running as it should.

The Mission Success Criteria should not be revealed to the Travellers. They may be inferred from the mission orders but the Travellers will not be certain exactly what they need to do for perfect mission success. Mission orders should always be comprehensible – unless garbled orders are an intentional part of the mission – and Referees should take care to ensure that the Travellers can figure out at least most of what the Admiralty wants them to do. This is not the same as providing them with a blueprint for obtaining the most medals from the mission.

## SHOWING THE SUNBURST

Showing the flag is an important part of naval operations in peacetime. The Travellers need to ensure their ship is a visible presence but not a nuisance. Within the Imperium, naval ships have considerable powers to enforce laws or conduct boardings of suspect craft. Beyond the frontier the situation is a lot less clear.

A naval ship is always permitted to act in self-defence or the protection of innocent vessels, at least under the Imperial regulations. However, the Travellers are not in the Imperium and there are many in the Arden region who think Imperial rules do not apply to them. Force of arms, or the threat of it, can be used but this may create an interstellar incident. The Travellers might not think offending some tin-pot world government matters all that much but interstellar relations are a tricky business. The conduct of an Imperial warship towards one government can influence the opinion of others.

Thus the Travellers need to tread carefully without seeming weak. As a rule their methods can be more robust in areas that are pro-imperial whereas those not well disposed towards the Imperium should not be antagonised by Travellers throwing their weight around. The decision whether or not to stop and search a suspect vessel should be driven by wider concerns than whether the Travellers have the firepower to get away with it.

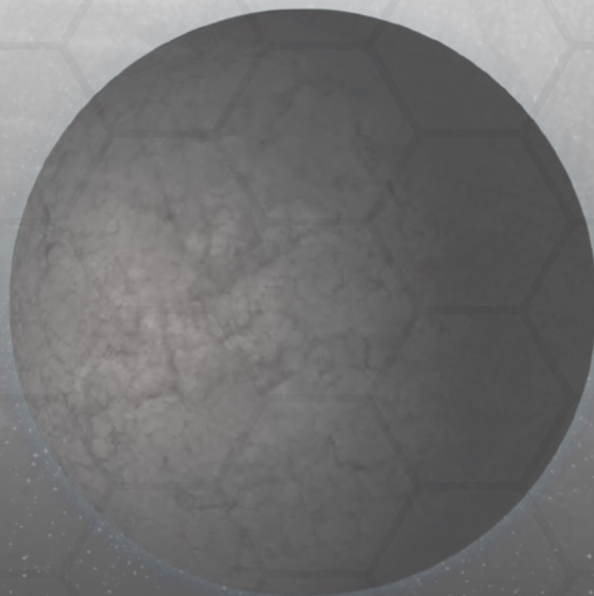
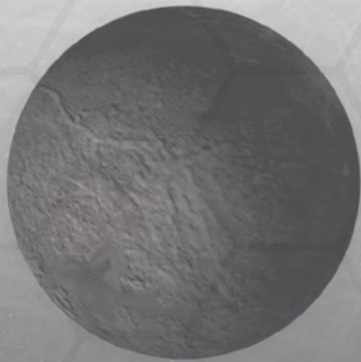
As to the mission itself, the order in which the Travellers visit their target systems, and how long they spend there, is for them to decide. Some systems are so insignificant the Travellers might choose not to go at all but a system never visited could become a haven for pirates or an assembly point for an invasion fleet. Conversely, a vessel that spends most of its cruise poking around outsystem rockballs will not be seen by the mainworld population it was sent to impress.

During the flag-showing section of the mission the Travellers may encounter incidents and situations created using the system in the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* as well as those scripted in this adventure. The Referee should try not to give much away about the importance of any given incident as it begins to develop. The Travellers may miss their best chance to deal with a problem out of complacency or leap to action stations over some trivial matter. The Referee should give the Travellers the information they would reasonably have and let them make their choices. If this leads to mistakes, they will have to deal with the outcome.

## Why Visit These Rockballs?

The Travellers' primary mission is to be seen by enough people and ship crews to create an impression of Imperial power and presence. Considering this alone, the Travellers might come to the conclusion to allocate their time to the highest population worlds. This is a sensible idea on the face of it but there are good reasons to visit at least some of the rockballs of the region. Firstly, maintaining a presence, however intermittent, is important to prevent populations losing touch with the Imperium. The loss of a minor world is of no great consequence but there can be a ripple effect when it becomes apparent that the Imperium simply does not care about people living in the backwaters.

There are additional factors as well. A system known to be ignored by the navy is a potential pirate haven and if navy ships only go to these places when something is happening, the navy's intentions become obvious. It is better to maintain an occasional presence so observers cannot be sure whether a visit is simply routine or something is afoot. Thus it is necessary, but not vital, to visit at least some backwater systems during a patrol.



# THE MISSION

The Travellers receive their orders at Extolay naval base.

## THE SEALED SECTION

The sealed part of the Travellers' orders should be revealed to the captain only. He or she may share these orders or part of them with officers and crew, as necessary, but operational security requires that information be on a need-to-know basis.

### Additional Orders

You are to locate and take possession of the vessels listed here. All are former Imperial Navy ships sold as surplus to requirements and obtained under false pretences by an unknown operator through a shell corporation. All vessels are to be returned to Extolay naval base. Personnel are considered a secondary priority. Whilst arrests are desirable, and information on the process by which the ships were obtained would be valuable, your priority is to ensure that these vessels are returned to Imperial Navy control.

You are reminded of the possible implications of a former navy warship operating as a rogue element in this highly sensitive area. Destruction of the vessels should be considered as a last resort if recapture proves impossible. Discretion is strongly advised.

(Identity of vessels follows)\*

*\*The Referee should insert the names and class of the vessels he has decided will be the target of this mission and should give a general indication of their capabilities.*

## WHAT THE ORDERS MEAN

Put simply, the Travellers have been ordered to move among the worlds within 3 parsecs of Arden, reminding everyone that the Imperial Navy is a force in the region. They are to tread carefully rather than throwing their weight around and be diplomatic rather than blustering. Their vessel is to make short visits to several star systems and an extended stay in one, although whether

this is a visit to the mainworld or patrol of the outsystem is up to the Travellers. In addition, the Travellers are to visit Arden and see if the Imperial ambassador there has jobs for them.

This is a very general brief but not untypical of naval patrol orders. The Travellers have sufficient discretion that nobody at base knows exactly where their ship will be at any given time. This prevents an information leak warning potential wrongdoers where the patrols are going.

The sealed component of the orders is the most important part of the mission, as the Travellers should be able to infer. The navy considers these ships a threat to the stability of the region even if they are not in anti-Imperial hands. An ideal solution is to bring them back to Extolay naval base with a prize crew aboard and key officers as prisoners – and to do it without local world governments realising anything has happened.

## MISSION SUCCESS CRITERIA

The Travellers ought to be able to infer some of their mission success criteria from their orders. However, the events that are about to unfold will create new criteria the Travellers could not have predicted. Once it becomes apparent unusual events are unfolding, the Travellers may be able to figure out what would be a successful outcome. However, the situation is complex and there are no perfect answers.

See the *Naval Campaign Guide* for details of the Mission Success Indicator (MSI). The Referee must assess success using the guidelines below.

### Criterion 1

Conduct flag-showing and general patrol operations in the designated area of operations and return to base within the expected time frame.

**Importance:** Routine

**Complete Success (MSI +2):** The Travellers manage to visit at least five star systems in addition to Arden and also conduct the extended patrol as ordered. In any given system this means either 'showing the flag' at

# ORDERS

## MACENE/SPINWARD MARCHES: FRONTIER PATROL OPERATIONS

*Sir, You are hereby requested and required to proceed aboard your vessel and undertake a discretionary patrol among the trans-border worlds of Jewell and Vilis subsectors. Your area of operations will be the Arden Proximity Group. You are to make visits of no less than four days in-system to at least five star systems in the area of operations, in addition to an extended patrol in one star system of your choice. A goodwill visit to Arden is also to be undertaken, of duration not less than 10 standard days. During this visit you will render assistance as necessary to the Imperial ambassador at Arden. Your visit should commence within 8 weeks of mission start.*

*Your mission duration is 16 weeks from departure to return, subject to an approximately 2-week discretionary variance. Your vessel will be declared overdue at 20 weeks.*

## INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

*Zhodani Consulate vessels are highly active in this region. Harassment and intimidation of Imperial-registered commercial traffic has been reported, although little hard evidence exists of such activities. Local governments can deploy only minor forces. The threat of significant corsair activity is also low.*

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

*Particular attention should be paid to the political situation in the region, notably the disposition of local populations and governments towards Arden, the Zhodani Consulate and the Imperium. Tensions between the Imperium and the Consulate should not be escalated.*

*An additional sealed section has been appended to these orders. It must not be opened until the vessel has entered jump en route to begin its mission*

## INFORMATION

*Patrol area designated the Arden Proximity consists of the following systems:*

- Stave
- Frond
- Caloran
- Zenopit
- Arden
- Zircon
- Utoland
- Tremous Dex

*Your vessel is to provide a highly visible presence in the region, reassuring friendly populations and reaffirming the Imperial Navy's commitment to monitoring the area. Due consideration should be given to requests for assistance from world governments. It is considered desirable that boardings and searches be carried out with discretion to avoid antagonising local powers.*

*The Admiralty has the utmost confidence that you will carry out this mission with zeal and intelligence.*

*Good hunting, Captain.*

*Commodore A. Varaani, Commanding Officer,  
322<sup>nd</sup> Provisional Patrol Force*

the mainworld or carrying out a patrol sweep of another part of the system. For example, a sensor watch for several hours at a gas giant suitable for refuelling and a scan of nearby moons for signs of a corsair or smuggler base would constitute a 'meaningful operation'. If the Travellers fail to complete this part of the mission due to a valid decision to deal with something more important, it will be considered to be a complete success for the purposes of determining overall mission outcome.

**Partial Success (MSI +1):** The Travellers manage to visit 2-4 star systems as mentioned in their orders and carry out the extended patrol.

**Marginal Success (MSI +0):** The Travellers visit 1-3 worlds as per their orders or carry out the extended patrol.

**Failure (MSI -2):** It would be hard to fail such a simple objective and a crew that manages it without a suitable explanation will be watched carefully in the future whatever the overall mission outcome may be. Failure is indicated by failing to carry out meaningful operations at (or even visits to) more than a couple of the worlds in their orders.

## Criterion 2

Proceed to Arden and carry out flag-showing operations.  
**Importance:** Routine

**Complete Success (MSI +2):** The Travellers manage to get to Arden within 8 weeks of mission start and behave with appropriate courtesy towards the world government.

**Partial Success (MSI +1):** The Travellers get to Arden but do not make a good impression or are late.

**Marginal Success (MSI +0):** The Travellers behave in an undiplomatic manner at Arden and are late.

**Failure (MSI -2):** Again, it would be hard to fail this objective. If the Travellers do not go to Arden, or antagonise the world government unnecessarily, they will fail.

## Criterion 3

Conduct an assessment of the political situation in the region.

**Importance:** Important

**Complete Success (MSI +3):** The Travellers provide a comprehensive report about the attitude of at least 6 world governments or significant entities (such as a commercial shipping company operating in the region), based upon intelligence gathering as well as the overly displayed attitude of local populations.

## Mission Segment Checks

To determine the performance of ship and crew during a mission segment, one of the Travellers will normally make a single check based on ECEI. If a whole-crew check concerns a particular Traveller's area of expertise (for example gunnery or engineering) then that Traveller should make the check.

**Partial Success (MSI +2):** The Travellers provide a sketchy account of local conditions in at least 6 systems or a good account of 2-4 systems.

**Marginal Success (MSI +1):** The Travellers provide a sketchy account of conditions in 1-4 star systems.

**Failure (MSI -4):** The Travellers fail to provide meaningful information about the situation in local star systems.

## Criterion 4

Assist the Ambassador at Arden.

**Importance:** Important

**Complete Success (MSI +3):** The Travellers impress the ambassador with their competence and manage to derail the court-martial so that no precedent is set.

**Partial Success (MSI +2):** The Travellers provide meaningful assistance and make a credible effort at resolving the court-martial situation.

**Marginal Success (MSI +1):** The Travellers are reluctant to carry out the ambassador's requests or behave in a manner that makes his job more difficult but ultimately provide some assistance with the court-martial situation.

**Failure (MSI -4):** The Travellers' efforts are ineffectual or mishandled, or they refuse to assist without finding a suitable excuse. Failure also occurs if the Travellers do nothing about the court-martial and allow it to proceed without any intervention on their part.

## Criterion 5

Locate and retrieve the misappropriated vessels.

**Importance:** Critical

**Complete Success (MSI +4):** The Travellers are able to secure and quietly return the vessels.

**Partial Success (MSI +2):** The Travellers secure the misappropriated vessels but it is obvious to local governments and shipping operators that something unusual has happened.

**Marginal Success (MSI +1):** The Travellers take the misappropriated vessels out of the equation but there is widespread knowledge that the navy has had to chase down some of its own vessels that were in the wrong hands.

**Failure (MSI -8):** The Travellers fail to secure the misappropriated vessels.

### CEI vs Skill Checks

The Travellers may wonder why they cannot use their own skills or those of a crewmember to resolve CEI checks. This is because CEI is designed to generate an indication of how the crew (or a part of it) handled a large and complex task that would require a great many skill checks to resolve and also involves interactions and teamwork not modelled by skill checks.

In almost all cases, a CEI check produces a successful (or successful-ish) completion of the task. It may be a chaotic mess, with incidents and mishaps, but the job will get done. If the Travellers want to improve performance, there are ways to do it other than increasing ECEI. For example, if the crew are trying to move supplies aboard in record time, the ship's logistics team might be ordered to prepare a most-efficient plan. This is a skill-specific task and can be resolved with appropriate skill checks.

Measures of this sort will normally grant DM+1 to the CEI check and in general only one such performance-improving measure can be taken per CEI check. However, if the Travellers come up with particularly good ideas they may be allowed more. 'Good' in this case means 'in keeping with the style and tone of a naval campaign' rather than simply 'effective at providing the DM the Travellers want'.

A certain kind of Traveller will want to endlessly grind DM-producing 'standard set-ups' for tasks. This is not what naval campaigns are about. Each clever plan to improve performance on a task is an opportunity for a mini-adventure. If it is reduced to just an extra dice roll to get DM+1, the Referee should disallow the attempt.



# C H A P T E R - F I V E

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once the mission begins, the Travellers are free to go wherever they please and deal with what they find there according to their own discretion. Some considerations apply no matter what the Travellers choose to do and so are detailed here rather than under any specific location.

### FUEL AND SUPPLY

A typical naval vessel can carry a number of supply units (SU) equal to its tonnage and uses up 1% of this amount per day of operations, whether it is in jump or not. This consumption can be altered by various measures, as detailed in the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*. A 14 week patrol is 98 days, so in theory a fully stocked vessel could conduct the whole operation and arrive home with a few crumbs in the bottom of the cupboard. This is not a wise course of action, however.

The Travellers can attempt to restock their ship at any port they visit. However, this is not the Imperium and navy letters of credit may not be readily accepted. Alternatively, unfriendly port operators may try to cheat the Travellers or charge a higher than acceptable price for supplies.

Civilian ports will have common items such as food and standard electronic components but lack some of the specialist supplies needed by naval vessels. Ports can be considered to 'generate' SU every day – this is an abstract representation of imports from the local worlds, items brought by passing ships and equipment manufactured at the port or salvaged from damaged vessels.

The Resupply table indicates the amount of SU available at a port and SU generated each day. If a port's stocks are significantly depleted, the available SU should be determined anew. The amount of supplies available will increase each day until this amount is reached. If a naval crew chooses, it can remain at a port for some time and fully restock but cleaning out warehouses every few days will cause resentment.

### Resupply

Port Class	Supply Units Available	SU Per Day
A	2Dx10,000 (Average 70,000)	2Dx1,000
B	8Dx1,000 (Average 28,000)	8Dx100
C	2Dx1,000 (Average 7,000)	2Dx100
D	8Dx100 (Average 2,800)	8Dx10
E	2Dx100 (Average 700)	2Dx10

The Resupply table indicates what is available, not what is on offer to the Travellers. To obtain supplies at a fair price the Travellers can engage in roleplaying or the situation can be abstracted as follows.

To obtain the full amount of supplies available requires an Average (8+) Admin or Diplomat check (1D hours, INT). DM+2 applies if the port is friendly towards the Imperium. DMs based on the world's attitude to the Imperium also apply.

If the check is successful, the Travellers can load up as much as the port has available and the navy will foot the bill. If failed, the amount of supplies available is reduced by 10% per negative point of Effect.

For example, the Travellers are crewing a 5,000 ton destroyer with a capacity of 5,000 SU and normal consumption of 50 SU per day. They attempt to obtain supplies at a Class D port that is unfriendly to the Imperium. The ship's supply officer fails his check by 3 points of Effect, so there are 30% less supplies than normal available. The Referee has already established that this port has a nominal 2,800 SU available but the port authority is being difficult and will only provide 1,960 (2,800 – 30%) SU. This is plenty to be going on with for a destroyer but a larger ship will struggle to remain properly supplied without further support.

Of course, the Travellers might choose to take measures to counteract the supply shortage, which could be the subject of an Adventure in itself. It is also possible to take by force what they need but this would seriously harm diplomatic relations in the region and the reputation of the navy. A crew that resorted to these methods would face tough questions upon return to base.

## PRIZE CREWS

An errant ship can be temporarily crewed by a minimal complement if its mission is simply to get to a friendly port. Usually this means pulling a detachment of competent personnel out of the crew and assigning a promising junior officer to lead it. Careers have been made, or at least furthered, by being given command of a prize crew... and disasters have also occurred.

The Referee may wish to gloss over the return of the vessels or might have the Travellers play out the journey to Extolay using the Detachment Efficiency Index of the prize crew. The Travellers may come up with an alternative solution such as hiding the ships or landing them at a friendly port and requesting a prize crew be dispatched from the naval base. So long as the ships eventually reach base and there is no widespread realisation that something has gone amiss, the mission will be a success.

## INCIDENTS, MISADVENTURES AND SETBACKS

Any time the Travellers' ship does anything – sensor scans, jump operations or just entering orbit around a world – a check is made using the ship's ECEI rating to see how well it goes. This may create an Incident or a Mishap, or spiral into an Adventure. The Referee should use this process to generate decisions for the Travellers to make or situations they must resolve.

The mission also includes certain incidents that will occur at any suitable point. The Referee should introduce these in much the same manner as a randomly generated Incident, leaving the Travellers to guess whether they are facing a trivial setback or the beginning of a larger problem.

## SHIP ENCOUNTERS

Encounters with other vessels are likely in the course of the mission and should be determined normally. If the Travellers choose to turn off their transponder and run silent their ship is unlikely to be detected by a typical merchant ship's sensors providing care is taken to avoid getting too close. This can be useful if the Travellers want to observe without revealing their presence or are hoping to catch a suspect vessel unawares.

However, an unidentified warship prowling about neutral star systems without identifying itself might be seen as a threat. None of the local worlds has indicated it does not want Imperial ships in its space and most could not

really do anything about it even if they did, so a ship proceeding overtly is actually a lot less inflammatory than one sneaking around.

If the Travellers want to show the flag they will have to run their transponder constantly, advertising to all vessels within range that a navy ship is present. There is little reason to fear being ambushed by an enemy capable of doing serious harm, so the Travellers will likely prefer to advertise their presence unless they have a good reason not to.

Vessels encountered during the mission will tend to be respectful or at least take notice of the Travellers' ship – an Imperial warship is impressive or threatening depending on whether you are doing something you should not. Crews who do not like the navy might be insolent or engage in passive resistance, which will pose a problem for the Travellers. Within the Imperium, the navy has the authority to stop and search any vessel, even at random, but outside its borders the situation is more complex.

In pro-Imperial systems or those with at least passive cooperation, the Travellers are free to operate much as they would within the Imperium, so long as they are polite and discreet. They may have to justify their actions or provide what they see as an unnecessary amount of information to the local government but will be able to conduct boardings or inspect a ship's papers and impose penalties.

Without at least passive cooperation in place, any interference with local traffic risks annoying the government or creating a wave of protests from local shipping. Actions must be carefully justified to avoid escalation into an incident and wherever possible the Travellers must have an acceptable pretext for any action or intervention.

Some ships will have something to hide. They may try to avoid detection or act innocent in the hope of not being searched. They may even try the sort of crazy stunt a typical band of Travellers might attempt – the Referee can have some fun as the Travellers witness their own antics from a previous campaign through the eyes of those they were trying to deceive, avoid or misdirect.

If a ship appears threatening, it can be fired upon. This is a big decision however; a destroyer captain who puts holes in a small neutral merchant ship is going to have to explain his reasoning upon return to port. If a vessel runs or simply ignores a demand to stop and be searched, the Traveller will have to decide whether to let the ship go and suffer embarrassment or take robust action, which could cause a diplomatic incident.

# INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

One of the reasons ships are sent on patrol is to gather routine intelligence and monitor situations first-hand. The Travellers' crew will maintain a standard intelligence-gathering posture unless told to deviate from normal practice. Sensor data will be collated and analysed, personnel sent planetside will provide reports on what they saw and heard, and information on ships encountered will be cross-referenced with other available data.

Most of the time this information is entirely mundane and simply feeds into the vast amount of data already known about local conditions. However, occasionally something unusual is spotted and the ship has the opportunity to follow up. The price for this is constant attention to little details, most of which are irrelevant.

An Intelligence Event normally occurs at the beginning of each mission segment; typically when the Travellers arrive in a new star system. At this point the Referee determines the quality of information available to the Travellers, which in turn may impose a modifier on the tasks they attempt. The Intelligence Event is resolved by making an Investigate check and consulting the Intelligence Events table on page 29 of the *Naval Campaign Guide*.

If the Travellers are not satisfied with the quality of information available to them they may decide to take measures to improve it, perhaps by conducting a detailed sensor sweep or sending some personnel planetside with a specific intelligence-gathering mission. This can be time-consuming and often the Travellers will need to do the best they can with the data they have.

To determine the attitude and stance of a local population the Travellers must make an Average (8+) Investigate check, modified by any outcome of the Intelligence Event for that segment. To qualify for this Investigate check the Travellers need to give themselves the chance to learn about the local situation, for example by sending a shore party planetside to meet with officials or questioning personnel returning from a period of portside liberty.

## Intelligence Gathering

Intel Total	Result
0	Nobody seems to have heard of these ships.
1	Unconfirmed rumours suggest that this ship or ships – or similar vessels – are active in the area.
2	The specific ships the Travellers are seeking have been sighted but not recently.
3	A ship that may have been one of the targets is reported as having come to the assistance of a merchant whose captain believed he was about to be attacked by a pirate vessel.
4	One of the target ships came through here. Its crew were well-behaved and wore smart uniforms that did not match any known navy. They let slip a few unguarded statements that suggest they have a base on one of the backwater worlds nearby.
5	Starport personnel and visitors recall a ship of that description in port. The crew were rude and confrontational towards personnel from a Zhodani-registered freighter. What the locals think of this depends on where it happened.
6	That ship (or those ships) have been through here recently. Their officers had a lengthy meeting with several trader captains and port authority officials. No details have emerged but some traders left the system in a convoy under escort from the misappropriated ships. Not long afterwards there was a blaze of anti-Zhodani political material on the local datanets.
7	Ships of that description have been sighted conducting joint patrol operations and exercised with Arden vessels, and have provided escort to Arden-registered merchant ships.
8+	Sufficient information has been obtained that the Travellers can predict the likely location of the target ships and set-up an intercept in a nearby system.
12+	The Travellers have pinpointed the base the missing ships are using.

In addition to their ostensible task of monitoring local political attitudes, the Travellers are looking for misappropriated ships. These are in the area and have visited various worlds, so information is available. Seeking it is a specific Intelligence Mission that must be played as an Adventure. This can be as simple as getting crewmembers to ask the right questions while enjoying liberty ashore in portside bars or examining public records of ships passing through a port. No more than two attempts can be made to obtain information on this subject per week and if two are made they must each use a different approach.

Every attempt to obtain information permits the ship's designated Intelligence Officer to make an Average (8+) Investigate check. Success normally gains the Travellers +1 Intel point on the Intelligence Gathering table. Note that some methods, such as trying to hack secret files maintained by a port, could result in an incident or misadventure. More risky methods such as this should be rewarded by D3 points towards success, provided they succeed.

The Referee should adjudicate the efforts of the Travellers and local governments will respond accordingly. As a result, over-ambitious Travellers may find themselves bargaining for the release of their intelligence personnel from the local slammer.

Once the Travellers have 8 points of Intel on their target ships, any further successful intelligence gathering operation will give the location of the target vessels for the next 2D days. This potential intercept should be within 1 jump of the Travellers' present location. The Referee should make this roll in secret and not reveal the outcome. If the Travellers do not get there in time, they can try to obtain more Intel that will generate another 2D day intercept window. At the Referee's discretion, the target ships might be headed for the present system or actually there but concealed or at an outsystem world.

Eventually, the Travellers will be able to make an intercept and must then decide how to deal with the target ships.

## SHOWING THE FLAG

Much of the Travellers' mission will be fairly routine; a matter of being seen and doing the job under normal conditions. They will proceed among the worlds of their patrol area and carry out the mission, resolving events as they occur. Any fuel-skimming operation or stop-and-search of a suspect merchant vessel has the potential to expand into an adventure, as determined by the normal mission segment resolution process.

Every 2D weeks, there is a chance that Effective Crew Efficiency Index may change. The Referee should determine the time frame when the Travellers leave Extolay and again after each attempt. When this time is up, the vessel's commanding officer must make a Difficult (10+) Leadership check (INT) and apply the Effect as a DM on the ECEI Changes table to determine whether the crew remains effective.

## ECEI Changes

0-	Morale collapses (-1D+3 Morale) and the crew is near mutiny. Reduce ECEI by -3
1-2	-1D Morale. Reduce ECEI by -2
3-4	-D3 Morale. Reduce ECEI by -1
5-8	No change
9-11	The crew gains confidence. +1 Morale
12+	Efficiency and morale increase. +1 ECEI, +D3 Morale

In addition, there will be opportunities to improve ECEI as the mission unfolds. The most likely situation is a 'solid success' as described in the Naval Campaign Guide but other events may also modify ECEI. Smart Travellers might deliberately engineer a situation where their crew can succeed and gain confidence. This is a valid leadership gambit but the Referee should not be too lenient in letting the Travellers engineer ECEI-improvement situations on a frequent basis.



# EXTOLAY NAVAL BASE

The mission begins at Extolay Naval Base, a small but heavily defended facility almost directly on the Imperial border. As the entry point to the Imperium for many ships, there is a great deal of in-system patrol and enforcement traffic carrying out boardings and inspections of cargo manifests. The vessels assigned to these tasks are mostly small cutters and non-jump-capable vessels, carrying out necessary but unglamorous work. There is a certain amount of jealousy and condescension between in-system patrol forces and the 'proper' navy crews assigned to jump-capable ships operating out of the base.

Whilst at Extolay the Travellers have the opportunity to prepare their ship and carry out any tasks they think will help with their mission. This might include trying to get additional information or advice on how to handle complex political situations. Of course, some of those they ask might be opinionated and ill-informed but on the whole the Referee should allow Travellers who need guidance to obtain it.

As always at the beginning of a mission, the Travellers' ship is expected to undertake basic drive, weapons and systems tests before jumping out. This is an opportunity for the Referee to demonstrate the mission segment resolution system, if the Travellers have not encountered it before, and to help them get used to running a crew instead of doing everything themselves.

In short, the Referee can make as much or as little as necessary of the Travellers' time at Extolay. They are expected to begin the mission as soon as possible after receiving their orders and long delays – for example, if the Travellers try to obtain vast quantities of extra supplies to fill every odd corner of their ship – will result in displeasure from their commanders.

If the Travellers spend time in port before beginning their mission, the Referee can subtly demonstrate the way the navy supports its personnel and vessels. The system is imperfect but the Travellers are safe at base and can expect their needs to be met. Once they leave Imperial space, the contrast should be apparent and the Travellers may feel a little vulnerable. This is a good thing; a little nervousness sharpens the senses and will remind the Travellers that they must tread carefully.

The Referee should encourage the Travellers to plan ahead before leaving Extolay. They should have at least a rough itinerary planned before they make their first jump. This can be modified, and there is no in-game bonus or penalty for following it, but it is good practice to make a plan and it will help get the Travellers into the right mindset for the mission ahead. A plan will also help the Travellers avoid problems or overcome difficulties down the line.

Factors that might be considered include:

- Being seen by the most ships and people is a central part of flag-showing missions.
- Backwaters need the occasional visit for intelligence-gathering and loyalty reinforcement.
- Supplies are most readily and simply obtained at good-quality ports on friendly worlds.
- High-quality ports have more traffic, which equates to a greater chance of obtaining useful information about the missing ships.
- Rogue ships are likely to stick to backwaters.
- Zhodani vessels operating in the area will likely have a very similar list of directives to work with.

Some of these factors are contradictory, at least to some extent. The Travellers may be able to create a plan that gives them a best-balance of these factors but they will never be able to satisfy all of them completely in the time available. However, a good plan means the Travellers will not run out of time to deal with a mission objective or make significant oversights leading to an unbalanced view of local conditions.

None of the worlds between Extolay and Tremous Dex are within the Travellers' patrol area and can be bypassed or transited quickly. However, worlds close to a naval base benefit from warships transiting through their systems and are sometimes overlooked as patrol stations for this reason. It will do no harm for the Travellers to visit some or all of these systems, although there is no penalty if they choose not to. They may not realise these systems are outside their remit for this mission and diligently try to obtain data on the local situation. This will be accepted by the admiralty, of course, and if it is in addition to the Travellers' assigned tasks then it will be considered a useful bonus. If, however, the Travellers try to count these worlds among those they are assigned to visit and study, it will be apparent that they did not properly digest their orders...

# SHOWING THE SUNBURST

The majority of the Travellers' time during the mission will be spent jumping between star systems and carrying out routine patrol operations once they arrive. Certain actions will be taken in every system the Travellers visit.

## OPERATIONAL STANCE

The Travellers need to decide whether they will operate overtly or not in each system. On a flag-showing cruise it is generally desirable to announce the presence of a naval vessel and run with the transponder fully active to ensure everyone knows the navy is present. However, there may be times when it is desirable to sit quietly off the approach and departure lanes monitoring local traffic or prowl the outsystem collecting sensor data unobserved.

The Travellers always have the choice to change stance but it is much easier to remain undetected than to vanish. Similarly, a vessel that does not openly acknowledge its presence upon arrival but remains hidden for a while risks offending local officials and ship operators unless there is a good reason for it.

The Travellers also need to decide how authoritarian and assertive they want to be. Actions that would be normal in the Imperium might seem high-handed and arrogant beyond its borders and few local governments are keen on presumptuous naval officers ordering local traffic around. Most problems can be avoided by remaining polite and diplomatic, and carefully phrasing instructions as requests. It is sometimes possible to argue a merchant captain into accepting a boarding party without making direct demands, which is a fine art but one that can be used to reduce friction.

## OBTAIN FUEL

It may not always be necessary to refuel in a particular system; if the Travellers' ship carries enough fuel for several parsecs then using reserves to cover the parsec between one system and the next may be a reasonable tradeoff. However, a wise captain makes it a priority to keep his tanks topped off whenever possible; there is no way of knowing when a courier might arrive with emergency redeployment orders. Fuel can normally be obtained at a starport in return for credit to be settled

through the navy's finance department. However, some captains consider that this makes the navy look weak and dependent on local ports and gives locals a chance to mess the navy around if they choose.

The alternative, since there is no tanker support available, is 'wilderness refuelling', usually skimming from a gas giant's atmosphere or cracking ice from a comet or asteroid. This is time consuming and takes the Travellers' ship away from the main traffic zone in a system. Skimming can be combined with a sweep of a gas giant and moons, which is part of the patrol remit but the decision whether to jump to a gas giant or the mainworld is a complex one.

There is no right or wrong way to go about this task or manage the ship's fuel reserves but the Admiralty does care about outcomes. A captain whose ship is delayed several days because a troublesome local government threw obstacles in the way of a refuelling operation might have to explain why he put his vessel in that position in the first place.

## SHIPS ENCOUNTERED

A routine transponder interrogative will indicate the name, class and port of registry of most vessels but not their cargo, destination or similar details. Most vessels will be (or claim to be) small merchant ships making short runs between one of the better ports in the region and the surrounding worlds, or headed along the Spinward Main, trading in the ports they stop at.

A significant number of vessels are registered out of Arden. Some were built or purchased there and are crewed by well-trained personnel whose activities are overseen by the Arden government. Others are independents operating under the Arden Trade Fleet banner as a flag of convenience. In both cases the vessel is under the protection of Arden, so antagonising its captain risks an incident with Arden itself.

The following vessels are active in the region and may be encountered by the Travellers. There are many others, of course, but this selection allows the Referee to quickly determine the nature of a ship encounter.

## Intelligence Gathering

Ship	Type	Allegiance	Mission and Notes
IISS-6842	Scout/Courier	Imperial Interstellar Scout Service	Routine information gathering and courier duty.
Various identities, including 'Straightthere Express'	Scout/Courier	Private Courier	Suspected smuggler, actually a reportable courier carrying small valuable cargoes under differing identities for security purposes.
Lanthanum 57	Seeker Mining Ship	Seeker/Prospector	Wandering prospector, borderline spaceworthy.
Taradder	Free Trader	Independent	Weary old trader jumping back and forth on a short run with small but reliable profits. Surly but not illegal.
Sakhiigaa	Free Trader	Independent (Imperial Registry)	Typical Free Trader wandering the Spinward Main. Pro-Imperial crew glad to see the navy beyond the borders.
Liilias	Far Trader	Independent	Actually a Zhodani intelligence gathering ship equipped with advanced electronics.
Mayfly Conveyor	Far Trader	Independent (Imperial Registry)	Typical trader plying the region between Imperial and Zhodani space. Suspected (rightly) of being a smuggler but may not be carrying contraband.
Negotiator	Yacht	Tremous Dex	Diplomatic vessel used by the Tremous Dex port authority to carry officials and merchant brokers among local worlds, seeking long-term trade deals.
Kiiarni	Gazelle Close Escort	Independent	Former Imperial Navy vessel sold to Kiiarni Defence Incorporated, a reputable but heavy-handed private security firm.
Extolay-T-04	Patrol Corvette	Imperial Navy	One of the Corvettes assigned to the Extolay Naval Base patrol forces. Operating under a temporary identity, pending reassignment to another base.
Spirit of Commerce	Subsidised Merchant	Arden	Arden-registered merchant ship typically found plying the Zhodani end of the Spinward Main.
R For Reliable	Subsidised Merchant	Independent	Independent merchant ship operating out of Tionale or Tremous Dex.
Kushirla	Subsidised Merchant	Independent (Imperial Registry)	Reputable merchant based out of Regina, making long runs to Arden and beyond. Her captain resents the navy but is honest.
Spirit of Luxury	Subsidised Liner	Arden	Liner operated by an Arden-based firm. Self-important and intolerant of interference by non-Arden vessels.
Garton's Asset	Mercenary Cruiser	Garton Interstellar Security Services	Patrol ship and escort-for-hire, dubious reputation.

Many other vessels can also be encountered in this region. Some will be passing through or new in the area but most commercial ships tend to stick to known routes or operate back-and-forth between ports where a reasonable profit can be predicted. The Travellers may encounter the same ship more than once, perhaps enabling them to catch one that got away with some wrongdoing earlier by hiding behind local treaties or building up a picture of another vessel's movements for future reference. Some ships might become regular characters in the Travellers' story. If so, the Referee can determine their CEI and other characteristics.

## PLANETSIDE

Wherever possible, the Travellers should allow some of their crew to take time planetside. Even a crummy low-quality spaceport on some dusty rockball is a change of scenery from the inside of a warship and a chance to get away from routine is important to morale. This does raise the prospect of crewmembers getting themselves into trouble but that comes with the territory.

The Travellers themselves might be drawn into planetside events. This may be quite genteel, such as an invite to dinner with some of the world's social, political or economic elite but there will be hidden complexities. There is always the outside chance that an enemy of the Imperium or someone with an agenda and a point to make might target the Travellers for a life-threatening attack.

Alternatively, they might be the subject of a lesser but still embarrassing incident, such as an activist throwing eggs at visiting officers or running through the security cordon

to deliver a scribbled plea for aid from some group. They might even be pranked by someone more clever than wise, perhaps pretending to be a journalist. How the Travellers handle such incidents reflects upon the navy; getting egg on the captain's uniform during a broadcast reception or gunning down an idealistic 17-year-old who wanted to make a point about offworld support for government corruption, each have their own problems.

Other possible incidents are less overt. At the level where the Travellers operate, everyone has an agenda. This may be nothing more than being seen with visiting dignitaries to increase perceived importance but usually officials and celebrities want something out of the occasion. That might be bending the captain's ear about tariffs, naval patrols or prospective treaties, or could be an attempt to get a comment out of an officer that can later be quoted as an endorsement of a product, policy or person.

There are many large and small adventures to be had along the way as the Travellers interact with planetside officials, other ships and their own crew. Most can be abstracted as a couple of key decisions and an ECEI check but a naval campaign of this sort could run for months if the Travellers like to play out awkward diplomatic receptions and agenda-ridden parties. For example, the Travellers may have come to despise a particular merchant captain who then turns up at the planetary president's gala dinner or as a keynote speaker at a conference on interstellar trade. The Travellers cannot use their rank or position to avoid having to interact with this odious individual but must 'play nice' – in public at least.



# C H A P T E R - E I G H T

# SKIPPER, SKIPPER!

At some point during the Travellers' patrol they will encounter the Far Trader *Kuldukian*, registered out of Thanber in Querion subsector. That is probably a flag of convenience but since Thanber is an Imperial client state and not a member, it slightly alters the Travellers' jurisdiction over the vessel.

Data on *Kuldukian* indicates her mortgage payments are at least 14 months overdue. Her mortgage is owed to a financial consortium at Thanber rather than an Imperial bank but skipping on mortgage payments is an offence throughout the Imperium and its client states. The navy thus has jurisdiction to seize the ship and return it to a suitable port where legal proceedings can begin.

Within the Imperium, a skipped ship of this sort would risk being impounded at every port of call once word reached the area that the mortgage had not been paid. Beyond the frontier the situation is more nebulous; the navy enforces repossession notices, and one exists on *Kuldukian*, but local conditions could make it problematic to carry out the repossession.

The first encounter with *Kuldukian* should occur in a system that is at least in passive opposition to the Imperium. The Travellers' order to stop and be boarded is met with a curt 'no' from the Far Trader, which continues its run out to jump. If the Travellers repeat their demand, they are informed that they are not in Imperial space and require permission to stop traffic... and that they have no jurisdiction over the *Kuldukian*.

This is all partially true. The Travellers do not need permission but failing to obtain it might antagonise a local government and they have been ordered not to do so. Firing on a ship for failing to stop when the local government has not agreed to the Travellers' intention to board it will certainly cause an interstellar incident.

If the Travellers try to obtain permission to stop and board the *Kuldukian*, they will encounter arguments and stonewalling from the local government, all while the Far Trader gets closer to her jump point. Eventually the Travellers will have to decide whether to blast her and take the consequences or let her go and accept the slap in the ego that accompanies this decision.

There is a real potential for the Travellers to mishandle this situation but if they do not, they will encounter *Kuldukian* later. Sooner or later they will catch her in a system willing to permit a boarding and seizure of the ship, or perhaps trap her somewhere she cannot get away. This may take several attempts, possibly interspersed with awkward meetings in a starport bar. *Kuldukian's* crew are not gracious about the Travellers' failure to apprehend them.

In the end, a ship that skips in this manner gets caught, and *Kuldukian's* crew know this. They will seek to leave the area or lie low until the patrol has ended, which may leave the Travellers with a feeling that they lost the contest. This is part of being a naval officer and the Travellers can only take comfort in the knowledge that sooner or later someone will catch *Kuldukian* in a situation where she can be seized.

If the Travellers are successful in capturing the skipped merchant, she must be sent to a Class A or B port to be impounded. Most likely she will be auctioned off to pay the mortgage arrears and some lucky crew will be able to pick up a starship on the cheap. The Travellers might even encounter her again, under new management, plying the spacelanes as a legitimate merchant vessel once more. That might be strangely satisfying...



TH-7801-28-0 (KULDUKIAN)  
REGISTER: THANBER 017, QUERION, SPINWARD MARSHES  
NOTES:  
MORTGAGE PAYMENTS OVERDUE  
ATTN:  
TYWIS FINANCIAL CONSORTIUM OF THANBER

# C H A P T E R - N I N E

# DIPLOMATIC DUTY

Sooner or later, the Travellers will arrive at Arden. There is a great deal of potential for side adventures during the Travellers' stopover in-system and the Referee can make as much or as little of this as seems desirable. For example, a crewmember disappearing on a run planetside to pick up supplies or take liberty in the starport could lead to a whole new adventure. However, the scripted part of this mission begins as soon as the Travellers arrive in orbit around Arden.

The system has a respectable defensive flotilla and makes no secret of its existence. Indeed, the Travellers' ship will be asked to wait for an escort before proceeding into orbit and will be kept hanging around whilst a gunboat makes its unhurried way out to meet their vessel.

The Travellers could ignore the instruction and proceed to establish orbit but that would at the very least cause a diplomatic incident. Extreme mishandling of the situation could trigger a war and drive Arden firmly into the Zhodani camp. The local forces could be brushed aside by a single Imperial cruiser, but that is not really the point. Travellers who fail to realise this will land themselves in real trouble – of the dishonourable discharge sort – when they return to Extolay.

It should be obvious to the Travellers that the government of Arden is deliberately keeping them waiting because it can. This sort of gambit is just a part of the mind games played by every world government, trying to increase perceived power through the use of what it already has. It does not demonstrate hostility, just a desire to assert independence and show the wider universe that Arden does not kowtow to the great powers.

Eventually the Travellers will be given permission to bring their ship into orbit and proceed planetside. They are reminded – despite the fact that any warship captain would already know this very well – that their personnel are to be granted entry to the planet through a single diplomatic point-of-entry and will not be

searched or questioned but are subject to local laws when planetside. Personnel may also visit the main starport or proceed through it to visit the planetary surface but anyone doing so is considered a normal visitor with no diplomatic privileges.

## THE AMBASSADOR

Whilst the Travellers are cooling their heels, the office of the Imperial ambassador begins bombarding them with requests for information and updates on their expected time of arrival. The ambassador does not make direct personal contact and her office does not say it in so many words but it is clear that she wants the Travellers to meet with her as soon as possible. It is not uncommon for Imperial officials to act like this even when there is no urgent need – they too often feel the need to play dominance games.

There is no way to know whether the ambassador is simply being officious or not. Requests for information are met with politely phrased requests to send a party containing at least one senior officer planetside as soon as practicable, to be briefed by the ambassador on the current situation.

Some data on the ambassador herself is available. She is Lady Niamet Zugoukh, a Vargr. Born on Trin, she served with distinction in the Imperial Army, reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel and receiving a knighthood upon retiring. Most ambassadors come through the navy or diplomatic corps route; a very small proportion have a groundside service background. Lady Niamet must have done something fairly special to merit a complex posting like that of ambassador to Arden. Her branch of service is listed as Army Command Staff rather than infantry, artillery or armoured forces, which implies she was in the support branch during her early career. That could mean she was a truly exceptional army chef or accountant but more likely served in army intelligence.

## GOING PLANETSIDE

There really is no reason for the Travellers to get into trouble at this point but they might manage it all the same. They are given a point of entry at a subsidiary spaceport used by the world's elite. Surrounded by a good set of aerospace defences, it is home to a number of high-end shuttles, some clearly imported from an Imperial shipyard, others of Zhodani make. All are much more advanced than a TL9 world like Arden could manufacture and are probably expensive to maintain using imported spares.

The fact that there are quite a lot of these shuttles tells a story about local politics. Arden is an oligarchy, whose elite clearly feel the need for expensive status symbols. Some of the shuttles belong to small yachts in orbit, all imported from a variety of prestigious builders. A world with interstellar ambitions no doubt needs a few diplomatic craft but having so many represents an extravagance that clearly eats up a significant part of the budget. This may suggest to astute Travellers that there is considerable rivalry among the world's elite.

Travellers and any bodyguards or assistants they take with them are conveyed politely through the port. Although local laws prohibit weaponry in private hands, officers and honour guards are permitted to wear swords and small firearms can be brought on-planet under diplomatic privilege. They must be carried discreetly of course but the government of Arden – like many planetary governments – grants visiting naval detachments the capability to defend themselves as a courtesy. Naturally, abusing this privilege would cause a diplomatic incident.

It is a short hop by grav limo to the Imperial embassy at the capital, which is guarded by a small detachment of Imperial Marines. Arden has an experienced diplomatic corps, who are efficient at ensuring the Travellers are conveyed to their destination with a minimum of fuss and delay. This is probably just as well, since the ambassador wants to see the Travellers as soon as possible.

## THE SITUATION ON ARDEN

Ambassador Zugoukh is small for a Vargr but has a commanding presence all the same. She wears an expensive civilian suit, unadorned but for her knight's star and a discreet Imperial Army pin in her lapel. Over light refreshments she outlines the situation and her hopes for how the Travellers can assist.

It is not uncommon for major navies to assign officers and senior petty officers to friendly forces for liaison and training purposes. Such personnel are given local rank

equivalent to their own whilst on secondment and, if integrated into the local chain of command, can give orders to personnel like any other leader. The question of what to do if such an officer misbehaves is a rather more nebulous one; the usual solution is a diplomatic expulsion, accompanied by revoking the officer's local rank.

Ambassador Zugoukh has received a request for assistance from the Zhodani embassy – yes, she says, that's right – with a difficult situation. Several months ago the Zhodani Consulate Combined Interstellar Forces, to use the proper title, seconded an officer named Nieza Izshittl to the armed forces of Arden. Izshittl is the equivalent of a junior starship captain – Zugoukh uses the term 'commander' for his rank although that is not, strictly speaking, accurate – and comes from an important noble family. He appears to be something of a rising star in the Zhodani military. Until now, at least.

Commander Izshittl has been arrested and faces court-martial over a number of offences. If found guilty he will certainly be cashiered and might even face the death penalty. The Zhodani embassy cannot become involved in the case because the government of Arden are trying Izshittl as one of their own officers. This is a dubious legal situation in which nobody is very sure how to proceed.

Ambassador Zugoukh wants the Travellers to assist, since the situation is far beyond her experience and area of expertise. She is not interested in protests from the Travellers that they are not lawyers or diplomats either; they are required to render her assistance as needed and she needs it. Astute observers may realise that she is quietly transferring the consequences of the situation onto the Travellers.

Izshittl has been accused of espionage and treason, apparently after supplying information on Arden's defences and ship dispositions to unauthorised offworld parties. The evidence is rather flimsy but the case is politically charged. Zugoukh points out to the Travellers that this is not a simple case of proving guilt or innocence. The question is far more complex than that, since there are political and strategic implications to all possible outcomes.

The obvious first question is whether a foreign officer can be guilty of treason for betraying the secrets of his host government. Arguably, he does the same thing when he goes home and reports to his superiors – although it could be said that this is condoned by the secondment agreement. A more important question is whether it is acceptable for a seconded officer to be court-martialled by his hosts. It is customary for

the officer to be expelled along with a request that his superiors deal with him appropriately. In this case, if he really has betrayed the trust of his hosts, then his own government is likely to be highly displeased with him.

Yet the government of Arden wants to handle the matter internally. This is unusual, to say the least. One concern is the wording of the charges against Commander Izshtitl. These use strangely loose language, which could be interpreted as giving the government of Arden jurisdiction over foreign naval personnel under various circumstances, including a diplomatic visit such as this one. It might also give Arden a legal right to impound vessels of foreign registry if their officers are charged with certain offences including spying. This could be used to impede local traffic – quite legally – for weeks or months whilst the matter is cleared up and a court finds the officers innocent. Whilst it is not clear why Arden would want this power, it is not desirable that the precedent be set.

Thus it is apparently obvious that it is in the interests of the Imperium that Izshtitl be found innocent or that the court-martial be declared void. On the other hand, if a Zhodani officer were to be imprisoned or even put to death for espionage on Arden, this might sour relations with the Consulate, to Imperial advantage. However, the precedent set by a conviction might be a problem in the long run and there are additional considerations.

It was Izshtitl who confirmed the presence of the misappropriated ships to the Imperium and he has provided evidence that some of the oligarchs ruling Arden are providing support to the ships' operators. This does not, on the face of it, go against Arden's official policy of neutrality, since these vessels are not openly hostile to either the Imperium or the Consulate. However, the Consulate wants these ships removed. They can be shown to be a threat to stability in the region and more importantly (for the Consulate) their stance is anti-Zhodani. Sooner or later that will become significant.

Izshtitl is no traitor to his people. Quite the opposite; he has cleverly provided the Imperials with information they must act upon, which will lead to the removal of anti-Zhodani naval assets from the area to the benefit of the Zhodani. Yet his actions may also benefit the Imperium – these ships could cause an incident that would embarrass the Imperials. However, Izshtitl's primary motivation is the same as that of the Travellers. The situation in the region is tense enough without private agendas stirring the pot.

## INFLUENCING THE COURT-MARTIAL

The Travellers need to decide what to do. They could allow the court-martial to continue unimpeded, or intervene for either the prosecution or the defence. Alternatively, they could derail the proceedings and try to have them declared invalid. There are consequences each way.

### Stay Out of It

If the Travellers do nothing, the court presents some rather flimsy evidence and dubious legal arguments, and rules that Izshtitl is a traitor to his host government. He is sentenced to death and summarily executed before news that the trial has even begun reaches the embassies on Arden. This causes an embarrassing incident with the Consulate, which might be exploited by Imperials, but the matter was conducted – on the face of it at least – in a legal manner. A precedent is also set under local law for jurisdiction over naval and mercantile officers in the Arden system under alarmingly loosely defined circumstances. This is the worst possible outcome and should be considered a failure to assist the ambassador to Arden.

### Derail the Court-Martial

If the Travellers attempt to prevent the court-martial from taking place, they will meet with considerable opposition from the world government. This may seem odd; the government of Arden seems inordinately keen to prosecute a foreign officer despite the problems it may cause. The Travellers could present a legal argument claiming the proceedings are invalid under existing treaties, which is more or less true at present. If the court-martial goes ahead then this will set a precedent for future proceedings being valid, which may be what the Arden government really wants.

An alternative might be to bargain directly with the government, attacking the decision to prosecute based upon its possible consequences rather than its legality. This requires presenting a case study to the Arden government outlining the potential problems that proceedings may cause for them in the future. Either of these options requires a Difficult (10+) Advocate or Diplomat check and takes D3 days to carry out.

If the Travellers are successful, the prosecutors will be ordered to drop all charges against Izshtitl and he will be immediately deported. The Arden government refuses to even consider allowing Izshtitl to go to his embassy; they want rid of him immediately and since there is no Zhodani ship in port to take him, his

embassy requests the Travellers' assistance by way of the Imperial ambassador, who agrees on their behalf without consulting them. The Travellers are then ordered (actually 'requested' but in a manner that would be hard to refuse) to take responsibility for Commander Izshittl and convey him to a port where he can get a ship home. Any Class C or better port will do but until he gets to one he is the Travellers' problem.

It might also be possible to engineer deportation ahead of the court-martial in other ways, such as by registering a diplomatic complaint against Izshittl that causes him to be expelled. There are those who want him convicted and they will oppose such a move but if the Travellers can make a suitably good case they may be able to get Izshittl off-planet before the projected court-martial date. Of course, this also means he ends up aboard their ship.

One way to go about a diplomatic protest is to suggest to the government of Arden that the Imperium considers having Zhodani officers in the Arden military to be a potentially hostile act and that doing so violates Arden's neutral status. A bit of persuasion (and a warship in orbit) might see the government declare the secondment invalid and Izshittl's presence as undesirable. If the secondment was never valid, then Arden has no jurisdiction to prosecute Izshittl under its military code of law and has to settle for expulsion.

Derailing the court-martial is the best possible outcome for this situation. The Travellers can be considered to have fully succeeded in this mission success criterion providing they handle the affair with discretion. They will have to continue their mission with a Zhodani officer aboard, however.

### **Intervene for the Prosecution or Defence**

The Travellers could choose to assist the prosecution or the defence, and there are valid arguments for doing either. In this case the Referee should use the court-martial rules in the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* to determine how the case goes.

At the presentation of evidence stage it becomes apparent that Izshittl has indeed released information considered by the Arden government to be secret. He cannot really be prosecuted for giving it to his own government, as this is condoned by the secondment agreement, but warning the Imperium of Arden's support of the rogue warships is a clear breach of trust.

If the Travellers choose to do so, they can obtain evidence from their embassy that Izshittl fed intel to ambassador Zugoukh. This counts as solid, reliable evidence of guilt, imposing DM-4 on the Outcome table (see page 32). They could instead refuse to present this evidence or obfuscate the issue, in which case there is

only weak or unreliable evidence, giving DM-2 on the Outcome table. They might even claim their intelligence services obtained the information independently and that there is no indication Izshittl passed it along, in which case no DM applies on the Outcome table.

Izshittl is clearly in trouble at this point, no matter how weak the evidence may be. He has been assigned a junior officer as his defence and, since he was serving in the Arden military, is denied assistance from his embassy. His defence team grants DM+2 on Advocate and similar skill checks. Meanwhile, the prosecution team is led by a well-known military lawyer with an excellent success rate, granting DM+6 on checks for the prosecution.

It should be apparent to the Travellers at this point that Izshittl is being stitched up. He is calm and dignified throughout the proceedings but without assistance he is doomed. The Travellers may be fine with this, in which case the proceedings take their course. If they choose to try to help Izshittl, they have a few options.

The Travellers might offer to provide Izshittl's defence team with additional legal assistance. They will have to justify this, although the suggestion that a stronger defence makes the conviction even more solid will win over enough support to be agreed. It would also be an acknowledgement that the proceedings were valid, which the Travellers may or may not realise. If the Travellers join Izshittl's defence they may use the highest Advocate skill among their crew instead of the (very relieved) local defence lawyer.

If the Travellers can present a strong argument for the defence, the Referee should grant the Travellers an additional DM on the Outcome table. How they go about this is up to them; they might try to convince the court that Izshittl has a duty to help keep the peace and that releasing this information to the Imperial Navy will ultimately result in lowered tensions. They might bypass considerations of guilt and innocence entirely and focus on the consequences of a given outcome. A military court can do this and indeed it is required to consider the implications of a given judgement. It may be possible to convince the court that whether or not Izshittl has committed an offence he should simply be expelled, as a judgement might invoke the displeasure of the Consulate or the Imperium, or both.

The Referee should encourage the Travellers to consider the implications of the situation and its possible outcomes and may create a number of small Adventures as the Travellers attempt to obtain advice or cooperation. Ultimately, unless the Arden government can be convinced to abandon the trial and simply deport Izshittl, the Outcome table must be used to determine the final verdict.

The procedure is for the prosecution to present their case and make an Average (8+) Advocate check with a DM provided by the prosecutor (in this case most likely DM+6). The defence then makes a similar check using their DM.

The effect of the prosecution check and any DM for evidence is subtracted from a 2D roll, and the Effect of the defence check is added. This gives a final outcome from the trial. A modified Outcome table is used rather than the one in the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*.

## Outcome

2D	Result
4 or less	Izshtitl is found guilty and immediately sentenced to death for treason. Sentence is to be carried out by firing squad in a few hours.
5-8	Izshtitl is found guilty and incarcerated for later sentencing. He is found dead in his cell a few days later.
9-12	Izshtitl is found guilty but the court cannot decide what to do with him. He is incarcerated pending sentencing, quite possibly indefinitely.
13 or more	Izshtitl is found not guilty, although his actions are considered questionable and he is to be immediately expelled from Arden.
12+	Efficiency and morale increase. +1 ECEI, +D3 Morale

The Travellers might choose to plead for clemency, perhaps requesting that Izshtitl be turned over to them as a prisoner for interrogation by Imperial intelligence services. This is highly irregular and will be opposed by those who want him dead but sufficiently persuasive Travellers might manage it. They might also be able to put forward some mitigating circumstances that alter the outcome, although at best all they can hope to achieve is have Izshtitl deported.

If the trial goes ahead and the Travellers perform honourably, this segment of the mission is considered a success of sorts. A dangerous precedent has been set regarding jurisdiction but it is weaker than it might have been. An acquittal or a guilty verdict that results in expulsion rather than incarceration would be considered a partial success, a guilty verdict a marginal one under most circumstances.

## Why Help Izshtitl?

There are several reasons why the Travellers might assist Commander Izshtitl. One is concern about setting a precedent regarding jurisdiction over naval personnel. Another is interstellar friction – presenting evidence that results in a Zhodani officer being executed on a trumped-up charge will surely escalate tensions, but if the Travellers did their utmost to save him then Izshtitl's superiors will blame Arden, not the Imperium.

Arguably, a guilty verdict does benefit the Imperial position regarding Arden, but it creates a can of worms that would be better not opened. If the Travellers can prevent increasing tensions in the area, even at the cost of assisting a foreign officer who might someday be an enemy, then they will have done good work here.

## THE ARDEN AGENDA

A segment of the Arden oligarchy wants Izshtitl out of the way. They are working with the owners of the misappropriated ships on a plan to increase Arden's power at the expense of the Imperium and Izshtitl knows too much about their involvement. The simple answer seemed to be to have him executed after a court-martial and the arrival of Imperial Navy personnel who might unwittingly assist their plan seemed like a wonderful piece of luck.

Ultimately, the oligarchs want to use these misappropriated ships to create a situation where their own navy can offer protection to local worlds, moving the so-called Federation of Arden one step closer to becoming a reality. Along the way the actions of these vessels will bring disfavour upon both the Imperium and Consulate among the local populations and this will all be done in a deniable manner – deniable so long as whistle-blowers like Commander Izshtitl do not reveal the plan.

Arden cannot directly challenge either major power and must hide its gambits behind a façade of legalities and coincidences. The oligarchs are wise enough to

pull their fingers out of the fire if it becomes apparent the plan has gone awry, and this can only be done by maintaining the usual polite diplomatic front and using deniable assets.

Arden will therefore not interfere in any move to reacquire the missing ships. As for the Zhodani, this is a win-win situation for them. The ships are a potential

### Adventures on Arden

The situation on Arden is complex and can be the basis for several game sessions. There is room for skulduggery and investigation, courtroom drama and entirely unrelated mini-adventures. The Travellers can also get involved in the local social scene, investigate the oligarchs' involvement with the misappropriated ships or do anything else they want. Their time on Arden is not just about the trial of Commander Izshittl, although this is an important part of the mission.

Additionally, veteran Traveller fans may detect in this mission echoes of the *Exit Visa/Stranded on Arden* adventure. If the Travellers are successful in derailing the trial, they may make life a little easier for those caught in that situation.

problem and possibly an asset for anti-Zhodani elements in the region. If the Imperials remove or destroy them, the Zhodani Consulate does not lose and may gain. To the Imperial viewpoint, stability in the region is desirable at least for the time being and any potential benefits of leaving these ships at large are outweighed by the possibility of an unintentional clash.

## COMMANDER IZSHITTL ABOARD

The Travellers could treat Izshittl as a prisoner if they so choose but his status is rather nebulous and this might be taken as an insult by the Zhodani Consulate. A better approach might be to consider him a guest but restrict his movements. If well treated, Izshittl turns out to be polite, courteous and quite an interesting companion at dinner, although strange by Imperial standards.

For his part, Izshittl is nervous at finding himself among potential enemies and psionics-haters but he is a well-bred gentleman with the reputation of his culture

to uphold, and behaves with great dignity. He will not lie about anything to the Travellers, but will decline to answer some questions with a bluntness that might raise eyebrows. One of the truths he will tell is that he is not a telepath and cannot read minds; his talents lie in the Awareness and Telekinesis fields. Whether the Travellers believe him is up to them.

The Travellers are of course bound by the regulations of their service not to mistreat Izshittl whilst he is aboard. If they are decent towards him (rather than just locking him up and leaving him in the brig), Izshittl is willing to share what information he has with the Travellers. He is quite open about the fact that removing the rogue ships from the region benefits his government and that he is essentially using the Travellers to that end. However, it does improve the stability of the Arden arm of the Spinward Main and reduces the chance of another war. Izshittl served in the Fourth Frontier War as a very young officer and is quite sincere when he says he would not want to see a renewed conflict.

If Izshittl is cooperative, the Travellers immediately gain D3 points of Intel towards locating the rogue ships and will gain an extra point on a straight 2D roll of 8+ any time they gather information, providing Izshittl is allowed to provide his insight. This may grant him some intelligence gathering opportunities of his own, so the Travellers need to make their choices accordingly.

Izshittl will also quite happily offer advice if asked. He will not give away any secrets but he is a professional naval officer with considerable experience of operating in the region. He will suggest workable solutions to problems like how to repossess the skipped Kuldukian. His reasoning is simple and honest – he will help if asked because he has absolutely no reason not to. If he has a reason not to help, he will not. The Travellers may seek some convoluted plot behind Izshittl's helpfulness but there is none. If the Travellers cannot accept that then they may end up tormenting themselves with attempts to see through a deception that is not there.

Eventually, however, Izshittl must be delivered to a starport from where he can make his way home. His government has been informed of the situation by a courier from the embassy on Arden and it is possible that the Travellers' vessel may meet a Zhodani warship diverted to bring Izshittl home. He is, after all, a member of a powerful Zhodani noble house. He may be a useful contact or reluctant foe at some point in the future but for now he is simply a courteous guest.

# C H A P T E R - T E N

## LOCATE AND RETRIEVE

Finding the misappropriated ships is the primary driving factor for the Travellers in this mission. Doing so requires a minimum of 8 Intel. Routine intelligence gathering might not be quick enough to allow the vessels to be located in time but the Travellers have additional options. Commander Izshtitl can provide information and smart Travellers might find other ways of getting more Intel, such as sending personnel shoreside with a specific intelligence mission.

If the Travellers are not diligent in their information gathering, they could fail to locate the targets altogether and run out of time. The options at that point are to return home in accordance with their orders or extend their patrol in defiance of them. Each has consequences but returning empty-handed is a lot less serious than being declared overdue and having warships sent to look for you. If that happens then the mission is a total failure no matter what else is achieved and the Travellers will get a look at the court-martial rules from the other side.

Assuming they manage to obtain enough Intel, the Travellers will have a 2D days-long window in which to make an intercept. The Referee should decide which system the target ships will be in and if the Travellers miss the intercept, they can generate another. Once the gathered Intel reaches 12 points, the Travellers have a clear indication of which system the ships are using. This is likely to be a backwater starport or a small port at one of the settlements on a world like Zircon or Utoland.

The circumstances of an encounter might dictate its outcome. It is possible that the rogue ships might be caught in port with some of their crews planetside, although if the Travellers have not been discreet about their intelligence gathering operations this is unlikely – if they know they are being hunted, the crews will be alert. An encounter in a system that does not like to cooperate with the Imperium could be awkward and the Travellers might even have to let their targets go. One very interesting option would be for a Zhodani warship to warn the Travellers against firing on the ships they are pursuing within the jurisdiction of an anti-Imperial planet. Are the Travellers willing to risk war to complete their mission?

Ultimately, however, the Travellers should be able to chase down the target vessels and demand their surrender. There is an outside chance their captains might actually do so, especially if caught in a bad situation. More likely, however, they will attempt to make a run for it and jump out. Firing on the misappropriated ships was given as a last resort, so should the Travellers do so? If they do, it will be very apparent that an incident of some kind has occurred and word about the misappropriation is likely to get around.

The ideal solution is to catch the rogue ships somewhere they cannot easily escape from and where there are no witnesses. That is a lot easier said than done, however. More likely the intercept will have to be made on the fly and the Travellers will have to work out how best to deal with the situation. In all probability the rogue ships will be overmatched but this does not mean they will not fight rather than surrender. The Travellers might try to make a limited strike and then demand surrender, using negotiation as well as force, or they could perhaps get a boarding party into the rogue ship(s) and force surrender.

How the Travellers handle the intercept is wide open. There is no perfect solution and a very large number of 'workable but wrong' answers to the question of how to do it. So long as the job gets done and the rogue ships are eliminated or recaptured, the mission will be a success. Of course, the Travellers may have to explain some of their actions and justify any decisions that led to their ship becoming damaged.

It is possible that the rogue ships might be recaptured early in the mission, in which case the flag-showing patrol should be continued as if nothing has happened. Alternatively, there may be more than one rogue ship and a second intercept may be required to catch 'the one that got away'. As always with a naval campaign, it is the Travellers' decisions that dictate what will happen and often the fallout from one decision will lead to further adventures.

# RETURN TO BASE

The Travellers were tasked with recovering the missing ships, assisting the ambassador at Arden and showing the Imperial Sunburst among the worlds of the frontier. Once their mission time is up, or if their ship is too damaged to continue, they must return to base.

Upon their return to Extolay Naval Base, the Travellers' performance will be assessed according to the Mission Success Indicators. The Referee should resist the temptation to be too lenient about objectives, however. Complete success should be hard to achieve and the Travellers may need to learn lessons about operating as a naval crew. The Travellers are expected to make their report in the manner described in the *Naval Campaign Guide*, giving an overview of the mission and answering Three Tough Questions about their performance. Note that these questions are sometimes asked to allow the officers being debriefed to shine, rather than to find flaws in their performance. It is entirely possible that their superiors will express approval or sympathy for having to make a tough decision.

Possible Tough Questions include:

- Explain why it took so long to locate the missing ships.
- Why did you let that suspect Free Trader go?
- Explain the reasoning behind the decision to deal with the court-marital situation the way you did.
- You brought a foreign officer aboard an Imperial Navy ship and allowed him the run of the place. Please explain.
- You locked up a member of a foreign noble house we are trying to maintain good relations with. Please explain.

As a general rule, if the Travellers tried hard to behave like a navy crew and acted in a responsible manner, the questioning should be neutral or even positive. If they rampaged around the spacelanes like a bunch of trigger-happy yahoos then the Admiralty will have more searching questions for them. Either way, the debriefing is an opportunity for the Travellers to learn what they might have done instead or what the consequences would have been had they chosen a different course of action.

Finally, the Referee should determine the final Mission Outcome. This is the sum of the Effects from the captain's Leadership check, checks to resolve the Travellers' answers to their Tough Questions and the Mission Success Indicator total. This value is applied to the Mission Outcome table (on page 39 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*) to determine the Admiralty's opinion of the Travellers' performance.

## FURTHER EVENTS

The situation around Arden remains complex and it is entirely possible that there will be fallout from the Travellers' decisions. If Commander Izshtitl was executed, Consulate relations with Arden will cool rapidly for a time... which suits the purposes of the people who misappropriated ex-Imperial warships and dispatched them to cause friction with the Zhodani. And speaking of those people... there will be an investigation into how these ships were diverted from going to an approved client government or merchant line. Who knows what adventures or missions might spin out of that can of worms?

