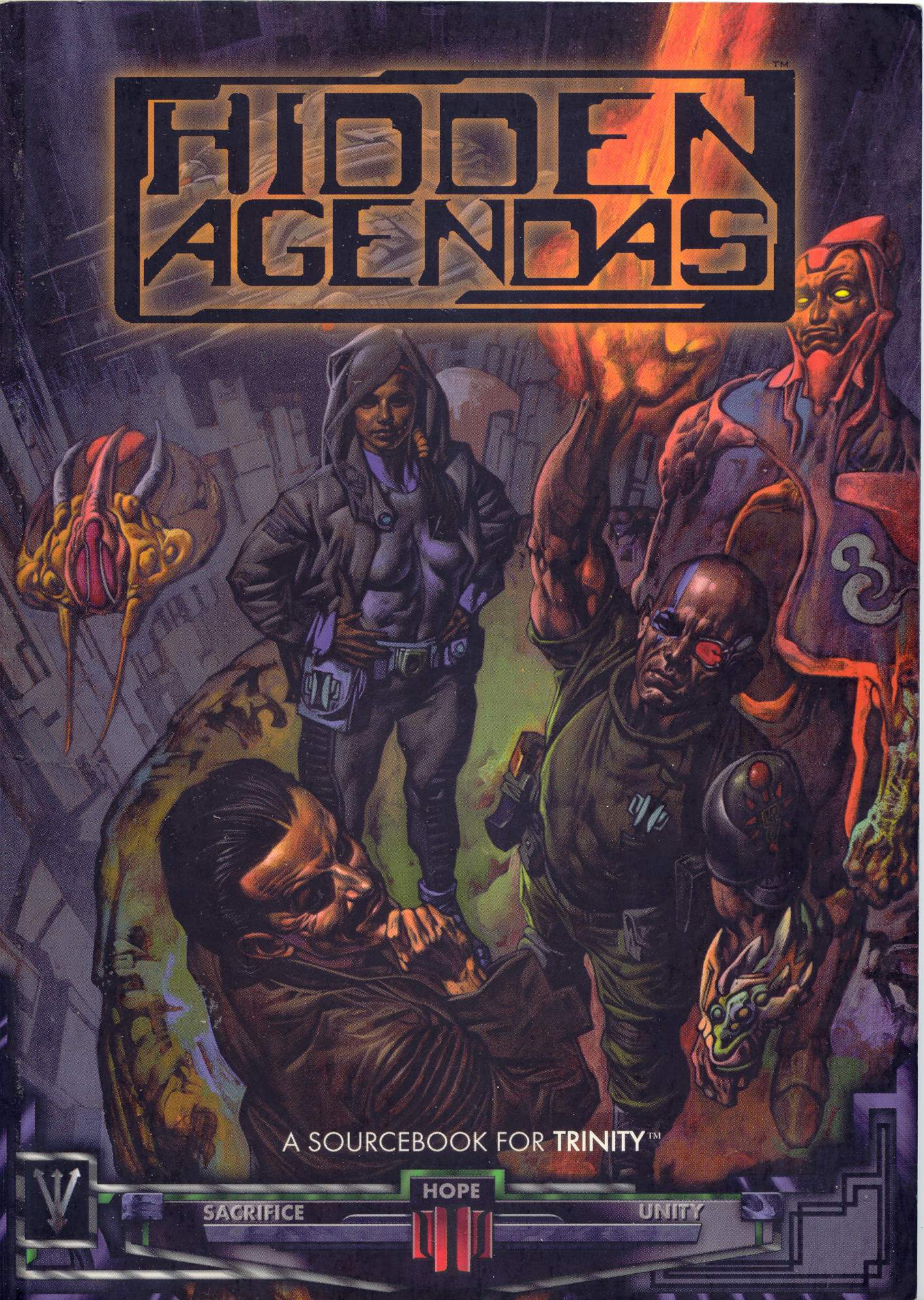


HIDDEN AGENDASTM



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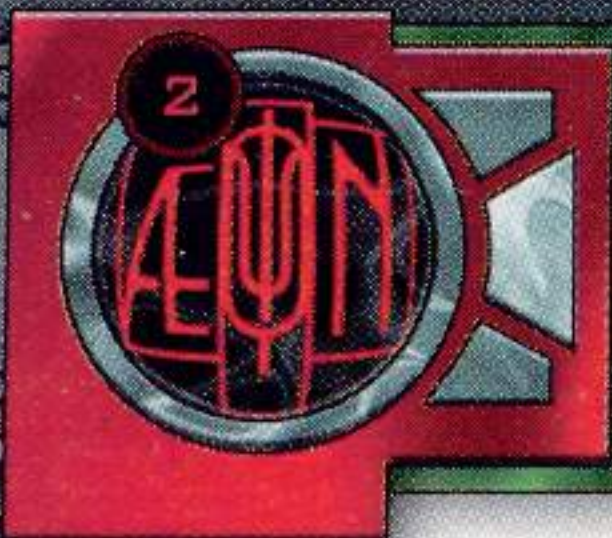
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INTRODUCTORY TRANSMISSION

HOPE • SACRIFICE • UNITY

In a universe of dangerous interplanetary travel, first contact with strange, alien races, the emergence of mysterious psionic powers among humanity, and the rediscovered menace of the Aberrant horde that endangers all life, the Æon Trinity is a force for good, dedicated to the protection of Earth. In a time of great uncertainty and apprehension, Æon stands at the forefront of humanity, both protecting and leading the way into a bold future. We lead the way in hopes of unifying all people to face the destiny that lies before us.

GREETINGS, COLLEAGUE

A number of powerful forces are active in the modern universe, forces that have the capacity to change humanity's course forever. The Æon Trinity finds itself in a unique position regarding these various agencies. As you know, an important aspect of the Trinity's actions involves coordinating others' efforts to achieve Æon's goals. The Trinity's role therein is now, in the 22nd century, more vital than ever before. Aberrant attacks grow more concerted; divisiveness escalates between — and within — the psi orders; and suspicion, panic and greed overwhelm human governments.

However, the very factors that call for our intervention likewise make our efforts that much more difficult to accomplish. The road ahead is a difficult one. We members of the Æon Trinity must put our differences aside and commit ourselves to uniting humanity and even our alien friends against the threats arrayed before us. We must be prepared to sacrifice ourselves in this effort if doing so fulfills our goals. We must never give up on our dream of realizing humanity's full potential, for as long as we hope, then we may still triumph.

I speak to you not only as a fellow Trinity member, but as a friend and brother. We must act together, taking advantage of every available resource. This transmission is but a small part of the information that our colleagues in Triton Division have recovered and compiled from various OpNet nodes. Its usefulness will vary with the situations you discover yourself in, but I am confident that you will find these files to be beneficial in your work.

Good luck to you.

Neville Archer
Director, Neptune Division
Æon Trinity

22ND-CENTURY EARTH

>>> Addendum <<<

See previous file: 22nd-Century Earth

Humanity has spent most of its relatively short time on Earth huddled on six of the seven major landmasses that span the globe. Two-thirds of Earth's surface remains relatively untouched by human hands. Economic wealth, scientific enlightenment, energy resources — all of these things lie under Antarctica's frozen tundra and in Earth's oceans. With the skill and technology at humanity's disposal, we have finally made strides in exploring Earth's last great wilderness regions.

Æon and the Psi Orders

The Trinity keeps an eye on polar and aquatic developments, as it does every other area of human involvement. Interestingly, the psi orders show little interest in these remote programs compared to the attention paid to endeavors in more "civilized" regions. The orders' perceptions remain focused outward, on the stars, as do those of humanity in general. It is mainly through Æon's urging that the orders look to Earth's frigid climes and undersea terrain at all.

Of all the orders, the Norça show the greatest inter-

est in these areas. This is not surprising. Of all the psionic aptitudes, their biokinetic talent is the most useful in extreme environments. A Norça may alter his very physiology to survive — even thrive — in frozen arctic wastes and under crushing undersea pressures. For the most part, the shifters leave the other orders to their stellar patrols; the biokinetics guard Earth's poles and oceans against Aberrant incursion.

Satellite networks, re-launched after the Aberrant War, have limited use in scanning Antarctica's icy mantle and the ocean depths. Earth governments, supplemented by Legion patrols and a scattering of Ministry outposts, monitor these areas as best they can. But even with this added assistance, a vast amount of territory remains for the Norça to patrol.

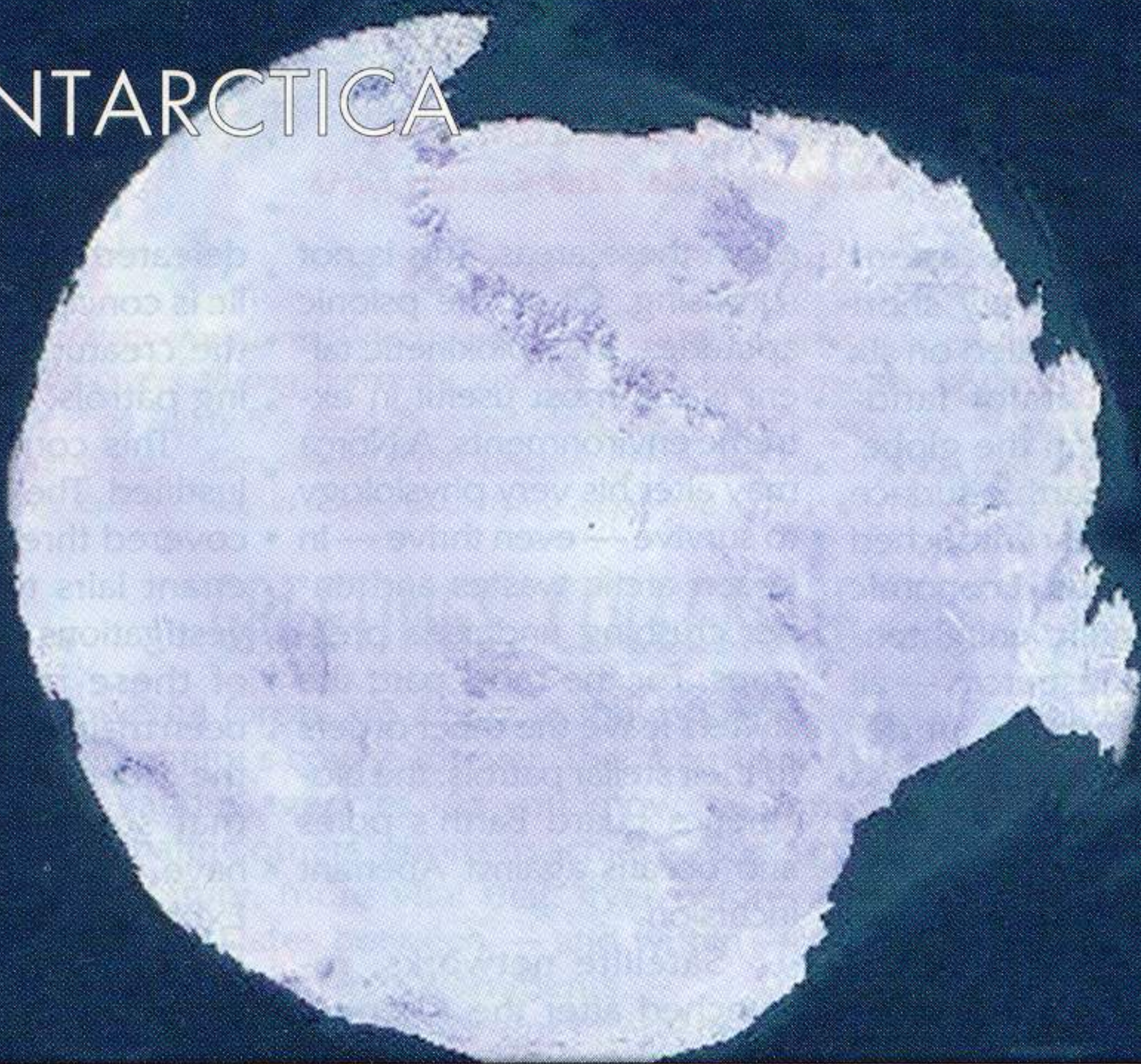
Psion and human patrols have encountered solitary Aberrants in both arctic and undersea environments. Due to our difficulties in monitoring these regions, the monstrosities have used them as landing points on Earth in preparation for staging raids. While Aberrants that have attacked from arctic regions and the sea have all been

defeated decisively, the public is concerned that more of the creatures may be evading patrols.

This concern is partially justified. The Norça have uncovered three undersea Aberrant lairs to date. Our investigations indicate that one of these might well have been maintained since before the Aberrant War. The idea that some Aberrants may have never left Earth in the Exodus is quite disturbing. The Trinity cannot ignore the possibility that there may be other Aberrant hideouts in other isolated spots on Earth — or even on Luna or other bodies in our solar system.

It will take time to root out other possible Aberrant havens. Involved as the Norça are in their South American and extraterrestrial endeavors, and additionally purported to be the smallest group of psions currently operating, the biokinetics must perforce be spread quite thin. The Æon Trinity lends what assistance that Proxy del Fuego will accept, and freelance psions accompany Norça patrols, but defending Earth remains a daunting job. We must rely on the biokinetics to maintain their vigilance in these harsh regions and times.

ANTARCTICA



The last territory on Earth to be opened up to permanent human habitation, Antarctica is still a forbidding, untamed territory. The polar continent is unique on Earth as a romantic alternative to the orbital colonies — a “downside alien world filled with fortune and adventure.” Unfortunately, this common sentiment is disturbingly accurate: Just as in the extraterrestrial colonies, hostile environmental factors and the threat of Aberrant attack make emigration to Antarctica a risky venture — one that relocation brokers are still reluctant to insure. Antarctica is truly an alien environment, a frontier as wild and exotic as any of the extraterrestrial colonies, despite being as much a part of planet Earth as is Rio or the Maghreb.

The Terrestrial Frontier

Antarctica's very remoteness attracts the elite and re-

clusive from all over human space. The continent's lack of universally recognized regulations for land use has allowed some of the wealthiest corporate heads to carve vast private retreats out of the trackless wilderness, dotting the landscape with fusion-heated ski lodges, and the sky with private orbital facilities. Antarctica's telecommuting class, too poor for such conspicuous displays of aristocratic privilege, band together to form yet another wave of isolationist communities, seeking the good life and entertaining fantasies of finding happiness as rustic prospectors or fishers. Such idealism and social disparity are just two of the many parallels that exist among Antarctica, Luna, Mars and other extraterrestrial settlements.

The simplicity of Antarctic communities make them among the most

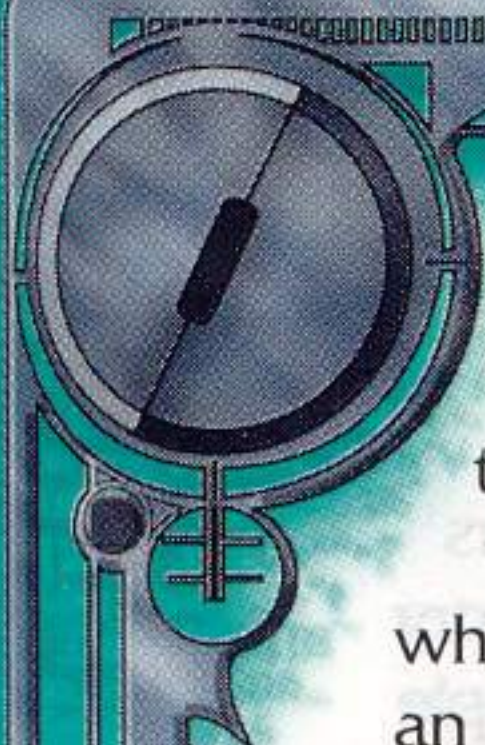
enticing of all terrestrial destinations for slummers fleeing North American, European and Chinese arcologies. Even Australia is a secondary choice at times, its romantic allure compromised by centuries of human habitation. In fact, a substantial percentage of the “penguins” (as the Antarticans are somewhat derisively called by outsiders) were originally first- or second-generation Schism settlers who left Australia when they realized that the Commonwealth was

TRITON ARCHIVE

LIVE THE ADVENTURE...

...without leaving the planet! Want to experience the thrill of living in the outworld colonies, but without the risks? Nervous about the trip up the gravity well and into the unknown? Come to Antarctica!

*Paid for by Sucasa Habitat Brokers,
Montevideo*



not the utopian enclave that brokers had led them to expect.

Still idealistic, the erstwhile "Australians" now seek an idealized relationship with nature and their fellow slummers in the settlements of Victoria's Land.

Earth's Last Treasure-Trove

Antarctica's largely untouched mineral resources are enormously tempting to a world forced to search deep into space for raw materials. Beyond the rich deposits of precious metals such as platinum and gold that are scattered across the continent, Antarctica contains important reserves of structural metals — iron, chromium and copper — not to mention untapped supplies of petroleum organics. Now that environmental technologies and automation have progressed to the point where humanity can finally exploit Antarctic wealth, Earth's leading economic powers are eager to reap rewards from the ice.

The most avid developers and financiers of Antarctic resource strategies are the resource-starved *zaibatsu* and the geocentric Brazilians. Both blocs have pursued policies of radical expansion into the Antarctic economy for over 10 years — the Nihonjin through the intermediaries of Australia and the United Nations, and the Brazilians through their aggressive mercantile establishment. FSA corporate interests, the Argentine military and the UAN hold much smaller stakes in the Antarctic resource market, although these tend to be minor niche operations.

Interests and Conflict

The political allegiances of Antarctica's homesteaders and the disposition of the continent's natural resources are two of the most pressing issues in international corporate law. Since a number of competing national and corporate interests have claimed the right to exploit the frontier, either exclusively or in part, the situation is tense and verges on explosive.

The most convincing claim is made by the Nippon-dominated upper chamber of the United Nations. The UN's history of involvement in the Antarctic territory goes back to the 20th century, when the continent was a UN protectorate. As most of the important Antarctic claims of the period were made by members of the North American-European cultural bloc (which have since abandoned their Antarctic interests, or now lack the political momentum to press their claims, or both), current legal opinion tends to attribute the continent to the UN.

Presumably, this would solidify Nihonjin interests in the area, as the Nippon-subsidized UN would likely seek to protect the *zaibatsu*. Of the other old claims to Antarctica, only the long-established Argentine military presence is still vital enough to present organized, serious competition for the UN's *zaibatsu* and Australian corporate trustees. Newer claims to the continent, such as those laid by China and Brazil, don't pose any immediate threat to the Nihonjin, Argentine nor Australian endeavors, but serve to shake up Antarctica's status quo even further.



Modern Antarctic society takes only a passing interest in these territorial disputes. International politics seem petty compared to the day-to-day struggle to survive. Yet this political indifference has enabled various extra-national forces to establish a strong presence on the frigid continent — often using the locals themselves as pawns. Brazilian corporations are a notable example. They have taken advantage of Antarctica's political disinterest in recent years, working through economic channels and FSA shell companies to challenge UN exploitation of the continent.

Indeed, the Brazilian connection is a particularly telling example of the complexities of Antarctic politics. The Sudamericans, as South Americans have come to be known, initiated their strategy after being invited to co-finance Chinese Ministry of Science installations in Antarctica. It is thought that Beijing was unwilling to give Nippon exclusive access to the platinate resources that made China so useful to the *zaibatsu*, so brought Brazil onto the playing field as a diversion. Brazil quickly proved unwilling to give up access to Antarctic platinum sources, and clashed with the greedy Nippon.

Today, China continues to dole out platinum and other strategic materials from Siberia and Antarctica to Nippon in exchange for proprietary patents. Meanwhile, the Brazilians continue to defend their own fragile platinum supply from not only the United Nations bloc, but also from the already

well-established presence of the Argentines, their Sudamerican rivals.

The Antarctic issue is further complicated by the lack of a modern legal precedent for what is essentially a large-scale colonial acquisition or land grab. The situation is in many ways an atavistic resurgence of old, nationalist territorial behaviors, with political forces competing for the right to control newly "discovered" resources that were previously owned by no one. In this regard, the only difference that exists between Antarctica and extraterrestrial colonization efforts is one of location.

The United Nations headquarters on Luna is in constant tumult as representatives push their nations' agendas, looking for every possible political edge in space and on Antarctica. Metacorporations do their part as well, offering lucrative donations to whichever dignitaries best promote the companies' goals. These efforts are a counterpoint to other, less public maneuvers. Political espionage is a given in 22nd-century politics, with nations resorting to bribery, counterintelligence and even the occasional assassination. Many rogue psions gravitate to this spy trade, lured by the wealth and glamor. It's likely that some orders are also heavily involved in this espionage. The Ministry, Orgotek and the Norça are known to support Antarctic developments; the psions they commit are doubtlessly used for more than simple exploration and colony development.

Ironically, competing claims to Antarctica allow its colonists to function as an almost entirely autonomous political unit, divorced from the system of national rivalries and corporate struggles. Although native-born Antarcticans retain their hereditary national citizenships or corporate affiliations, few identify strongly with their "original" homes. They are Antarcticans — or, more poetically, "Borealites" — children of a new and nonpoliticized civilization.

Yet Borealites are not entirely free from interference. Colonists' increasingly independent attitudes in recent years have resulted in a greater military presence in Antarctica. The governments of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China and Nippon have spent significant time and resources developing their presence on Earth's polar continent. Addressing each others' political maneuvers is strain enough without having to deal with fractious settlers. The colonists' independent spirit is what inspired them to live in this frigid southern land, and government pressures serve to only stoke the settlers' fire rather than dampen it. Argentina has already stopped two secession attempts by its Antarctic colonies in the past 12 years, and UN-sponsored colonies routinely disregard directives from the Nihonjin contingent. It seems only a matter of time before scuffles for autonomy escalate into a full-scale battle for independence.

No-Man's Land

The combination of political and environmental factors make Antarctica a vast territory that few "respectable" people want to explore. Antarctica's interior is certainly Earth's sanctuary for those citizens who wish to escape from the stresses of 22nd-century life. But, much like Luna, the continent is also the ideal hiding place for criminals, political and ecological refugees, rogue psions of all sorts (supposedly including a number of old, powerful psychomorphs or "proto-psions" — progenitors of psions and beings with psionlike powers), and at least a few active Aberrants. The polar wilderness is the modern world's answer to the forest of the Hindu siddhis — an hallucinatory place bathed in unearthly lights, and populated by bandits, saints and monsters.

PROTEUS ARCHIVE

Subject: Possible chibb renegades
From: Major G.N. Bandawadday
To: Colonel Agrah Shahim, Commander, Fourth Legion
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 04:21:06 11.01.10

New evidence near the abandoned Dakshn Gangotri base indicates that renegade members of Chitra Bhanu are still active in the Antarctica theater. A cache of Bhurano publications was confiscated and destroyed.

Evidence is inconclusive as yet as to whether we face sympathizers or actual quantakinetics. Recommend we proceed under the assumption that some chibs escaped the purge. Request additional reconnaissance teams to ensure renegades are brought to justice.

Also request additional pyro support — the cryo kids out of Ross Station are enjoying themselves, but I'm miserable.

Environmental Hazards

Despite the advances in environmental technology that make Antarctic enclaves and corporate compounds possible, the polar continent is becoming less, rather than more, hospitable to permanent human inhabitation. Only the dramatic advances made in stellar colonization techniques, as well as the development of human and Qin biotechnology systems over the last few years, allow the colonies on the seventh continent to remain viable. According to some ecologists, technology must continue to advance to even keep up with Antarctica's resistance to colonization.

The problems inherent to Antartican colonization are manifold. To begin with, the inland region is the coldest territory on Earth. The continental interior's perpetual polar wind, glacial ice pack and relatively high altitude combine to produce temperature extremes reminiscent of a Martian autumn, ranging from 0° to -60° Celsius.

While this sub-freezing cold is, in itself, a challenging obstacle to human life, it has caused secondary problems for Borealites: The cold makes it difficult to restore atmospheric damage done by Aberrants in the past. During the Aberrant era, a certain number of the beings were apparently fascinated by the natural ozone layer breach that spiraled over the South Pole. This interest even led a group of Aberrants to establish a headquarters in the Antartican interior.

These Aberrants used their abilities to widen the ozone hole

for unknown reasons, producing the now-familiar Cyclopean Eye phenomenon. Deadly ultraviolet radiation now streams unfiltered through the Eye during the Antarctic spring and summer. This radiation may have been welcome nourishment to the mutated Aberrants, but it causes numerous problems to human existence today. The UV waves trigger cancers in those who spend too much time in the area, and they tend to destabilize unshielded hyper-fusion cells. The Æsculapians theorize that the irradiated region is also extraordinarily high in taint, making it likely to lead to cases of Aberrant Syndrome and other grotesque illnesses.

Beyond these known dangers, Antarctica seems to be growing ever colder and more hostile. Studies show that the polar continent's mean temperature in 2120 is 4° C lower than it was three years ago. Blizzards grow stronger and last longer with each passing year. Scientists are divided on whether the Cyclopean Eye accounts for these changes.

Furthermore, Antarctic colonies have experienced unforeseen complications. The swelling number of technicians gainfully employed in Antartican cities is the subject of numerous jokes. They earn their keep,

Citadel of Doctor Mirabilis Found

Aberrant House of Horrors Is Empty?

GN Special Report © 2103

In a surprising development, a team of Antarctic explorers led by Ashesh van Courtlandt has discovered what appears to be the former headquarters of the Aberrant leader known as "Doctor Mirabilis." After careful sweeps for radiation in the "taint" spectrum, the team concluded that the installation is deserted, presumably abandoned during the Aberrant Exodus over 40 years ago.

Infamous during that time as an Aberrant ideologue and faction leader, Mirabilis is thought to have murdered several hundred-thousands of people. Unfortunately, the only member of van Courtlandt's expedition versed in Aberrant history was forced to leave the group several days ago due to injuries sustained in a mechanical failure.

Although the Aberrants left Earth four decades ago, the United Nations has responded to public concerns regarding the discovery. The UN announced that it will send a special investigations team to the site, led by Professor Solomon Pringle, a specialist in Aberrant physiology. Even if the site is truly abandoned, Pringle states that he hopes the installation will reveal new insights into Aberrants and how humanity may combat them, should they return someday.

though; systems failures and power outages have become disturbingly common. Although polar colonies are constructed with the same technologies used in extraterrestrial settlements, incidences of failures and breakdowns in the Antarctic region are five times greater than in space. Most people attribute these problems to harsh weather conditions, forgetting that space colonies deal with temperatures lower than -200°C , as well as lack of gravity and atmosphere.

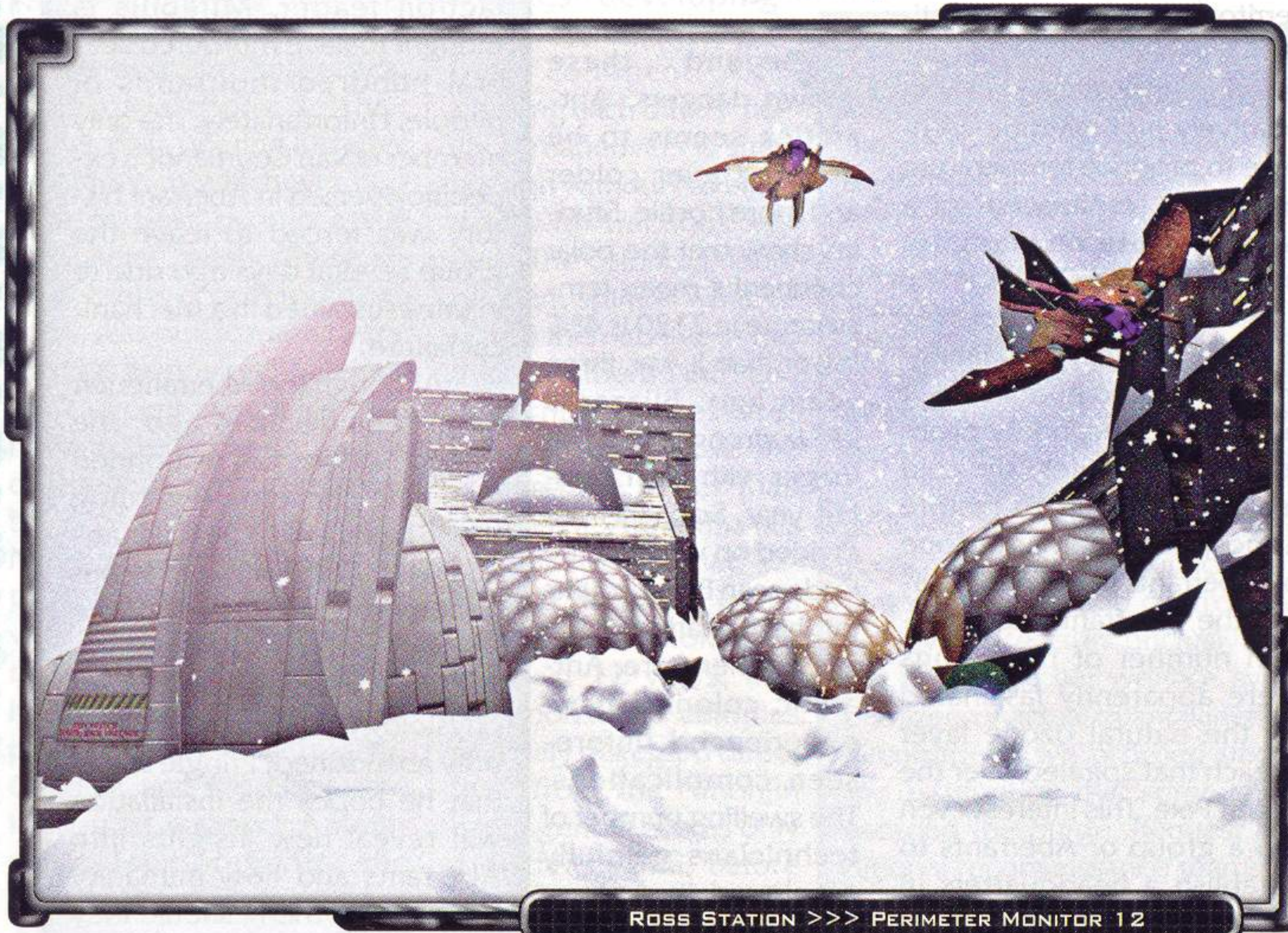
Technicians and scientists have yet to account for the problems posed to polar colonies. Rumors fill the resulting void. Recent gossip blames systems failures on

sabotage by competing governments or corporations, or blames Aberrant attacks.

Compared to the lurid majesty of the Eye and the glacial fastness that keeps a continent buried under ice, the more mundane environmental hazards of Antarctica seem almost hospitable. Travelers and settlers alike must import most biomass to be used as food. The Antarctic ecosystem is too stark to provide much food, other than fish (on the coast) and seasonal algae (which require extensive processing before becoming a useful part of the human diet). Specially insulated biospheres and hydroponics chambers that require constant supervision dot the continental interior's harsh ice surface, operating as much through

human stubbornness as through technological achievement.

Antarctica is a frigid yet almost romantically alluring place. Borealites choose their lives on the polar continent, struggling to survive against the elements, systems failures and sporadic Aberrant raids with the same fierce intensity as the Karroo miners in the Crab Nebula fought against the alien Chromatics over five years ago. Psions are drawn to many sides of life on the continent — promoting governments and corporations' plans, supporting the settlers' efforts, and investigating espionage and rumors of Aberrants. Antarctica is the source of many agendas and possibilities, and offers as much mystery, danger and wonder as any extraterrestrial colony.



ROSS STATION >>> PERIMETER MONITOR 12

OCEANIA

The Urban Schism resulted in the fulfillment of an ancient fantasy: the expansion of the human world into permanent enclaves built on the surface of and at the bottom of Earth's seas. After the Aberrant War, most governments were more concerned with rebuilding their ravaged societies or venturing into the stars than they were in exploring the sea. That void left Earth's oceans open to exploitation by private agencies.

Ocean cities are located in two main areas of the globe — the Asian Pacific and the Caribbean Sea. Undersea arcologies are also located at other places like the Mediterranean and on the African coast, but aren't as developed as their larger competitors. "Oceania," the name used to refer to all sea cities as a whole, originally referred to the islands of the Pacific. However, the arcologies of Oceania are forming identi-

ties and loyalties independent of the powers that established them, much as extraterrestrial and arctic colonies are.

The ocean developments of the Pacific rim are primarily Nihonjin-built arcologies. This region is now known as Technonesia, a somewhat tongue-in-cheek salute to Nippon's hardtech expertise. The Caribbean ocean cities haven't yet felt the need to create a new name for themselves, since "Caribbean" does the job well enough. Both regions reflect much of the culture of the societies that established them.

Ocean arcologies fall into two main categories: floating cities or deep colonies.

Floating Cities

The first of the artificial sea environments were floating cities built around mineral-facilities. Administered by various metacorporations (especially the Nihonjin

zaibatsu), the oceanic installations served as "company colonies" throughout the late 21st century. Life in these oceanic arcologies tended toward the austere, intensely regulated and profoundly boring — the aquatic cities rivaled the Amano-Kelsian station orbiting one of Saturn's moons in terms of pure functionality over any sort of aesthetic.

New corporate strategies that recognized the importance of developing aquatic stations beyond limited mining capabilities gradually forced non-Nihonjin facilities to relax their control over the oceanic installations; the *zaibatsu* soon followed suit. As orbital-resource exploitation became more and more important, corporations encouraged "soft-management" styles and social economy in the floating cities in an attempt to raise production efficiency.

The results were extraordinary. Formerly rigid routines and hiring patterns were revised to encourage young, unorthodox talent to emigrate to the installations, making it possible to lease less profitable facilities for ecological research or (in some cases) as living quarters for utopian communities. Disillusioned citizens of the Federated States of America (often called "Norda-mericans"), as well as Europeans, members of Psi Nippon and other outcast Nihonjin subcultures flocked to the aquatic cities. They joined scientists, technoprimitives and hopeless romantics searching for an unspoiled ocean dream. In exchange for autonomy and the chance to return to nature, the new generation (called "wave dwellers" or, most commonly, "tsunanjin") kept the installations economically viable into the orbital age.

Of any society on Earth, the tsunanjin are debatably the most concerned with the integration of modern technology into the natural environment. Clinging to their fragile urban platforms and hydrospheres, they have reason to be concerned with nature. These ocean-dwellers are insignificant in and alien to their immense habitats. Like extraterrestrial colonists, the tsunanjin treat their adopted homes with humility and reverence. To go against the flow risks the utter destruction of their fragile worlds.

Unlike a number of the outer colonists, however, the tsunanjin approach their lifestyles with exhilaration and an almost playful enthusiasm.

They are a fantastically diverse group, a collection of a dozen different cultures united by a respect for the natural world. Whether their parents were Somali ore technicians, Venezuelan marine biologists, Texan maintenance engineers or Psi Nippon culture theorists, they have learned from an early age that the world is alive, and even has moods. There is an ounce of truth in the holoflat stereotype of the "noble tsunanjin" who feels a deep, almost empathic connection to the surrounding sea.

Deep Colonies

Although the tsunanjin showed an impressive resurgence in mining efficiency, their efforts were still not enough to sate Nippon's hunger for raw materials. Forced to go farther and farther afield to find stable sources of raw materials, the *zaibatsu* achieved another technological miracle: "deep cities" built on the ocean floor. Originally situated along the continental shelves surrounding the Sea of Japan, these undersea installations make use of Lunar mining architecture, retro-engineered to withstand oceanic pressures instead of near-vacuum.

The deep colonies are among the engineering triumphs of the 22nd century. Variations on the life-support systems operating on orbital stations provide air integrity, with gill-like exchange membranes serving as backup systems. Defense grids modeled after aspects of Nippon's Hidden Fortress system protect installations from aquatic Aberrants. Anchored deep in the continental bedrock and built on a modular, "compartmentalized" plan, the new-

est colonies are considered safe by *zaibatsu* insurance departments, and are even considered to be proof against anything short of an undersea volcano.

The *zaibatsu* hold proprietary patents to the specialized construction methods that ensure (among other things) that underwater cities do not buckle under the ocean's weight. The Nihonjin

PROTEUS ARCHIVE

UNLABELLED HOLOFILE, FOUND
DAMAGED IN LIMA BARRIO, 1.4.2114

First Voice: So, what is it that you want?

Second Voice: I had been told that you shifters were brusque. Some might even find you rude.

First Voice: I am not concerned with how others might find me. My loyalty and my responsibility are to my people.

Second Voice: On this, I agree. It pleases me to find that the Sudamericans share some qualities with the Nihonjin.

First Voice: You understand if I do not share your pleasure. Again, what do you want of me?

Second Voice: We would like to give your employees in Caracas access to the deep-city blueprints. It would allow them to make use of the rich organic treasures of the Venezuelan Reef.

First Voice: And what do you gain?

Second Voice: The usual small tithe of raw output. However, our primary concern is your assurance that the deep cities will incorporate certain mirror-data archives.

First Voice: Locked duplicate data files. Sounds risky for you, and of little gain.

Second Voice: [laughter] Do not worry about us. The archives will include their own decryption algorithms. We would like for them to be read ...someday.

therefore dictate the location, layout and ownership of these bubble environments. The oldest of the colonies, including the now-famous Psi Nippon stronghold Makaro-shima, are inhabited strictly by Nihonjin, having been built during the final years of the Quarantine. Most of these installations (such as the "bedrock-communities" that service Yokohama) are now modular residential colonies or have converted their economies to the production of tertiary goods or to service industries after exhausting their local mineral resources.

Australia and the various powers of Asia were quick to petition the *zaibatsu* for the rights to build their own undersea installations, resulting in the now-familiar grid of mining, trade and research facilities that ring the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The most famous of these facilities are probably FangTown, FangTech's corporate headquarters in the Indian Sea off Perth, and Atlantis Deep in the Red Sea, where pure ferrous gels are pumped directly into waiting UAN/Nihonjin tankers. A third, more recent wave of undersea expansion brought the deep-city environments to the Caribbean, where Venezuelan petroleum installations and the multinational Afro-Caribbean/Brazilian "Pearl City" are justly famous as tourist attractions and architectural achievements.

Defense of the Undersea Realms

The deep colonies have clamored recently for even stronger safety measures and increased psion patrols. The reason for this concern comes

from an obvious and unwelcome source: Aberrants — ones adapted to marine existence. Although there appears to be no organization to the Aberrant raids, at least one Aberrant has an "under-sea" agenda. The gigantic being who calls himself Poseidon is responsible for five of the last 12 deep-colony attacks recorded in the past six years, including the well-publicized destruction of Castor Deep in the Mediterranean. Psion teams patrol constantly for this beast of the deep, but have yet to come close to catching him.

Earth suffers infrequent Aberrant attacks compared to space settlements, but isolated Oceania arcologies are in a situation similar to that of extraterrestrial colonies. Despite the fact that the undersea cities are on Earth, being deep beneath the ocean surface limits the amount of assistance that governments and psi orders can lend. Deep colonies must rely on their own defensive capabilities to protect themselves against attacks. Many Technonesian undersea arcologies enact aggressive recruitment programs for independent psions. Considering Nippon's reservations against psions and biotech, its deep colonies' willingness to hire psion teams for defense creates tensions between surface and sea authorities.

Aside from hiring psion protectors, deep colonies maintain their own defense measures. Colonies designed in the past five years are built around a cylindrical, compressed carbon core. This core contains its own power plant for defense and its own emergency life support, and the core connects directly to the

facility's defense and communications computer nodes. According to Nihonjin engineers, in the event of a full-scale Aberrant attack, the central core also serves as an evacuation capsule, jettisoning ballast and carrying the station population to the surface.

Thus far, psion and human patrols have withstood disorganized Aberrant attacks. The "core defense" hasn't been put to the test, and colonists hope it never will; jettisoning the central core would destroy a station — and people's homes.

Oceania Society

Although the new generation of tsunanjin has come from all over human space, the majority of these people originated in cultures that are already ecologically oriented. The hybrid society of the ocean cities includes representatives from the carefully engineered environments of the Malind "arcologies": Nihonjin refugees carrying that nation's regrettably endangered rural tradition, Amazonian pragmatists, and Bharatu moralists. Many members of the European and Nordamerican ecological movements retreated to Oceania during the Urban Schism; those who stayed behind (particularly in the FSA) dream of emigrating themselves someday.

Two elements in island society embody tsunanjin identity. The first is composed of former Melanesians. Papuans, Fijians and Solomon Islanders were among the first contractual inhabitants of the corporate ocean facilities. Melanesian culture also gained unprecedented global in-

fluence with the Eastern Hemisphere's ascendance as the primary socioeconomic power. Furthermore, since only the largest of the artificial islands were stable enough to support orbital launch facilities, Nippon was forced to build its regional commercial and transport hubs on natural islands in the Pacific. Samoans and Fijians now reinvest the lease money made on their lands and co-bankroll the expansion of Technonesian development into the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

If the tsunanjin know what it means to live in a self-sufficient, self-contained environment, surrounded by the vast ocean, it is because the Melanesians have experienced it for a centuries and have shared their experience. Nothing is ever wasted on the artificial islands; with their tightly regulated ecologies (the undersea installations recycle even the air), the floating cities are more like orbital colonies than true islands. The cities are simply more convenient to Earthly commerce and cosmopolitan culture than are geographical islands. Everything is a potential resource for use or for sale on a man-made island or in an undersea city.

The second unique cultural force among tsunanjin is dolphins. As yet neither group — tsunanjin nor dolphin — will discuss the relationship between the two in any detail. The possibility of cetacean — and, incredibly, cephalopod — sentience has scientists and theologians alike rushing to Oceania. Noeticists are heavily involved in this research, telepathy having been key to encountering



Music of the Sea

— Warren Shaw, *Retrospective* © 2113 OBC

Once again in their short time with us, the Qin have casually shaken scientific views about the nature of the universe and of humanity's place in it. While touring the installations of noetic art in the Technonesian undersea city of Makaroshima, the Qin delegation was "delighted" to make contact with native Earth sentients previously unknown to them. Makaroshiman telepaths were embarrassed to admit that these "intelligences" (described by the Qin ambassador as "elegantly manifold") were unknown to humanity as well.

Until the appearance of Qin in the undersea habitat, human noetic research had inconclusive proof of the degree of intelligence that dolphins and whales possess. The Qin assured the assemblage that humans' aquatic relatives are impressively intelligent, with thought patterns as complex as those of humans themselves, but nearly incomprehensible. Even more surprising, the Qin conveyed their belief that octopi possess similar intelligence. The noetic community is loathe to accept such a claim, although higher cephalopods have long been known to create and use tools. Favor rests, not surprisingly, with the more sociable (and presentable) cetacean species.

Initial telepathic probes reveal that the minds of some aquatic animals seem intensely introspective, making it difficult to gauge their nature accurately. Dolphins, whales and octopi are therefore more fascinating now than ever before, although it may still be decades before we learn the true extent of their intelligence.

Why the Qin's low level of telepathic capability could trigger communication with undersea species, while Ministry endeavors have failed, baffles noeticists. They theorize that the aliens' basic telepathic abilities, while much less than full psion levels, facilitate telepathic communication greatly. Noeticists will be hard at work for some time researching the full repercussions of this event.

what is currently referred to as "cetacean proto-sentience." A number of research expeditions, sponsored by China, Zurich-Geneva, Brazil and the UAN, include psions as staff and/or as defenders against undersea threats. These groups venture out for weeks at a time to study and interact

with pods of dolphins and whales, as well as with octopi and squids.

It is premature to delve deeply into the ramifications of cetacean and cephalopod sentience. Still, the possibilities may enable humanity to explore the history and environment of Earth in ways that were never possible before.



RELIGIONS OF THE 22ND CENTURY

Religious cults and philosophical cabals enjoy a resurgence in the psionic era. Human society is overwhelmed by the emotional enthusiasm of religion — or perhaps more accurately, by the possibilities of future religions. The miracles and monsters of humanity's myths are alive and living among us: flying people, horrible demons, visionary saints, clockwork creations, incomprehensible alien spirits. Children born today inherit a universe where biotech and psi allow the fulfillment of the simplest desires, where almost any dream can be realized.

Of course, all of this assumes that humanity survives.

Rather than look at the religious forces now shaping the world as revived mythic fragments, it is perhaps more useful to focus on how — and if — these forces might help humanity create its own heaven or form its own hell.

ESOTERIC SECTS

New faiths have emerged in the 22nd century and focus on the unique features of the modern universe. Many such religions represent attempts to combine the oldest human beliefs with the newest technologies and social trends — noetics, alien contact, biotech theory and Aberrants.

While a number of new religious groups (Chitra Bhanu and Xigaze, among others) have been linked to terrorist activity or destructive cult behavior, it should be noted that this is by no means the case for all emerging faiths. Indeed, many of these groups are quite harmless.

ABERRANT CULTS

During the atrocities of the last century, thousands if not millions were seduced into worshipping Aberrants in order to avoid their wrath. Some worshipped alone, becoming part of a wave of ritual “wannabe” killers. Others worshipped together, forming so-called “Aberrant cults.”

These tragic sects, many consciously encouraged and engineered by the Aberrants (and later, by cynical elements within the media), operated on a simple principle: If rational civilization had failed, comfort could be found by devoting loyalties to the new dominant culture, Aberrants. The crimes, perversities and cruelties committed

THE 2084 VATICAN REFORMS

— Mother Rose Olsen,
The Long Dormition
© 2102 Sirius Press

Taken together, the 2084 series of papal encyclicals is one of the most important religious documents of modern Christianity. First and most importantly, the 2084 Reforms brought the Church in line with the spiritual needs and the material culture of the Crash. The Catholicism (and threatened schisms) that emerged from the debates was far more in tune with the world's day-to-day problems. The remaining clergy were encouraged (even expected) to become social and political leaders in their communities.

This new attitude of engagement in the secular world extended even to the Vatican. From 2084 onward, the papacy dedicated itself to using its enormous diplomatic apparatus to promote a specific political agenda of human rights and ethical conduct. After a half-century of atrocities and squalor, it was felt that surviving secular institutions should have a strong moral and guiding voice, and the Vatican (not without misgivings) became that voice.

By developing this new secular social consciousness, the Church took a step that many believe was centuries overdue. In 2084, the sexual equality of the soul was finally recognized and women were granted the right to become ordained clergy.



RELIGIONS OF THE 22ND CENTURY

by “wannabes” and organized cults are a matter of public record — or at least those records restored in the aftermath of the Pulse. In some cases (Doug Treadwell and his “Dolly,” the “Wailing-Wall cult”), the human followers of the Aberrants equaled their idols in sheer barbarism.

The Trinity is aware of several vestigial remnants of these cults that survive in the 22nd century. Many have shifted their foci from slavish service to Aberrants as a whole to seeking out and nurturing returned Aberrants, perhaps in hopes of replacing their lost demon-gods. Most cultists continue to imitate their role models, as if in the hope that by impersonating the demons, the demons will come again.

The Divisians

The best organized (and funded?) of the remaining Aberrant cults, the Divisians appear to have evolved out of the fan club for Divis Mal. The Divisians were involved in community service and recreational roleplaying as early as the 2030s, but the inevitable descent of their idol into alienation and insanity soon altered the group’s tone substantially. Urban legend holds that the Divisians never disbanded after 2061, and are still out there promoting the “future” that “belongs” to Divis Mal.

CHITRA BHANU

Originally the quantakinetic psi order established by S.K. Bhurano (founder of the Jinana Physics Interpretation of contemporary noetics), Chitra Bhanu is now thought to be extinct, wiped out in the unfortunate siege of 2109. However, the scarcity of texts on the order that remain after its purge makes it difficult to determine the group’s true tenets. Was Chitra Bhanu actually a sophisticated Aberrant cult, as the remaining orders claim? Triton Division continues to delve into the mysteries surrounding this organization.

DOYO

One of the most popular of the new religions of the Caribbean and of the cities of

• TRITON ARCHIVE •

REFLECTIONS OF AN ORDINARY MAN

— From the Collected Writings of Otha Herzog

As we walk through the wreckage of the Aberrant Era, the belief that spirituality and progress were once considered contradictory forces seems strange to us now. For our grandparents, the future of the human race was a fragile thing, endangered by the psychological drives that struggled against progress and that guided us instead back into the dim primitivism of the past. In order to protect the future, women and men of conscience felt obliged to stand guard against any incursions by the primitive, the traditional, the anti-intellectual or the mystic. These “menaces” were perceived to be prevalent in religious life, which was viewed as being contradictory to meaningful betterment of the human condition.

The Aberrant Era brought an end to all that nonsense.

the Niger coast, Doyo is apparently a fusion of African belief/ritual systems and worship of a “progenitor race” that is considered to have bestowed the proxies with their powers. Despite the fact that there is no evidence of such beings, the Doyo belief enjoys a small but growing popularity.

According to Doyo, distinct identities and personalities are ascribed to extraordinary entities that are at work in the universe, but these identities seem to be applied with little or no apparent pattern. For example, the entity that is supposed to have appeared to Alex Cassel is called “Doshang” by Doyo practitioners, who invoke it for virility and corporate success. Bizarrely, “Dambado,” the entity attributed to Proxy Atwan of the missing teleporters, is considered a figure of apocalyptic dread, and is rarely, if ever, invoked.



RELIGIONS OF THE 22ND CENTURY

The number of these “divinities” appears to vary widely from community to community — in some places, a dozen or more are revered, but individual practitioners generally focus on two or three. The Caribbean branch of this religion is especially interesting; emphasis is not on the propitiation of these “all-powerful beings,” but on the eventual evolution of human beings into the same state of transcendent power. A number of known psychomorphs, or “proto-psions,” appear to belong to this “Pearl City Doyo.”

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FACE OF THE MAKER
(FACE CULTISTS)

In the 20th century, some of those individuals who studied the Mars images returned by the Viking missions claimed to have seen evidence of a human, or at least humanoid, face carved on the Martian surface. Later, observers found — or imagined — similar monuments on Europa and Tethys. When manned ships were finally sent to survey these phenomena, nothing was found that could not be explained by normal pro-

cesses of planet-shaping or the limits of photographic resolution. And yet, “believers” were not dissuaded.

The Fellowship of the Face of the Maker emerged in the decade leading up to the Chinese Ultimatum. The group began as an alliance of pseudo-science scholars with mystical inclinations. The founders of the Fellowship believe that there are indeed faces on every notable body in the solar system — but that most images were destroyed by Aberrants to keep mankind in spiritual darkness. The Fellowship’s sacred duty is to carve new faces on every planet and moon, demonstrating to the secret forces that created humanity that we are ready for the next step in enlightenment.

The discovery of the Qin caused a boom in the society’s membership. “Here are benevolent aliens in the flesh — or whatever it is they have —” the Face Cultists claimed. The extrasolar colonies likewise provided new territories for the Fellowship to explore, expanding the search for evidence of higher beings.



Small bands of Fellows are found anywhere they can travel to by spaceship, and anywhere they can carve for the greater glory of the race. Their works range from life-size visages to ones that span kilometers. Detail likewise ranges from crude blocky outlines to hyper-real clarity. These cultists are friendly to all humans and untainted aliens, believing that humanity's creators mingle among us even now, and could regard universal hospitality as a sign of spiritual maturity. Fellows are unremittingly hostile to Aberrants and anything else that hints of taint.

Rumor has it that some Fellows and followers of the Doyo faith have begun to compare philosophical perspectives. There seems to be some interest in reconciling the disparate ideas that each group has about some sort of "progenitor" race.

KOSTBAARISM

Something of a cross between a "joke religion" and a cult of media personality, Kostbaarism is equal parts surrealism and social commentary. It appears to exist largely to guarantee the tax-exempt status of the clothing designer Kostbaar, and to preach the spiritual importance of fashion. Kostbaar himself doesn't promote this cultish behavior in any overt way, but his pub-

TEMPLE JUDAISM

— Warren Shaw, Retrospective

© 2120 OBC

The state religion of Israel-Judah and the only surviving faith now practiced in Jerusalem, Temple Judaism is the expression of centuries of Jewish history. Since the Romans' final destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago, the dilemma that Jews faced was how to worship correctly in a world where the only truly sacred place no longer existed. Emphasis was therefore placed on the study of the Talmud and on correct reading rather than on correct action. As the centuries past, political and religious tensions continually prevented the Jewish people from rebuilding the Temple and restoring the priestly rite to a central role.

When the Aberrants destroyed Jerusalem in 2052, Israel was perhaps the best prepared for the disaster of Middle Eastern nations, and was the first to truly recover. After securing its borders by annexing territories formerly belonging to the neighboring states of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Jordan, the "reconsecrated" nation turned to rebuilding the Temple. When the holy site was completed in 2100, all inhabitants of the region (including the Bahai, based on Mount Carmel) were given the choice of converting to Judaism or evacuating the country. The borders of Israel-Judah were then sealed, presumably to keep the Temple holy.

lic appearances and the marketing arm of his fashion empire serve to drop not-so-subtle en-

MORNING WESTERLY EXUBERANCE (MWE)

The so-called "Dolphin Religion," MWE has no real connection to any actual cetacean belief or ritual system. Instead, the Exuberance is the creation of Flassy Fallanger, a popular (and possibly fictitious) science-fiction writer. While the version of MWE that's popular in Australia and Oceania tends to be simplistic and utopian (it's largely concerned with "diving into the exuberance" and justifying one's own narcissism), the vision outlined in Fallanger's books is an extraordinarily complex examination of the nature of our reality and the implicate order behind it.

Rumors that "Flassy Fallanger" is merely an alias for Otha Herzog have yet to be proved. Meanwhile, cetaceans themselves have been reticent to discuss their religious beliefs (if any), but seem to find Oceanic MWE adherents infinitely amusing.

ORGONE CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

The Trinity believes this group is a wholly artificial creation of the FSA corporate media, although this suspicion has yet to be





RELIGIONS OF THE 22ND CENTURY

confirmed. The OCCS might even be the work of the CSA to discredit Orgotek and Alex Cassel by association. Cassel's Psi Interpretation was based on obscure 20th-century psychological theories about "orgone." The OCCS takes every opportunity to make those theories seem ridiculous. By promoting "total sex, right now" and the idea that the Messiah was reincarnated as a scientist in Maine, the Orgone Church gleefully does untold public-relations damage to Orgotek — at least for as long as the media continues to associate the two organizations with one another.

ORGOTEK TRAINING HOLO (2111)

— Narrated by Alex Cassel

Orgone. Electricity. The subtle fire. It's more than just electrical impulses or lightning bolts. It's what you use to send commands from your brain to your body. It's how we run engines. It's how we send words and pictures through radio waves and telephone signals. It's the energy fluid that makes things move. It's the desire of the universe itself to live and multiply.

That's what we deal in here at Orgotek: the blue light that everything solid melts into; the struggle for pleasure.



QINDO

Qindo, born in the slums of the Hong Kong and Okinawa orbital facilities, is a sometimes painfully sincere attempt to imitate the Qin. In cheap, mass-produced Qindo literature, the Qin are portrayed as angels come to enlighten humanity and protect the Earth from the coming Apocalypse. The Qindojin believe that for humans to survive, they must become more like the beautiful Qin — an attitude accurately (but somewhat cruelly) described in the media as "an adolescent crush on someone a few years older." Yet Qindo has spread to the underclasses of most nations and now supports even a small orbital community.

WITNESSES OF HAGIA
TAMRIKA K.

The most extensive of the so-called "cults of the new saints," the Witnesses of Tamrika K. are common throughout Europe and Russia. Tamrika K. is a young girl, purportedly a powerful psychomorph (a person demonstrating psionlike abilities). Her adherents claim she rivals psions in power, but achieved this state without undergoing the Prometheus Effect. As early as 2116, she supposedly displayed the signs of saintliness — levitation, divination and other "miracles."

These capabilities can certainly be explained as noetic phenomena, but such attribution becomes problematic when the powers that Tamrika displays belong to multiple aptitudes. Noetic science has yet to prove that humans can fully manifest more than one aptitude. As such, most noeticists and psions are inclined to disregard the stories of Tamrika K. as wishful thinking.

The Witnesses of Tamrika K. have all taken oaths to never reveal what their living saint requests of them, or what secrets are revealed at jubilant Witness Meetings. Telepathic probes of Witnesses do not reveal Tamrika K.'s location or even her appearance, reinforcing the belief that the cult is based on fabrication — or powers that exceed even those of psions.

XIGAZE BUDDHISM

The motivator of secessionist tendencies in the Chinese Xizang ("Tibetan") region, Xigaze is also the foundation for a new school of Buddhism. Lamaist in orientation, the Xigaze "Blue Monks" are opposed to the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, claiming that irregularities in his most recent coronation invalidate his right to lead Xizang. What, exactly, these irregularities were is the subject of much debate among Buddhists of all stripes, creating an undercurrent of discord aside from



that stirred up by the Blue Monks themselves.

Xigaze is a proscribed sect throughout Asia because of its apparent connection to a wide range of terrorist and seditious activity (ranging from smuggling rogue psions away from the Ministry to firebombing the Xizang orbital platform).

World opinion on the Blue Monks is divided, especially among thriving European and Australian Buddhist communities. Some consider the Blue Monks' aggressive interpretation of the Eightfold Path (a way of life that, if followed, should lead the adherent to

nirvana) to be a necessary step in finding salvation in the tumult of modern times. Others believe Xigaze to be the religion of zealots, that is uses faith as an excuse to promote political agendas.

Followers of Xigaze have clashed with more traditional Buddhists at a number of rallies and *ad hoc* debates in cities such as Bangkok and Beijing. The Buddhists' resistance to engaging in violence is perhaps the only reason why events haven't escalated into a religious *jihad* at this point. The Blue Monks don't restrict themselves similarly, as Xigaze's ties to terrorism attest.





PSI ORDER RANKING OFFICIALS

Like any other group in the public eye, psions have their share of notable figures. While a number of Gifted are considered popular-culture icons, this report is concerned with those people who hold positions of note within

the psi orders. The individuals detailed here are more than just pretty faces; they are figures of authority within the psion community. Ironically, not all of the individuals described here are psions.



Proxy Matthieu Zweidler's management team is a small but trusted group. Zweidler himself is involved almost exclusively in no-etic research, although he has recently taken personal interest in studying the taint. He trusts his staff completely, leaving many of the responsibilities of running the order and its numerous clinics to his underlings.

Pierce Monahan,
Administrative Director

Monahan is one of Zweidler's old college friends, and he handles the order's day-to-day affairs and dealings with the Trinity. Although a neutral, Monahan was instrumental to helping the Æsculapian Order achieve its status as a premiere human-aid foundation. Monahan's legal expertise was essential to designing UN-approved guidelines that established rexs as licensed medical technicians throughout settled space.

Dr. Gemma Fiosi,
Clinic Network Director

One of the first vitakinetics, Fiosi shared administrative duties with Monahan in the order's early days. It's rumored that they shared

ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER

more than that, although there's just as much speculation that Fiosi prefers the company of the fairer sex. Whatever her romantic inclinations, Fiosi has handled clinic affairs and staffing issues with unparalleled skill since establishing the first satellite clinic in Minneapolis. Every new care facility must receive Fiosi's approval before being opened; she also makes new psion staffing decisions and does regular spot-checks to ensure that docs are up to snuff.

Dr. Roland Stoltzfus,
Organ Bank Director

Stoltzfus transferred a few years ago from Special Projects when the vita-kinetics' organ bank became large enough to warrant its own division. The psion coordinates efforts to provide and/or manufacture organs needed throughout settled space. The Montessor Clinic houses the main biotech organ vats, but Stoltzfus also monitors ancillary organ centers in the Addis Ababa, Haiti, Minnesota and Olympus clinics.

Delemont,
Special Projects Director

Delemont is a little-known figure, even in vitakinetic circles. The Trinity's information on him



Field Docs and Admins

— Cori Heisler, *The Painful Truth*
© 2117 MMI

A rex whom you find in the field is a far cry from the detail-oriented scientist who walks Basel's halls. A great many docs want to get down and dirty with medicine, believing (perhaps correctly) that the places where their talents are most needed are the ones that receive the least publicity. There is a range of rebels, hotheads and graduates of Port-au-Prince who volunteer to take assignments at the wildest and farthest-flung clinics. There is also a fair number of psions who volunteer for emergency-team duty; they are willing to go anywhere on a moment's notice to deal with any crisis.

That isn't to disparage the work being done by the more traditional Æsculapians, many of whom consider the laboratory as wild a frontier as any colony. However, such psions (not to mention ones who have been absorbed permanently into administrative tasks) are rarely found in the field. They're quick to point out that they have the big picture to worry about.



is scarce, and reveals little more than that he is not a psion, and that he assumed his directorship six years ago, after arriving in Basel from an undisclosed part of Eastern Europe. Special Projects is generally considered the “catch-all” department of the Æsculapian organization; it handles those affairs that don’t fall automatically into the purviews of other divisions.

Dr. Karen Dietrich, Research Director

Dietrich coordinates the order’s scientific pursuits, from developing new drugs to investigating new diseases. The research department also puts a significant amount of effort into studying Aberrant Syndrome and other manifestations of the taint. Such studies give rise to rumors of extreme practices and to fears of a repeat of the Chitra Bhanu debacle, but Dietrich assures the public that the Æsculapians’ research is entirely

ethical and is concerned purely with eradicating the taint.

Dr. Rona Moshay, Port-au-Prince Clinic Administrator

The most powerful vitakinetic outside Basel, Moshay is a thorn in Zweidler’s side. She is a vigorous proponent of alternative healing techniques, a stand that puts her at odds with Zweidler’s rigidly scientific views. Moshay established the Haitian clinic on her own, and receives only minimal support from Basel. Despite its status as the order’s black sheep, the clinic has evolved into an organization rivaling Montessor. Increasing numbers of docs use a blend of techniques from both Zweidler’s official regimen and Moshay’s eclectic training. It is only a matter of time before Zweidler and Moshay’s disparate philosophies come into direct conflict throughout the Æsculapian Order.



ISRA ORDER

Although it lacks the regimented structure of the other orders, ISRA has its share of administrative individuals. Herzog intervenes rarely in clairsentient activities, most often sending taped messages to his brethren, or operating through his Mashriqi. Indeed, many ISRAns consider Herzog to be the order’s heart, the Mashriqi to be its voice, and individual clears to be its hands.

Princess Lila Faoud

An old but still glamorous woman, Princess Lila spends much of her time handling relations between ISRA and the human political and economic elite. Hailing from the remains of Saudi Arabia, Faoud was one of Herzog’s first converts, both to clairsentience and Baha’ism.

Abbas Kastami

A mysterious figure with links to Muslim extremists, Kastami handles the training of clairsentient investigators. He focuses on bringing criminals and Aberrants to justice, but cares little for how his students accomplish these goals. Many of his former students join

police or military groups, but a significant number of clears remain under Kastami’s direction, pursuing renegades of established law-enforcement groups.

William Kaige Miller

Miller is related to the descendants of Selene Olympia Miller, Luna’s “first family.” His heritage, combined with his status as one of the first psions, made him a media icon in ISRA’s early days. Miller has gone to great lengths to disassociate himself from his star status, focusing his intellectual and psionic talents on designing structures for ISRAn use, such as the *Huruf al-Hayy* orbital station and the School’s Lunar headquarters.

Johan Rydell

Rydell is Herzog’s closest boyhood friend. Although a neutral, Rydell has proven instrumental to the ISRA Order. He provides not only financial assistance, but also gives the Mashriqi his “un-Gifted perspective” on various issues. It seems that Rydell acts as an “anchor” for Herzog as well, drawing the proxy back from the clairsentient visions he is known to have for days on end.



Philip Vaughn Williams

Williams assists Herzog in cataloging and analyzing clairsentient visions. The two are apparently able to coordinate their psionic powers to study recent, present and even future events from different points of view. They hope that such pursuits will lead to a final victory against the Aberrants.



THE LEGIONS

Proxy Larssen learned in the Aberrant War that multiple organizations working independently of each other are easy to divide and conquer. The General respects the defensive measures that Earth's governments enact, but considers her Legions to be the force that defends humanity — not only against Aberrants and hostile aliens, but against itself. The commanders who head up the Legions are Larssen's primary tools in this campaign, and their loyalty to the General is well-documented.

Field Marshall Marilyn Jabe, First Legion Commander

The public thinks Legionnaires are a boisterous lot, with boundless energy and in-your-face charm. As a soldier of the old school, Jabe stands in dramatic contrast to that image. Stern, gray-haired and silently competent, she depends on her officers to maintain their troops' morale, preferring to devote herself to planning the First's future. While Larssen and Jabe have professed a great deal of professional respect for one another, the two seem to have little personal interaction.

Brigadier General Garrett "Gar" Banion, Second Legion Commander

An enormous, cheerfully belligerent man with a complexion almost the color of his full red beard and mustache, Banion is an unmistakable sight. His troops regard him as something of a combined uncle and patron saint. Banion's exploits are nearly legendary, and he still ventures into the field now and again. Much like his proxy, Banion is not one to lead from the back — a brand of cowardice he quite publicly ascribes to Field Marshall Jabe. The two are

Varuni Venkatesan

A clairsentient of respectable ability, "V.V.," as she refers to herself, spends most of her time handling publicity for ISRA and coordinating affairs with the order and the Æon Trinity. She is an aggressive clear, promoting ISRA and its psions in the public eye with remarkable flair and ingenuity.

rivals at best, and their clashes have certainly colored relations between their respective Legions. Banion's self-professed chauvinism is no help at all, and makes Solveig Larssen's quiet support of him all the more perplexing.

Colonel Agrah Shahim, Fourth Legion Commander

Shahim is the newest of the Legion commanders, his predecessor having passed away in an Æsculapian clinic after an Aberrant raid on Zurich-Geneva three years ago. Shahim is a dangerous man, though polite to a fault. Those who have spoken with him personally insist that his manners are but a thin barrier between his rage and the world. The other commanders watch Shahim carefully, and Larssen has been notably silent regarding the colonel, though his record has been exemplary so far. Shahim displays the fanaticism unique to those who come from the desolate former United Arab Emirates, which were destroyed decades ago by Aberrants and have yet to recover.

Commandant Iago Salera, Fifth Legion Commander

Salera is a charming Argentinean man with shocking-blue eyes and a girth that belies his competence. He is known to be urbane, cultured and, as dark rumors have it, utterly without remorse. Salera has held his post for years with distinction; allegations that he's involved intimately with the upper echelons of the Norça remain unsubstantiated.

Gianetta Mossalo, Sixth Legion Commander

Mossalo is a diminutive, young Italian woman; an unlikely leader of a military group. Her latency test was one of the highest ever re-



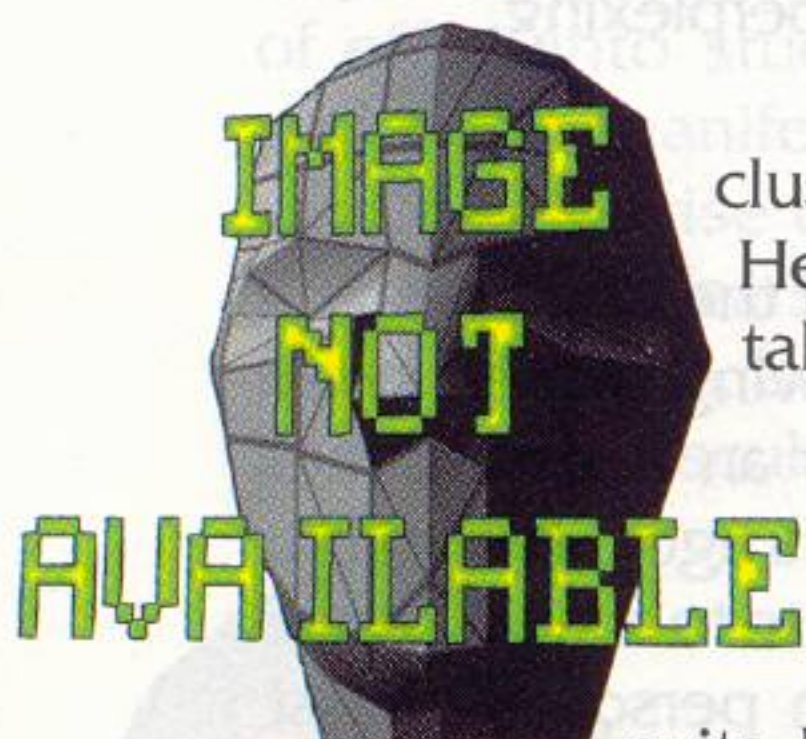
corded for a psion of any order. She is relatively new to the military. Mossalo shows a tremendous natural psychokinetic talent, and seems to pick up military tactics with ease. General Larssen herself assigned Mossalo to the European theater, to the disgruntlement of a number of higher-ranking Legionnaires. Mossalo claims no rank, though the Sixth follows her with great loyalty.

Shogun Toshiro, Seventh Legion Commander

In the seven years since Larssen established this, the newest Legion, Toshiro has

transformed a loose collection of hot-headed-fighter-jocks into a crack zero-g assault squadron. Yet he encourages his Legionnaires' independence where it doesn't conflict with regimented training or respect for authority. Those Legionnaires who are not involved in deep-space maneuvers still benefit from the shogun's training, learning his close-combat techniques. Phoenix Squadron (or "Blazing Sun of Glory," as Toshiro has been known to call it) prefers hand-to-hand combat to use of projectile weapons because, the psions say, a poorly aimed shot can breach a bulkhead.

THE MINISTRY



Despite indulging in a seclusion that rivals that of Otha Herzog, Proxy Bue keeps close tabs on her subordinates. Her scrutiny seems to derive less from a desire for control than from an active interest in her order's pursuits. Interestingly, Bue's predilection for privacy is also demonstrated by her senior subordinates. The heads of the Ministry's main divisions go by aliases in public circles to create anonymity — in fact, it's suspected that these individuals' names and elements of their backgrounds are fabricated. At high levels, true Ministry administration is a matter of secret identities, double-blind operations and unsigned memos.

John Bue Kar-Wai, a.k.a. "Kestrel," Office of Semiotics Senior Director

Bue Kar-Wai is billed as Proxy Bue's twin brother. The Trinity has yet to find conclusive proof of Kestrel's existence, let alone any genetic links to Bue. Aeon agents have never seen Bue Kar-Wai in person, although Triton has compiled extensive holotransmission files that have supposedly been sent by him. Still, a handful of people claim to have met the man in person. The Trinity's only hard facts on Kestrel are that he appeared shortly after Bue Li established the Ministry of Psionic Affairs, that he runs the OS in a fairly hands-off manner, and that he has countered Proxy Bue's

stands on two issues regarding Ministry involvement — investigating the Upeo disappearance (Kestrel was against investigation) and extracting survivors of the Aberrant attack on Baghdad in 2118 (Kestrel was for it).

D.J. Han, a.k.a. "Sparrow," Officer of Hermeneutics, OS

Much as with Bue Kar-Wai, the Aeon Trinity has been unable to learn significant details about Han. In fact, it's unclear whether Han is male or female (for ease of reference, Han is referred to as "he" in all official Trinity reports). Han reportedly pioneered the Ministry's "telepathic switchboard" techniques, and assists in Office of Semiotics special projects. While Triton Division has found references to a "D.J. Han" in documentation over the past 20 years, the individual remains a complete enigma. Some Trinity members suspect that Han and Bue Kar-Wai are actually the same person.

Andrei Tarkovsky, a.k.a. "Thrush," Shanghai Institute Director

Tarkovsky was the former head of the Russian Bureau of Parapsychology, and was one of Bue's first converts. Debatably the oldest psion alive, Tarkovsky has learned a number of tricks over the years — psionic, political and psychological — that he's not above resorting to to get a job done. He seems to have a deep love for his work and for those whom he works with, although he's inclined to play power games to advance the order's (or his own) agenda. Ultimately, Tarkovsky is a crafty bas-



tard. Aside from handling the Psi Institute's day-to-day affairs, he takes an active hand in the order's hardtech-telepathy research, gene-surgery studies and other noetic endeavors.

Yekaterin Khvistiashvili, a.k.a. "Firebird,"
Office of Psionic Security Assistant Bureau Chief

Tarkovsky apparently recruited Khvistiashvili from Caucastan, where she worked for the government in an undisclosed capacity. (Proteus Division investigations suggest Khvistiashvili's main duties involved silencing the Caucastanian government's opposition.) Firebird's beauty rivals that of Bue Li herself, and the two are known to mix like oil and water. They seem to be strong-willed women with markedly different outlooks — the proxy a sociable, political animal; Khvistiashvili an introverted loner. Despite almost constant disagreements with her proxy, Khvistiashvili has proven to be a loyal Ministry member.

J.L.G., a.k.a. "Kingfisher,"
Office of Psionic Security Senior Director

Frustratingly, this individual is even more mysterious than are Bue Kar-Wai and Han.

TRITON ARCHIVE

Subject: Bue search
From: Linda Graves, Manila, PH
To: Eternal Triangle Imports, Olympus
Encryption: SPE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 09:41:32 10.4.2107

The book you inquired about does not show up on our records. No title "Rebecca Bue" or "Bue Li" written in Philippines since 2040 or earlier. Beijing house also shows no publication history. Who is she really?

The Trinity lacks even a complete name for this person, and has never acquired any images of him or her. Triton Division's official report is that J.L.G. is actually a highly advanced bio-organic SI — perhaps even the first truly artificial intelligence. All other data searches performed on J.L.G. to date have resulted in contradictory information at best.

THE NORÇA



Information had on the Norça is less detailed than that known about any other order. There are two main reasons for this, and neither is very surprising: Proxy del Fuego and his psions keep a very low profile, and it's difficult in the extreme to gain accurate information on people who can literally become anyone.

Geneva Jerde

It's believed that Jerde coordinates Norça involvement in the Mexican border resistance against the Federated States of America. The Trinity is aware that the biokinetics have supported this effort for years, from advising to smuggling arms to the freedom fighters. Proteus Division notes that a mysterious woman fitting Jerde's description has been seen coordinating resistance efforts in various Mexican villages over the past few months. The FSA has recognized an increased threat posed by the Mexicans; the Texmex District shows a dramatic increase in support troops.

Whether the increasing strength of the Mexicans is due to Jerde is unknown.

Victor Trabaj

Trabaj is del Fuego's only lieutenant on which the Trinity has any reliable information. Trabaj handles the Norça's legitimate (and presumably illicit) drug research and manufacture. Trabaj is a flashy, charismatic gentleman. He has come to represent what most people think of when they think of the Norça. Trabaj has a knack for public relations, and appears frequently on media programs, ostensibly promoting the latest medicinal aid that the order has developed, or simply flashing his truly perfect smile. The Ministry might take notes on how such spin-doctoring can present a secretive order as a group of helpful, friendly psions.

Daniel Keos

Despite the fact that Keos is Director of Operations for BioSystems, a Columbian biotech manufacturer, facts on him are scarce. His talent



for manipulating bioware supposedly rivals that of Orgotek's Lehoczký-Elliott, but since most of what BioSystems produces is used exclusively by the Norça, it's hard to gather evidence of this

"talent." Keos apparently took a cue from Trabaj and hired Tangent Technologies to promote BioSystems as a competitive biotech manufacturing firm. Time will tell what the Norça intend to gain from their recent, more public, image.

ORGOTEK



Orgotek is perhaps the most organized of all of the orders regarding its internal affairs. The combined order and corporation is run by the "Round Table," Cassel's board of directors. Each of the directors works with one of Orgotek's main divisions, with the exception of Cassel's wife Ellayne, who chairs the board and oversees the entire corporation in the proxy's absence. Each member of the Round Table went to Williams College with Cassel, and ranges in loyalty from close friendship to fierce devotion.

Ellayne Cassel, Orgotek Senior President, World Enterprises, Inc.

Although not a psion, Ellayne Cassel has proven to be instrumental in Orgotek's success, having handled much of the company's growth and having directed its public-relations efforts through WEI. The oft-professed love of Proxy Cassel's life, Ellayne has an Asian heritage. Like her husband, though, this Cassel considers herself 100% American. Her beauty is easily a match for Cassel's charisma, and her business acumen rivals Cassel's psionic ability. After almost two decades together, the couple still acts — and looks — like newlyweds. Many consider the Cassels to be Earth's "first family," and follow their exploits as they would royalty or media stars.

Jennifer Lehoczký-Elliott, Orgosoft CEO

Lehoczký-Elliott is one of the most innovative minds in electrokinesis. She was key to developing Orgotek's bioware industry, not only through noetic research, but through promoting its usefulness. A pleasant, middle-aged woman, Lehoczký-Elliott almost literally lights up when she discusses anything related to biotechnology. Although she's been handling legal and copyright

work for the past few years, she has been involved directly in the jump-ship development project.

Kevin Labak, Tekne Group Research Director

Like Lehoczký-Elliott, Labak is a few years older than Cassel, having been a teaching assistant prior to his new role as Cassel's director of hardtech research. Despite being a strong latent, Labak resisted undergoing the Prometheus Effect. Cassel apparently encouraged him strongly for years, but finally came to terms with Labak's resolve. The Tekne Group director seems to feel that his neutral viewpoint brings a crucial insight to electrokinetic research. It's difficult to argue with his results; Labak designed the interface that enables bioware to accept hardtech power sources.

Ashley Frost, Lumen CEO

Frost's personality seems better suited to Tekne Group than to Orgotek's photokinetic research arm. She is reserved and studious, and greatly interested in the application of psionics to electromagnetic forces. In fact, Frost's research resulted in the first biotech laser array. Over the past few years, she has extensively studied the Chromatic body recovered from Karroo, and is fiercely determined to learn all she can about the aliens.

Jeff "Jomo" Kenyatta, Operations Director

Although he has no connections to the Jomo Kenyatta African spaceport, Orgotek's operations director acquired the nickname "Jomo" due to the similarities between his name and that of the station. Kenyatta isn't as charismatic or as powerful a psion as Cassel is, but is a significant figure in his own right. He is always on hand to assist his proxy and closest friend, and seems content to let Cassel stand in the limelight. Kenyatta's wife Ida seems to have contracted a strange condition. Details are unclear, but it may be similar to a taint-related disease known only as "D." The Æsculapians have been unable to cure her.

HIDDEN AGENDASTM

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Welcome to the future.

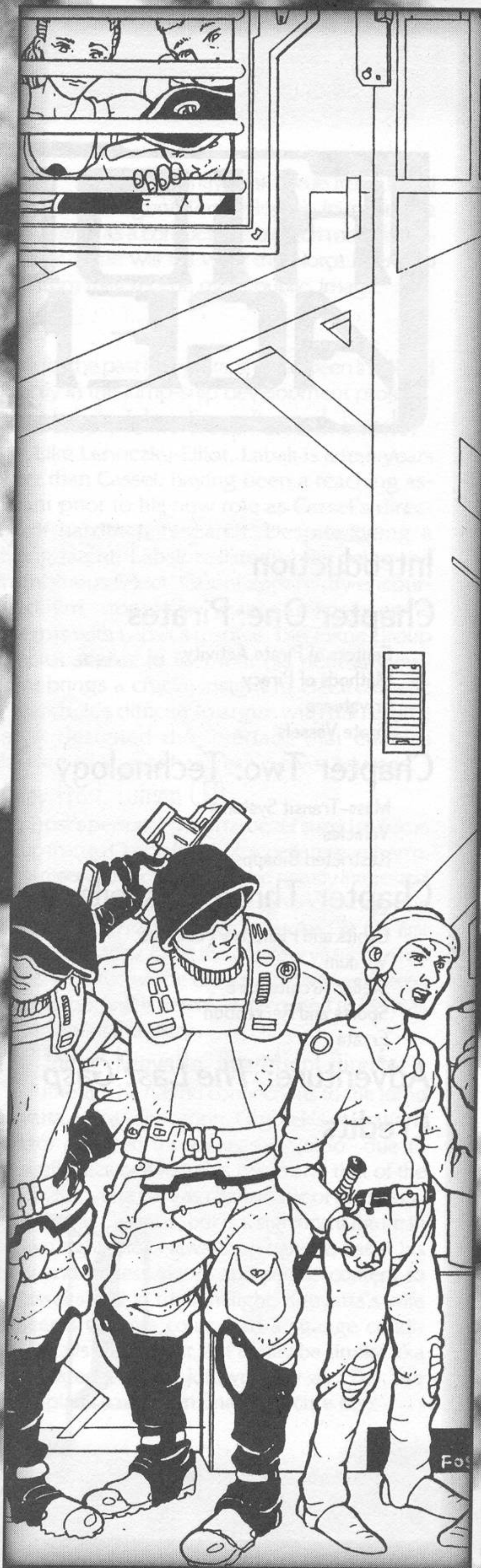
Since you're holding this book, you've more than likely read **Trinity** already. As you've probably noticed, **Trinity** is a big book, filled with all sorts of interesting stuff. Yet it doesn't reveal everything about the 22nd century. That's where **Hidden Agendas**, and other supplements down the road, come in. These sourcebooks and adventure books explore the future's reaches and mysteries.

Hidden Agendas is special in that it doesn't focus on one area specifically. Quite simply, this book is a collection of the material that we couldn't fit in **Trinity** itself. That's not to say this stuff is simply castoff — far from it. **Hidden Agendas** contains plenty of useful tidbits.

Some of this material is for Storyteller eyes only. Everyone should enjoy the expanded setting information, but your group will definitely have more fun playing *The Last Gasp* adventure if only the Storyteller reads it.

As with the rules in **Trinity**, none of this material is gospel. While all of the information in **Hidden Agendas** is sure to add richness and depth to your series, it isn't necessary for you to apply every detail to your game. Players and Storytellers are always welcome to use what works and to disregard the rest.

The whole point is to have fun!



"Rogue swashbucklers of the spaceways! Led by the notorious Hook Hammond, these dashing wayfarers fight a constant battle against the imperialist lackeys of the evil TerraLok Corporation. Their quest for truth and freedom begins today! It's time for Hook Hammond and the Space Pirates!!!"

— Prologue from a popular children's holo
The truth, of course, is somewhat different.

The pirates that roam 22nd-century space are not dashing, have little interest in truth, and do not swash their buckles. They are, almost to an individual, a collection of thieves and thugs whose lives are based on the application of threats and violence.

The Mind of a Pirate

Pirates come from the dregs of the solar system population. Mutineers, ex-corporate wage-slaves and failed miners make up the bulk of their ranks. Like the majority of criminals, pirates are often those who have failed at — or never even attempted — honest labor. Piracy is typically believed by this ilk to be easier and to offer greater rewards than legal pursuits.

There is no single path one follows to become a pirate of the space lanes. Pirates often claim it's less a conscious choice than it is the result of circumstance. After checking over a hundred worthless rocks, an asteroid-miner puts a laser bolt through another miner's life-support suit just to break the monotony. A naval crew bashes its tyrannical captain's head in, and realizes that it has no place to go. Once the line has been crossed, piracy becomes the only option.

Stealing from other vessels requires little more than a fast ship, a large gun and luck. It also demands a heart of stone. "Targeting their engines" works fine in fiction, but in reality it is difficult to incapacitate a ship without killing some of its crew. Those victims who survive become hostages, the perfect defense against retaliation.

Centers of Pirate Activity

Pirate encounters are most common in and near the Asteroid Belt. This area is both easy to hide in and offers a wide variety of relatively helpless targets.

The space around Mercury and Venus is relatively safe, although precious-metal shipments from Mercury Mining Consortium facilities are considered choice targets. Mars is quite well-protected, but ships leaving and arriving are still attacked occasionally by the desperate and the reckless.

Jupiter is second in pirate activity only to the Belt. The Trojan asteroids leading to and trailing from Jupiter are popular for the same reasons as is the Asteroid Belt. Despite the ever-increasing funds that the Norça and the UAN spend on defending their holdings, too many valuable shipments depart from Jupiter's moons to protect them all. Furthermore, Jupiter's thin rings, numerous moons and powerful electromagnetic field provide excellent cover for raiding craft.

Saturn is regarded widely in the pirate community as "poor pickings," and the outermost planets are considered a waste of time. And yet, ships in the outer system are far from any help, and at least one deter-

Pirate Slang

The following terms originated in pirate circles, but have since been adapted into general spacefaring vernacular.

babe	poorly defended, easy
black	bad, disastrous, FUBARed; "This situation's gone totally black."
blind	cover of some sort (asteroid, moon, planet)
bright	rich, valuable, profiable; "She's a bright target."
curtain	concealment
H&H	water (H ₂ O) or prostitutes (hookers); the necessities of life
lamb	hostage
pop, popped	to ruin a plan by talking too much; "Jace got drunk and popped that raid."
near-rock	close to a planet or moon
ola	olaminium
pounce	a long, high-gee burn performed in preparation for an attack
Snug, the	the area of space on the opposite side of Jupiter from <i>Mafaa-3</i>
swag	loot from a raid



mined band of ex-ABI employees has made it their mission to attack any ship in circum-Tethys space.

Some very brave and very well-equipped pirates raid targets in Earth-Luna space. This area is heavily patrolled, making such attacks surprising in the extreme. Considering the repeated success that some of these pirates enjoy, the Aeon Trinity suspects that raiders are government-sponsored privateers, rogue psions or even Aberrants using piracy as a cover.

Methods of Piracy

Pirates use a number of different methods to attack their targets. Despite what one sees on holos, raiders don't lurk in open space hoping for a passing freighter. All successful pirates spend a fair amount of time at established spaceports, observing the flow of ships, and monitoring communication frequencies. These tactics are vital to determining a target's cargo, destination, defensive capabilities and the best place at which to stage a raid.

Few pirates close with their targets with guns blazing. Even a slow freighter can get a decent head start on the fastest pirate vessel, if the target moni-

tors the threat from a few thousand kilometers away. The best raiders use one of three attack methods: ambush, false approach or shadowing.

Ambush

A raider performs an ambush by using an asteroid or other stellar body as a sensor shield, and emerges from behind the cover when the target approaches or passes. Although an ambush offers the element of surprise, it has its share of complications.

Most crews relax in open space; a craft's standard sensor sweeps pick up approaching objects from a significant distance. Since an ambush requires something to hide behind — an asteroid, moon, planet — the attack must occur under conditions where the target is probably alert for trouble. This also means the pirate is probably not too far from a colony or orbital station. Unless the raider strikes quickly and decisively, the target's distress call is bound to bring support in short order.

Since the pirate uses cover to block sensors, the raider's own sensors are likewise hindered from picking up the target. Most pirates stick to the edge of a blind, hoping that their ships ap-

pear as part of the cover's sensor register, while still allowing the raider to monitor the approaching vessel. Observing the target is often accomplished visually, since ships normally detect sensor sweeps. Pirates are also known to establish camera hookups on the opposite sides of their blinds. These remotes transmit visuals back to the pirate vessels. A camera monitors space passively, allowing a raider to stay under full cover until the target reaches the ambush site.

There are two main types of ambushes: mid-transit interception and near-rock attacks.

Mid-Transit Interception

A vessel on the Europa-Mars run, for example, typically makes the journey under 1.5 gees of acceleration, and maintains that velocity for approximately eight days. At mid-flight, which puts the ship well within the Asteroid Belt, the vessel has a velocity of more than 1.75 *million* meters per second. In the early days of mass-space transit, ship captains believed such tremendous speeds were an effective deterrent to interception by pirates. However, a ship traveling at five gees takes only 10 hours to achieve that speed. A healthy human in proper suspen-

sion (and who performs minimal movement) can withstand five gees for a long time. In fact, there are numerous documented instances of gutsy or desperate crews withstanding up to 10 gees for several hours.

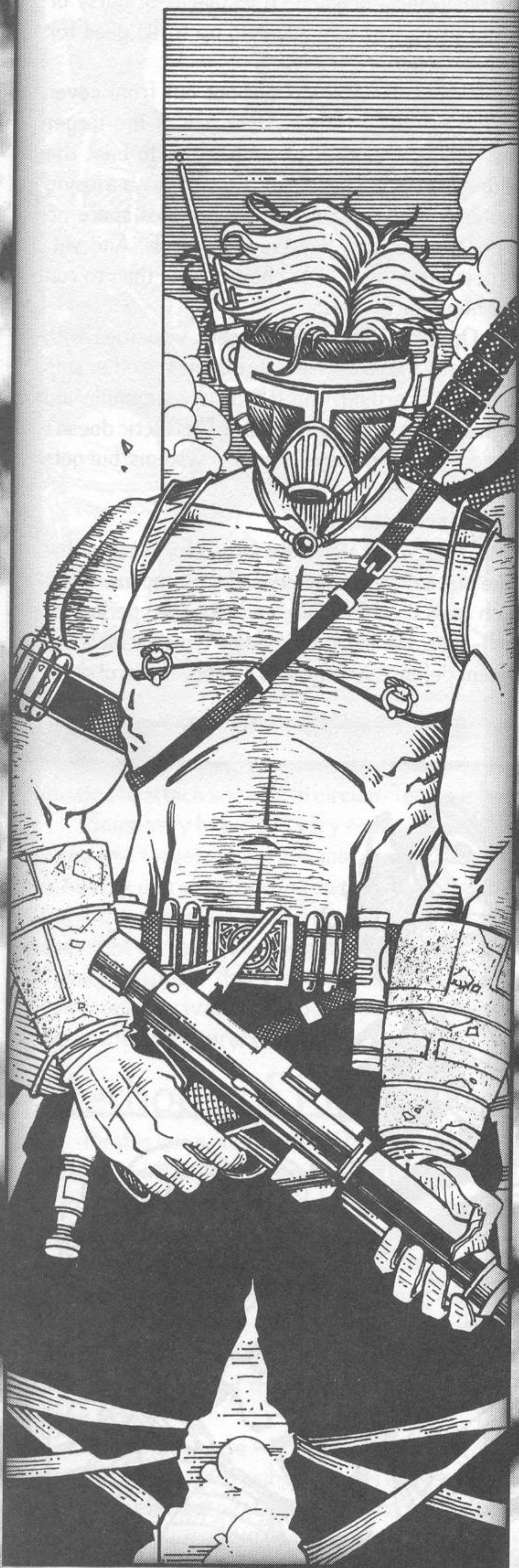
Pirates can therefore shoot out from cover after a speeding target. The crew of the target vessel typically relies on its velocity to beat the raider to safety. The race is almost always a losing contest for the quarry as most pirates spare no expense in rigging high-speed vessels. And yet, targets often have little choice other than to run and hope for the best.

Once a pirate craft matches velocities with the target, the raiders usually disable the other ship to permit boarding. This is typically accomplished by breaching the ship's cockpit. This tactic doesn't damage the cargo bays or engine systems, but gets rid of the crew.

Near-Rock Attacks

"Near-rock" is pirate jargon for attacks that take place close to planets and their moons. While such raids do not require enduring long periods of high-gees, the inhabited bodies typically have excellent defense systems and numerous patrol ships.





Performing a near-rock attack requires precision timing and detailed knowledge of local space. Is that cruiser landing or taking off? Is the lo-orbit terawatt laser on this side of Jupiter? What orbital path offers the best getaway?

A hostage is one of the most useful means for escaping a near-rock raid. If a pirate crew captures a high-ranking official or relative thereof, the rogues may keep the victim alive for some time to prevent interference. Many people who travel in high-risk areas have “no-hostage” clauses in their wills (requiring that they be regarded as dead if taken hostage), but these legalities are not always observed by loved ones of hostages.

False Approach

The pirate ship poses as a transport vessel, cruise ship, military craft or other ship that the target’s crew considers nonthreatening. The raiders may travel in the same direction as the quarry, may approach from another direction, or may even lay in wait with some sort of “system failure.” Once the two ships get close enough (which, if the pirates are especially skilled and resourceful, could include docking with the target), the raiders spring their trap.

Pirates can perform this ploy anywhere, and it is most effective far from an orbital station or patrolled region. Yet false approaches are surprisingly successful along established space lanes; most pirate attacks in Earth-Luna orbit are the result of “patrol” or “customs” craft.

Performing a false approach does not require that the ship have a fake registry, although most self-respecting pirates keep a half-dozen or so on hand just in case. In fact, false-registry manufacture is a thriving black-market trade. A ship’s designation is supposed to be listed on the craft’s exterior and must also be available for transmission to approaching vessels. Still, unless the target keeps an updated file on current registries (an expensive proposition, but one in which large organizations like ABI gladly indulge), raiders can use their current designations or simply make ones up and a target is often none the wiser.

Shadowing

Shadowing is the most difficult method of piracy, and requires that the pirate craft mirror the target’s every vector change, acting as a sensor shadow so that the target’s crew disregards the stalker’s presence — which is when the raiders move in. Attacks of this nature have a number of

inherent problems. The pirate ship must have a skilled pilot who is able to respond exactly to the target's maneuvers. An advanced computer agent works best at achieving this effect, but requires human backup. The pirates never know if the target is aware of the trap until they make their move. And, shadowing often results in the target setting its own trap for the raider. Despite shadowing's obvious failings, pirates still indulge in it, presumably as a way to garner status with other raiders.

Disabling and Boarding Spacecraft

Detonating missiles near a ship is often effective in disabling and boarding a target; doing so has a small chance of causing a structural breach, as opposed to aiming missiles directly at the target. The concussive force and radiation (of fusion warheads) of a near-miss can still take out humans and delicate systems effectively.

There are a great many ways to prevent boarding, including spinning a ship or initiating high-gee evasive maneuvers. Such tactics also make a clear strike difficult, increasing the chance that the attacker hits a sensitive part of the ship.

Board and Storm

Once a pirate ship renders the target vessel defenseless and inert, it's time to reap the spoils. The raiding craft fires magnetic grappling cables onto the captured ship, with the pirate ship's cargo bays facing the chosen airlock. The attacking vessel then reels the craft in for docking.

Depending on the pirates' haste and personal temperament, they may override the target vessel's airlock security protocols or simply burn the airlock doors off. Whatever the method of entry, the boarding party wears vac-suits (usually VESes with some armor reinforcement).

Raiders tend to depressurize decks and bays of ships as they proceed through them, by opening airlocks and blowing out bulkheads, to hinder counterattacks from any survivors. The more humane of them broadcast their intentions to the captured ship to give the crew and passengers time to get to escape pods. The major-





ity of pirates don't bother with such niceties, though. If the victims are smart enough to get into protective gear, great; if not, that's their problem.

If a ship is raided for a specific cargo, seizing that prize is the pirates' first priority. The main boarding team typically finds the cargo and transfers it to the pirate craft's bay as quickly as possible — using the captured ship's own loading equipment if it's still operational. A second, smaller boarding team goes after consumables and medical supplies. Once this is done, and if the pirates feel there is time, they literally go after anything that is floating free or can be pried loose. Instrumentation consoles, life-support gear, gravcrystals, computers, personal knick-knacks, clothing — whatever comes to hand is shoved into the cargo bay to be sorted through later. If "lambs" are required and available, survivors on board are burned out of their sanctuaries during this phase, or their escape pods are tracked down and thrown into a hold to be opened later.

Escape

Escape is perhaps the most difficult part of piracy. If there are any sort of time constraints on a raid, the crew has a choice between lashing down all the booty and boosting away at high gees, or leaving stolen cargo in disarray and accelerating more gradually. High-gee maneuvers performed with loose, heavy items in the cargo bay can be extremely dangerous. Such unsecured material can cause systems damage or even a hull breach as it's flung about during vector changes and acceleration. The type of getaway performed depends on the circumstances; if pirates need to leave immediately, they don't bother to lash down their prizes.

In the event of pursuit, pirates must find some place to hide (a gas giant's rings, an asteroid or moon), turn on their attackers or simply outrun pursuing ships. Pirates try to be capable of all three. Many pirates, lacking a fast ship or heavy firepower, fall into the hands of reinforcements called in by the target before it is boarded.

Selling the Swag

Anyone familiar with black-market trade knows of a number of places to trade or sell "found" cargo and supplies, no questions asked. Foremost among these places are the Pit on Luna,

and Absolute Zero in the Belt. There are other places on Earth, Mars and in the Belt, but the Pit and Absolute Zero handle the majority of traffic.

There are easily almost a dozen major dealers on Luna and three on Absolute Zero alone. Some corporations are willing to buy cargo that was raided from a competitor's ship, although this business is risky for both parties. It's suggested that some metacorps even sponsor privateers to go gunning for competitors' craft, but one must be careful where such things are said. Pirates also trade with each other, and it's a clever pirate who gives up raiding entirely in favor of handling trade.

Home Port

Home for most pirates is their ship. Why own two life-support systems when one will do? Few bands have their own stations (perhaps long-abandoned research or mining outposts). A few maintain hollowed-out, large (1,000,000+ cubic meter) caves in asteroids. Such havens are sealed with scavenged airlock equipment. The pirates dock their ships within to store excess loot and to "get out of the damned ship." The air in a cave is usually provided by a ship's life-support system, which is probably only marginally up to the task. Every so often, Legion patrols come across entire suffocated pirate crews in asteroids of this sort.

Privateers

Privateers are pirates who are paid by corporations or governments to attack ships belonging to the competition. Privateers are much better equipped and funded than are traditional pirates, because they have a sponsor, and because that sponsor wants very much for them to go uncaptured. This difference aside, privateers are as violent and amoral as any pirate band. (Indeed, they are arguably worse; most people become pirates out of necessity. Privateers choose their careers.) Needless to say, communication between a sponsor and its agents is kept to a minimum to ensure deniability.

Current rumors suggest that ABI has a privateer in the Saturn system to prevent other corporations from establishing a foothold (and to dispose of any "freelance" pirates). The UAN and China almost certainly have privateers covering Mars, the Belt and Jupiter.

Sample Pirate Template

Physical Attributes	Abilities (typical)
Strength 3	Brawl 2
Dexterity 3	Athletics 2, Firearms 3, Pilot 2
Stamina 3	Endurance 2
Mental Attributes	Abilities (typical)
Perception 2	Awareness 2
Intelligence 1	Engineering 1, Intrusion 2
Wits 2	
Social Attributes	Abilities (typical)
Appearance 1	Intimidation 3
Manipulation 3	Interrogation 2, Subterfuge 2
Charisma 1	Savvy 2
Backgrounds: Allies 1, Cipher 2, Contacts 1	
Willpower: 4	
Psi: 1	
Gear: Fighting knife, Banji Spark laser pistol or Aris Whistler sonic pistol, armor vest, VES, Wazukana 300E PC, computer detector, medkit	

Pirate Vessels

Pirate ships are typically medium-cargo or light-military craft that are stripped for maneuverability. Enhanced engines and weapons are near-universal. The Banji Falcon, the Bakuhatu Trey, the L-B Venture and the L-B Supernova have all seen use as pirate craft. For their "modified" statistics, add one to VS and/or Handling, and at least a half-dozen missiles on improvised launchers (-1 to Accuracy). The interiors of pirate ships are spartan, bordering on bare-bones. Items that are likely to have been removed include radiation shielding, bulkheads, safety equipment, galleys and even gravcrystals. (The life expectancy of a pirate is short enough that LAO and long-term radiation sickness aren't feared much.)

The technological devices described in *Trinity* are merely a sampling of the hardtech and bioware that exists in the 22nd century. While it would be ridiculous to describe every facet of this technology — you certainly don't need statistics for toasters or pens — there are still plenty of innovations left that are worth discussing.

This chapter covers mass-transit systems, new vehicle types and restricted bioware.

Mass-Transit Systems

Hyper-fusion's invention in the 21st century forever changed the way humanity uses energy. The most dramatic change, at least to individual perceptions, has been the switch in vehicles from internal-combustion engines to battery power. Auto manufacturers who clung to fossil-fuel energy sources crumbled. They couldn't stand against the new, cheaper battery-charged vehicles. Yet, although the new vehicles are less expensive to maintain than are most internal-combustion autos, they cost a pretty penny to purchase.

Now, in the 22nd century, more people use public transportation than at any other time. This isn't due entirely to the price of cars and hovercycles, though. There are also more people on Earth — and in space — than ever before. Most of these people are crammed into arcologies and orbital stations, places where it's simply not practical to own a personal vehicle. Even those affluent who own a hoversedan keep it in storage, taking it out only for occasional pleasure drives outside the metroplex. (Those so inclined also make sure to buy an optional armor package for their cars, just in case the slummers get uppity.)

Urban centers support two main forms of public transportation: maglev rail lines and hopper craft. Maglev — short for magnetic levitation technology — isn't a fanciful anti-gravity device. The technology incorporates fundamental concepts of magnetic attraction and repulsion to suspend and propel cars along a rail line at incredible speeds. Hoppers, or sky buses as they're also called, are simply large ducted-fan aircraft.

Maglev

Metroplexes maintain extensive maglev subway and surface-rail systems. Civilian planning engineers of the 21st century imag-

ined intricate metropolitan subterranean webs linked by long intercity rail lines. Unfortunately, the massive damage done during the Aberrant War destroyed most of the old connecting passages and rails, leaving hundreds dead and isolating different urban mass-transit systems once again.

The S-TRAM System

In North America, the various metrosprawl districts operate individual maglev subways, but no civilian transcontinental lines survived the Aberrant War. Despite this, the most comprehensive intranational ground transport in operation today is the Federated States Military's Semi-vacuum Transcontinental Maglev system. The S-TRAM was the first and largest rail system to utilize the newly developed magnetic levitation technology.

The S-TRAM system was proposed as an alternative means of transporting military gear, since Aberrants were taking out the FSM's slow and cumbersome air and ground transports. There were plans to extend the system throughout all of North America, but a combination of tight funding and the war's end left construction at its current state. As of 2120, the S-TRAM links military bases in Seattle, Denver, Dallas, Chicago, Atlanta and New Washington with extensive underground rail lines.

The S-TRAM allows these six regions to transport military supplies and vehicles at extreme hypersonic speeds, free from orbital detection or attack. In fact, the exact routes that these underground lines follow are among the FSM's best-kept secrets (and it has many).

The Luna Automated Maglev Pneumatic Transport network is the second largest semi-vacuum maglev system currently in operation. The Moon's LAMP rails reach throughout Olympus and even extend to nearby major colony spurs. Unlike North America's S-TRAM, though, the LAMP is a public-rail system. China is constructing a similar network to connect Beijing to the Autonomous Regions. Considering the magnitude of such an undertaking, it will take almost a decade to complete, despite improved technologies.

Some regions, such as Nippon, escaped such ravages and still maintain effective national train transit. In other regions, one cannot always depend on inner metrosprawl systems. Even after 60 years, parts of most intra-national rail lines aren't reconstructed fully. The London metropolplex is a good example; the damage that destroyed a portion of the Continent also wrecked the England-France Chunnel and flooded large portions of the London Underground rail system.

Despite problems connecting rail lines between arcologies, most maglev systems within a metropolplex run quite well. Trains run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, carrying people and goods everywhere within the cities.

A typical one-way subway ticket costs •. Most arcologies offer monthly passes for only ••.

Hoppers

The hopper's main advantage over maglev is that it can go places that a rail line can't. Most sky buses are used to transport passengers from one metropolplex tower to another, or even to different levels of the same tower. This saves people the time and aggravation of taking an elevator down a hundred or more stories, catching a maglev tram or ground taxi, and then going up another elevator.

Since air travel of any sort involves a greater number of problems than does ground transport — you're dealing with three dimensions instead of two, after all — hopper routes are regulated strictly. While sky buses have pilots, the craft operate primarily on automated systems, following proscribed routes at predetermined speeds.

Many taxi unions are pushing to authorize skycabs, but the outcome of the lobbying remains in doubt. Arcology governments feel that adding dozens, if not hundreds, of individual ducted-fan craft to the airspace around a metropolplex would be a logistical nightmare — not to mention an invitation for disaster. The cab drivers think the local officials are a bunch of penny-pinching wimps who are trying to keep the honest-working Joe down. And so the debate continues.

A typical one-way hopper ticket costs •. As with maglev, most arcologies offer monthly passes for only ••. Indeed, this pass is useful for both maglev and hopper passage in most places.

Vehicles

Trinity contains information on a wide range of commercially available vehicles. The information



in this section covers ocean-going vessels and intra-atmospheric vehicles, as well as a number of military and other restricted craft to which players' characters don't normally have access.

See **Transportation** in *Trinity*, page 277, for details on basic vehicle information.

Sea Craft

Sea travel in 2120 consists almost exclusively of huge, heavily automated tankers and freighters (of which a growing number are submersible). The following are small, special-purpose sea craft.

- **BioSystems Belem:** Although most believe this submersible's name to be a tribute to the Brazilian city Belém, it is in fact an abbreviation of "belemnite," a reference to a cephalopod from the Mesozoic era. The craft is notable not only because its designers do their homework, but because it is one of the Norça-sponsored company's first forays into large biotech constructions. Used for both research and perimeter patrols, the Belem seats up to four, and has an 80-cubic-meter storage bay.

VT: Submersible

Tech: Ψ

CS: 70 km/h

TS: 110 km/h

Handling: +1

Mass: 30

Cost: ●●●●●● (standard), ●●●●●●●● (armored)

Armor: 3 [10] (optional)

Weapons: Dual front-mounted, light coilguns (Accuracy: 0, Damage: 5d10 [10] L each) (optional)

- **FangTech Barracuda:** This light, fast and small hydrofoil serves in a variety of civilian roles, and is occasionally armed for coastal-defense missions. It has cabins for four, and can be equipped with armor plating and defensive weaponry.

VT: Hydro

Tech: Ω

CS: 130 km/h

TS: 150 km/h

Handling: +1

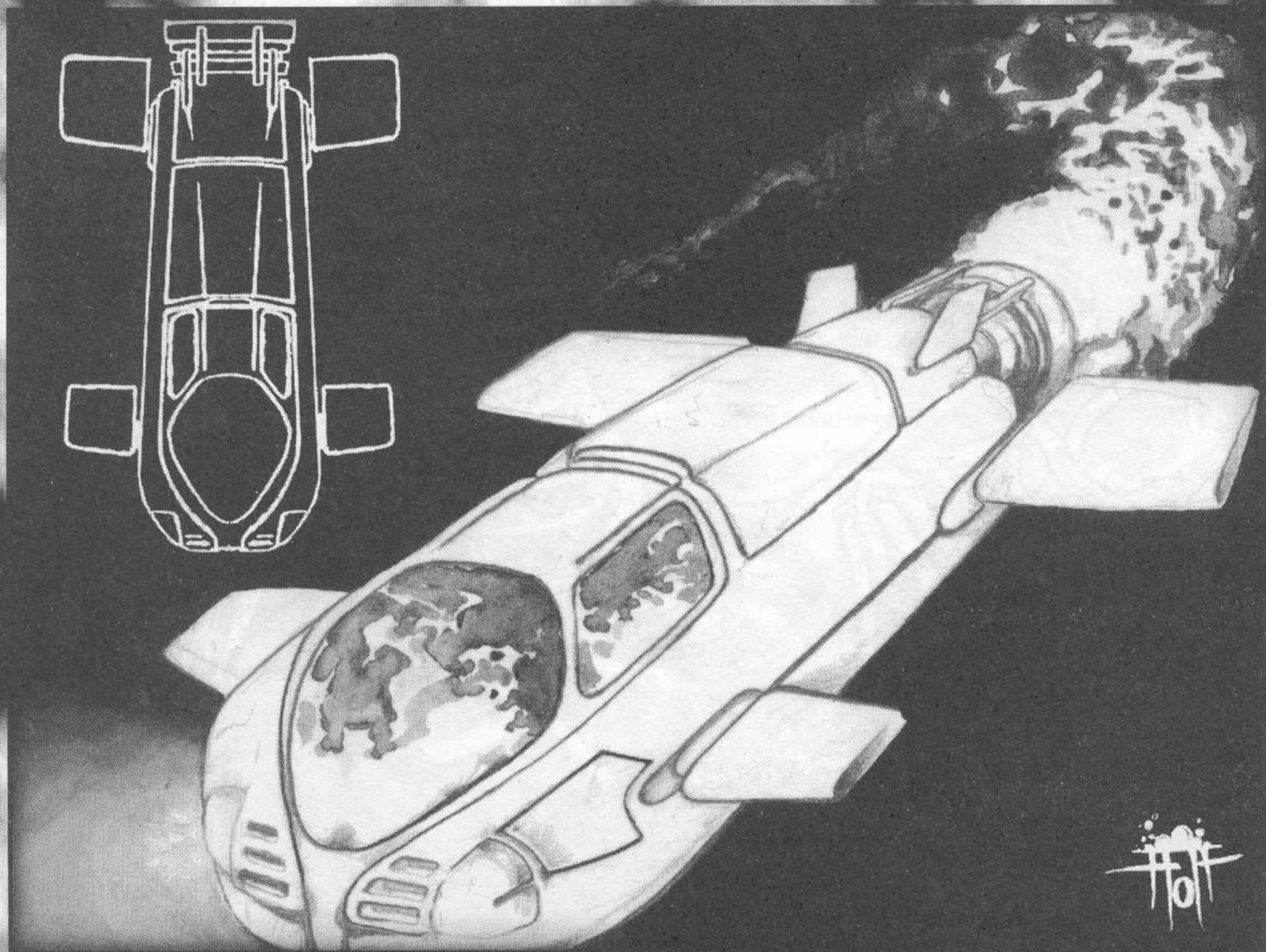
Mass: 4

Cost: ●●●●●● (standard), ●●●●●●●● (armored)

Armor: 3 [5] (optional)

Weapons: Turret-mounted, light laser cannon (Accuracy: +1, Damage: 5d10 [5] L) (optional)

- **FangTech Magellan:** This is a small submersible designed for an exploratory role, but it is



often customized for defensive duties. The basic design seats three, with an 60-cubic-meter storage capacity.

VT: Submersible

Tech: Ω

CS: 85 km/h

TS: 120 km/h

Handling: 0

Mass: 23

Cost: ••••••• (standard), •••••••••• (armored)

A armor: 3 [10] (optional)

Weapons: Front-mounted, light coilgun (Accuracy: 0, Damage: 5d10 [10] L) (optional)

Aircraft

While hybrid vehicles have assumed the majority of intra-atmospheric responsibilities, aircraft still see extensive use in the 22nd century. Rotor craft and jets are used regularly on Earth, often proving more versatile than the larger hybrid vehicles.

Passenger flights of over 3000 km are staged by semi-ballistic liners. These planes spend most of their voyages in the ionosphere, essentially in a low orbit. They carry several hundred high-paying passengers, and can make a trans-Pacific flight in only three or four hours. Military escorts are not uncommon on such trips. HVTR (High-Velocity Tilt Rotor) or ducted-fan planes make shorter hops, and the journeys are much less luxurious and less expensive.

• **Banji Dragonfly:** A common HVTR aircraft, the Dragonfly is suited for light-cargo or passenger duties. Seats four in the cockpit, plus either 500 cubic meters of cargo or 20 passengers.

VT: Rotor

Tech: Ω

CS: 700 km/h

TS: 900 km/h

Handling: +1

Mass: 12

Cost: •••••••••• (vehicle), •• (ticket)

• **Banji Hornet:** This medium-cargo aircraft is an HVTR-fusionjet hybrid. The rotors are used for vertical takeoff and landing, with the fusion engine handling the Hornet's long-range duties. Seats four in the cockpit, with 1500 cubic meters for cargo.

VT: Jet

Tech: Ω

CS: Mach 1

TS: Mach 1.25

Handling: 0

Mass: 25

Cost: ••••••••••

Heavy Ground Vehicles

These craft range from light-armored paramilitary vehicles to simple heavy assault machines. They have an imposing size and durability, and a high price tag.

• **ClinTech HEV:** The ClinTech Hostile Environment Vehicle is a popular civilian ground craft intended for planetary travel. The HEV has proven an effective exploration vehicle, and is common on Mars as well as at other extraterrestrial colonies. The HEV has a complete sealed-environment system with a life-support duration of one month.

The HEV requires a single pilot, and can carry 12 passengers or up to 30 cubic meters of cargo. The HEV is much faster than its "military" brother, the HEVI-D, as the mass of the HEVI-D's weapons and armor put significant strain on the power plant and drive train.

VT: Track

Tech: Ω

CS: 85 km/h

TS: 145 km/h

Handling: 0

Mass: 12

Cost: ••••••••••

• **ClinTech HEVI-D:** ClinTech simply added weapons and light armor to its standard Hostile Environment Vehicle to produce the equivalent of a light tank. The HEVI-D's overall appearance is similar to that of a German tank destroyer from the Second World War.

ClinTech sells the HEVI-D to colonies for use by defense militias only (although some of the vehicles wind up in the hands of Earth nations). Colonies — and nations — that would be hard-pressed to purchase an Osner tank can acquire three or four HEVI-Ds. However, crews of the vehicle quickly learn that they get what they pay for. The HEVI-D's light armor has only marginal resistance to anti-tank fire, and the vehicle is known to explode when such shots breach the armor and strike the vehicle's mortar ammunition. Troopers and armor crews throughout known space have nicknamed the HEVI-D "The Bomb." As if that weren't embarrassing enough, there's discussion regarding the meaning (if any) of "D." Marketing types suggest that it stands for "Destroyer"; crews

that have served in the vehicle smirk that "Doomed" is closer to the truth.

The HEVI-D requires a crew of five (commander, driver and three gunners); the vehicle's weapons, armor and munitions take up the remaining room in the base HEV design. Like its counterpart, the HEVI-D has a complete sealed-environment system with a life-support duration of one month.

VT: Track

Tech: Ω

CS: 60 km/h

TS: 95 km/h

Handling: 0

Mass: 23

Cost: Not available commercially

Armor: 2 [10]

Weapons: Front-mounted, light coilgun (Accuracy: +1, Damage: 5d10 [10] L); Turret-mounted, heavy laser cannon (Accuracy: +2, Damage: 8d10 [5] L); Dual light plasma guns (Accuracy: +1, Damage: 5d10 [15] L)

• **Rheinmetall Lowe (Lion) Assault Gun:** The relatively small German weapons corporation Rheinmetall revived the two-century-old concept of the assault gun. Essentially a super-heavy tank, the Lowe is used to smash heavy fortifications and defended strongpoints on the battlefield. The Lowe's main weapon is a spacecraft-scale 280 mm heavy coilgun. It also has four mounted anti-personnel laser cannons; two in front and one on either side.

There is some concern regarding this tank: Aberrants proved three-quarters of a century ago that such heavy armament is of limited effectiveness against them. The fact that such weaponry is still quite useful against humans and even psions is not lost on most of Europe nor Asia — especially since the Russian Federation is the Lowe's primary purchaser.

VT: Track

Tech: Ω

CS: 50 km/h

TS: 90 km/h

Handling: 0

Mass: 120

Cost: Not available commercially

Armor: 9 [10]

Weapons: Front-mounted, 280 mm heavy coilgun (Accuracy: +3, Damage: 12d10 [10] L), Four light laser cannons (Accuracy +1, Damage: 5d10 [5] L)

• W/V "Hedgehog" MLRS Mobile Missile

Launcher: A 10-year-old design from Great Britain, the Hedgehog MLRS is essentially a missile battery on tracks. Capable of delivering an enormous amount of firepower, the vehicle's main deficiency is its lack of anti-personnel weaponry. If given proper infantry support, the Hedgehog is a terror on the modern battlefield, especially considering the relatively small number of personnel that such battles involve.

VT: Track

Tech: Ω

CS: 80 km/h

TS: 120 km/h

Handling: 0

Mass: 40

Cost: Not available commercially

Armor: 5 [10]

Weapons: Two missile bays with 25 smart missiles each (Accuracy: +3, Damage: 10d10 [15] L)

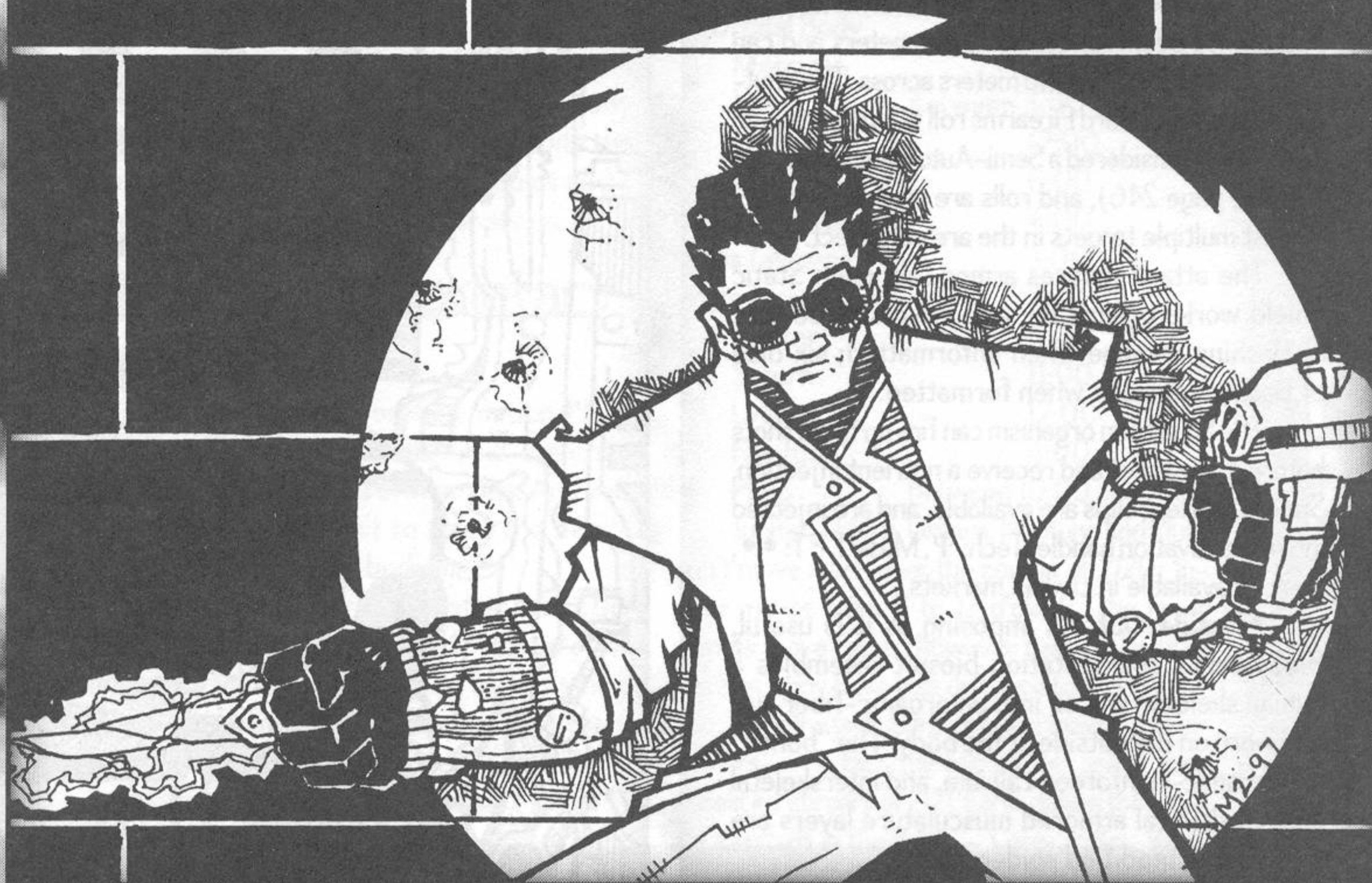
Acquiring Military Craft

Not surprisingly, Earth's various militaries are loathe to give out details on the vehicles they use. This extends, obviously, to not allowing civilians the opportunity to purchase said craft. Even the *Æon Trinity* has difficulty acquiring true military vehicles, often having to settle on retrofitting civilian craft with armor and weaponry.

The Storyteller is under no obligation to allow characters to have military vehicles. Such craft — whether a ground transport, jet or hybrid — are not commonly available on the open market. One might be available for a very steep price on the black market, or the characters may try to *appropriate* one. Whatever their methods of getting a military vehicle, characters will face endless troubles if the craft isn't assigned to them by the proper authorities. One can't expect to drive a tank into town without repercussions. The authorities frown on that sort of thing.

Restricted Bioapps

Some bioware is so potentially harmful or has such specialized uses that the orders keep its existence a secret from the populace at large. This gear is kept under



wraps not only from normal humans, but also from many new psions, usually for their own protection.

The bioapps provided here are primarily for Storyteller to use. It's always fun to throw a curve at a cocky team, and what better way to do that than give the bad guys gear that characters have never seen before? That doesn't mean characters can't get their hands on restricted bioware if you want them to. However, these devices are quite potent, and may unbalance your game if you're not careful.

- **Biochemical Alteration Node (BAN):** This highly restricted bioapp was originally developed for treating neurological and psychiatric disorders based on brain-chemistry deficiencies or excesses, such as Parkinson's Syndrome, schizophrenia, seizure disorders or Alzheimer's Disease. The node lodges in the cerebral tissue, where it monitors and maintains brain chemistry at optimum levels. Some BANs artificially stimulate a patient's deficient neurotransmitter production. Other nodes produce chemicals for patients lacking production mechanisms of their own, while other nodes destroy excessive amounts of certain substances.

BANs can debilitate as easily as they can heal. Addiction and domination accompany the nodes' un-

precedented opportunities for mental-health and psychiatric research. As a result, sanctioning use of nodes requires the highest level of governmental and psionic approval of any matrix bioware to date.

BANs are currently used as a constructive alternative to lobotomy in treating those unfortunate psions who emerge from the Prometheus chamber with severe neurological disturbances. A node has been used to permanently tranquilize a dangerous individual in only one case. Vocal proponents of the BAN — primarily members of Æon's Proteus Division — encourage the bioapp's use against all threats to the Trinity and against all threats to psions, humans and aliens. Any use of the BAN for defensive purposes is kept under wraps by ranking Æon members. Tech: Ψ, Mass: negligible, Cost: Unavailable in civilian markets

- **Shutdown:** This half-meter wand emits an Electrokinetic blast that overloads the victim's neural pathways and results in the complete shutdown of the peripheral nervous system. The central nervous system also suffers enough shock that not even a psion can utilize his talents while under the influence of the Shutdown. The biopolymeric wand grown around the organism supplies it with protection and channels the emission burst.

The Shutdown can be formatted. If used unformatted, the half-meter wide beam can hit a target up to three meters distant. If formatted, the Shutdown's beam ranges up to six meters and can widen to cover an area two meters across. The Shutdown uses a standard Firearms roll to fire; widening the beam is considered a Semi-Automatic Burst (see *Trinity*, page 246), and rolls are made separately against multiple targets in the area of effect.

The attack ignores armor (although Static Shield works against it), and inflicts three dice of Bashing damage when unformatted; six dice of Bashing damage when formatted.

The Shutdown organism can fire up to six shots before it must rest and receive a nutrient injection. Special nutrient clips are available, and are injected into the activation handle. Tech: Ψ , Mass: 1, FT: ••, Cost: Unavailable in civilian markets

- **Inside-Out:** As imposing as it is useful, BioSystem's augmentation biosuit resembles a human skeleton woven into an organic-fiber suit and worn on the outside of the body. The "bones" are ceramic-reinforced calcium, and interskeletal and subskeletal armored musculature layers are sheathed in modified spider silk.

The IO's armor provides protection against most low-caliber bullets and low-intensity lasers. Additionally, the organism interfaces with the wearer's Biokinesis Aptitudes, if any. The entire combination of Mode enhancement, armor protection and disturbing visual appearance makes the IO's wearer one of the most dangerous beings you could ever hope not to meet.

The Inside-Out adds two dots to your character's Psi (for the purposes of using psionic powers only; Attunement doesn't increase) and adds two dots to his ratings in Adaptation and Psychomorphing (no new powers are gained from increased Mode scores). Unfortunately, the suit makes using Transmogrify more difficult, since the IO cannot change form. Using Transmogrify powers while wearing the biosuit incurs a difficulty to the Psi roll equal to the power's rating — so, using Molding is a +2 difficulty. Furthermore, any homonculi that your character makes do not come equipped with small versions of the IO.

Although anyone can wear an unformatted Inside-Out to gain armor protection, the device must be formatted to trigger its Biokinesis interface (which, obviously, only a biokinetic can use). [2/3, 0], Tech: Ψ , Mass: 5, FT: •••, Cost: Not available commercially



As this chapter's title suggests, the following pages contain information that, while useful, doesn't fit neatly into any one category. Topics range from planetary orbits to the effects of vacuum on the human body to popular 22nd-century sports. Despite the scattered subject matter, these topics add a greater degree of detail to your series.

Orbits and Planetary Positions

The universe is in constant motion. Planets hurtle through the stellar void, covering thousands of kilometers in moments. And yet, it's not terribly difficult to track the direction of most planetary bodies.

Each planet in our solar system orbits the Sun at a specific rate of speed. This sidereal movement varies depending on a body's size, density and distance from the Sun. Planetary orbits are compared to Earth's as follows:

Orbital Body	Sidereal Period
Mercury	88 days
Venus	225 days
Earth	365 days (1 year)
Mars	687 days
Jupiter	11.86 years
Saturn	29.46 years
Uranus	84.01 years
Neptune	164.8 years
Pluto	247.7 years

Planetary orbits and speeds are key aspects of astrogation. All ships, from the smallest hybrid fighter to the largest freighter transport, have programs that calculate planetary orbits. This enables spacefarers to travel from planet to planet with a minimum of time and effort. Such "space lanes" change as planets orbit the Sun, with ships adjusting their routes appropriately.

Since the **Trinity** universe focuses on story over mathematics, we'll leave specific trajectories to the astronomers. All that most players need to know is the general direction in which a planet lies. **Trinity** lists each planet's closest distance to Earth, as well as standard travel times from Earth to those bodies. The lists below describe the rough positions that each major body holds in our solar system at the beginning and end of 2120.

In simple terms, imagine our solar system to be a clock with the Sun at the center and Earth at 12 o'clock. On January 1, 2120, the

major bodies are located as follows, based on the position of the little hand on the "clock":

Orbital Body	Relative Location
Mercury	7:00
Venus	between 3:00 and 4:00
Earth	12:00
Mars	6:00
Ceres (asteroid)	4:00
Pallas (asteroid)	3:00
Vesta (asteroid)	7:00
Jupiter	11:00
Saturn	11:00
Uranus	12:00
Neptune	4:00
Pluto	between 10:00 and 11:00

Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto don't move much over the course of 2120; Jupiter moves from 11 to 12 o'clock. The inner planets move faster, however (being closer to the Sun, they have less distance to travel).

Over the year, Earth gets increasingly closer to Mars — in fact, the two planets are at their closest in February of 2121. Earth passes the three big asteroids in the Belt — Ceres, Pallas, Vesta — from March through June of 2120. Earth stays fairly far from Venus during 2120, but the two get closer in December. Mercury zips around the Sun like the *second* hand around a clock.

On December 31, 2120, the planets are positioned as follows:

Orbital Body	Relative Location
Mercury	9:00 (having made four orbits)
Venus	11:00 (having made one-and-a-half orbits)
Earth	12:00 (having made a single orbit, naturally)
Mars	1:00
Ceres (asteroid)	5:00
Pallas (asteroid)	4:00
Vesta (asteroid)	9:00
Jupiter	between 12:00 and 1:00
Saturn	11:00
Uranus	12:00
Neptune	4:00
Pluto	between 10:00 and 11:00

Interplanetary Travel

The best time to travel to a destination that is further away from the Sun than your point of departure is just before you are closest to that destination. You use the velocity of the body that you're

PLUTO

URANUS

SATURN

JUPITER

NEPTUNE

MARS

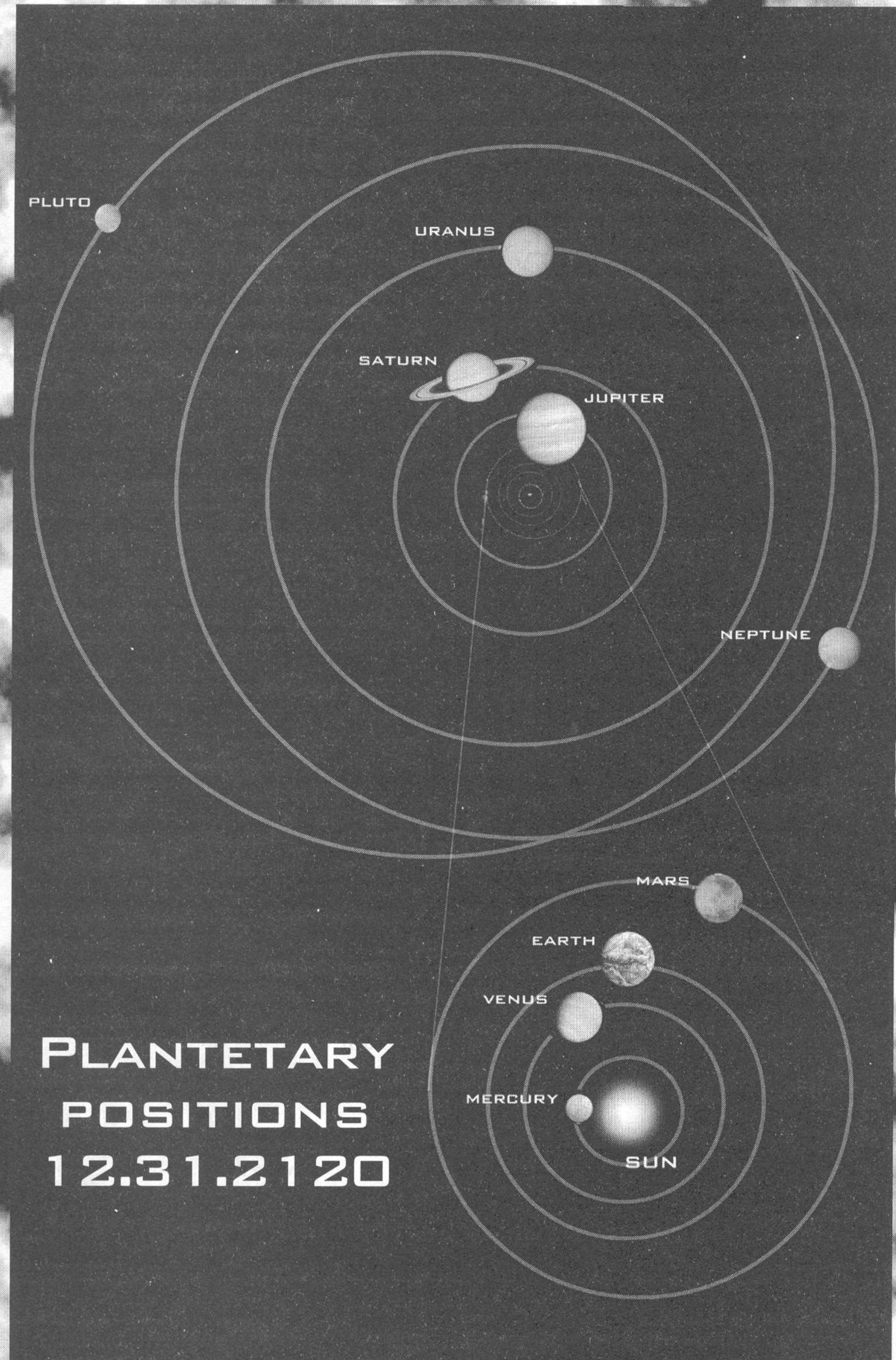
EARTH

VENUS

MERCURY

SUN

PLANETARY POSITIONS 12.31.2120



leaving to propel you toward your destination, and the distance traveled is also reduced. The best time to head to something closer to the Sun than you are is just after you are closest to that body. In this case, it's much easier to leave your point of origin and simply sit in the path of the oncoming object — your destination comes to you.

A Further Note on Distances

The distances between bodies' orbits increase as one travels further from the Sun. Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars and the asteroids are a relatively close to each other. Even Jupiter and Saturn are reasonably close to the Sun. However, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are way, way out there in the interplanetary scheme of things. The distance from Earth to Uranus, for example, doesn't change much no matter what the date is.

Again, the **Trinity** core rulebook lists each planet's distance from Earth, from which you can make a ballpark estimate of travel times and other needed information. For those interested in more exacting information, any introductory astronomy text should serve your purposes.

The ships in **Trinity** have hyper-fusion reactors that provide constant-boost capability, meaning they can accelerate continuously to increase their overall speed and shorten travel time. It's therefore not strictly necessary for spacecraft to abide by this departure-time rule of thumb.

However, constant boosting causes wear and tear on engines over time, which can result in delayed transit due to breakdown. Although waiting for optimum travel windows isn't necessary, most commercial craft follow this practice nonetheless.

Vacuum

There are a number of different theories on what happens to the human body when it's exposed to hard vacuum ("hard vacuum" being the depths of space, as opposed to a decompression chamber). Some claim that the unfortunate victim explodes due to the tremendous pressure difference within his body and in the void. Others propose that the subject merely flash-freezes ("merely" implies that it's somehow less grim than blowing up). And some suggest the poor soul freezes on the side that faces away from the Sun while he burns up on the side

facing toward it. Fortunately, no one's had to put these theories to the test in the 20th century.

In general, unprotected exposure to hard vacuum is an almost instantaneous battle for time between the effects of temperature and decompression. Either way, the poor soul dies.

This is the theory that we suggest you use in **Trinity**: Anywhere that the victim isn't near a large heat-retaining body, she flash-freezes first. Thirty to 60 seconds is an extremely generous amount of time for the human body to freeze through, considering that the ambient temperature in space is cold enough to freeze helium solid. (Remember the scene in *Terminator 2* when liquid nitrogen freezes the T-1000 — then it shatters into a thousand pieces with a single gunshot? This is a lot colder.)

If the crystallizing victim gets pulled inside before she dies (yes, "dies," as in all of the water in her body freezes into tiny crystals and ruptures most of her cells), she has some brutal frostbite of the limbs, and loses her eyes. (Eyes are essentially balls of water, and are quite delicate since they don't have the protection of that surprisingly tough envelope, skin.) Additionally, the subject probably suffers pressure-induced damage as well: ruptured capillaries throughout her body, blown-out eardrums, and possible eruptions of the gastrointestinal and urinary tracts.

In the event that the victim is exposed to a significant heat source...well, here's your opportunity for gore. Take, for example, a subject standing exposed on the light side of the Moon. There isn't much in the way of atmosphere to diffuse the Sun's radiant heat, so the Lunar surface is rather hellishly hot under direct sunlight. The Moon isn't much more than a very large, heat-radiating ball of rock.

In this case, the pressure likely kills the victim first. He has about as much time to survive as the other victim did, although the effects are somewhat different here. The subject's surface capillaries burst, his eyes rupture, his eardrums pop — there's a lot of general rupturing as heat works its way inward to boil his blood and cellular contents. He blows up like a balloon — remember, human skin is surprisingly tough and elastic — with quite a lot of bleeding out every orifice, and the destruction of most of the delicate tissues within those orifices. A last-second rescue is rather messier than it is for the frozen victim, but this subject might sustain a little less damage. At least he doesn't have frostbite.

Oh, and speaking of standing exposed, remember something called *radiation*. The damned stuff is everywhere when there's no atmosphere to protect you. Not only is the subject of a last-

minute rescue cooked, he suffers massive cellular damage. Beyond that, radiation certainly causes severe cancer in the near future.

In the end, unprotected exposure to hard vacuum is a bad thing. It's best to avoid it entirely. Don't go outside without a spacesuit.

Damage Due to Vacuum Exposure

It's not really worthwhile to describe specific systems dealing with exposure to hard vacuum. Death is virtually instantaneous. However, if a subject is lucky enough to be saved at the last minute, she has lost enough Lethal Health Levels to put her at Incapacitated. The victim also suffers the effects of long-term exposure to radiation, and will likely require extensive grafts and regeneration.

A character suffering such an unfortunate event doesn't bounce back in a few weeks (see **Recovery** in **Trinity**, page 252). Additionally, she'll probably have a severe case of caelophobia — fear of deep space.

Stellar Architecture

Expansion into space allowed for amazing new innovations in a variety of fields. Architecture was not the least of these — in fact, new designs and construction techniques were essential to making orbital stations and extraterrestrial colonies possible.

A leader in the architectural revolution was born in the ravages of the Aberrant War. In the heart of the 2050s, an African-American architectural student named V.I. Mhula escaped from the horrors around him by designing structures tailored to spectacular points on various planets in the solar system. Even though Luna and Mars were the only extraterrestrial bodies that were settled at that time, Mhula's designs for Mercury, Venus and Jupiter were expressions of his hope that humanity would triumph over the terrors of the day and would continue to colonize the stars.

After the Aberrant Exodus, Mhula moved to the Congo River valley, where V.I. Mhula Associates became a respected architectural firm. The business was quick to adopt the principles of the United African Nations and develop a harmonious blend of high-tech and traditional forms. Mhula's firm provided key design elements in the further development of Luna and Earth's orbital stations. Despite his successes, V.I. Mhula never had the opportunity to construct his most inspired, most fanciful designs. The resources and technology simply didn't exist in his lifetime.

Mhula's grandson now runs the business. He discovered his grandfather's notebook years ago, and has dedicated the firm's significant resources to constructing as many of V.I.'s designs as possible. The young Mhula refers to the project as the "World Havens" series.

Mhula on Other Worlds

The underlying aesthetic of V.I.'s designs was this: the illusion of unmediated experience. People in his buildings were meant to feel as though they were in the midst of an alien wilderness — but still safe. His successors have built the following marvels, which Storytellers can introduce either as completed projects or as works in progress.

Mercury: Yellow Meld

Yellow Meld is a single-story laboratory and resort built at the bottom of a crater on Mercury's equator. A seven-meter layer of gel, developed originally for space-station insulation, fills the remaining crater space above the building. The gel melts at 200° Centigrade and remains a transparent liquid at temperatures as low as 1° above absolute zero. Between 200° and 300°, the gel congeals into an opaque mass that is extremely effective at distributing incoming light and heat.

Almost all of Yellow Meld's patrons are scientists who take advantage of the lab's observation opportunities; Mhula would like to build a tourist trade as well.

Venus: Pterodactyl Station

Pterodactyl Station's name and design are both ironic allusions to pre-Space Age stories of Venus as a world of perpetual swamp and jungle inhabited by primitive behemoths. The near-orbital station is a network of dirigibles, linked by advanced orbital steel and polymer struts. The hulls are strong enough to support (very brief) dives down to within two kilometers of the Venusian surface. Dirigible floors are composed of optical bioglass; the panels' opacity can be adjusted to allow guests to see down in whatever wavelengths and at whatever magnifications are most effective and visually stunning at any given moment. Such observation systems are supplemented by visual and ultraviolet spotlights on Pterodactyl Station's underside.

The station remains in near-orbit around Venus in the less dense and less toxic atmosphere of 20 to 40 kilometers above mean surface level. Offworld Enterprises provided much of the funding for Pterodactyl Station's construction. OE and Mhula currently operate the station in conjunction.

Mars: Summit Center

Built on a magrail track that encircles Olympus Mons' upper rim, Summit Center is possibly Mhula's most fanciful design. Summit Center looks like a gigantic, 20-story-high crystal — and in many ways, it is. The structure's walls are made of numerous half-story optical bioglass segments. Each panel is transparent, but can adjust from translucency to opacity in any color of the rainbow. Walkways radiate out from this central core to a ring; this ring elevates Summit Center 12 meters above the magrail track. The building moves along the customized track, completing its trip around Olympus Mons once each Martian day.

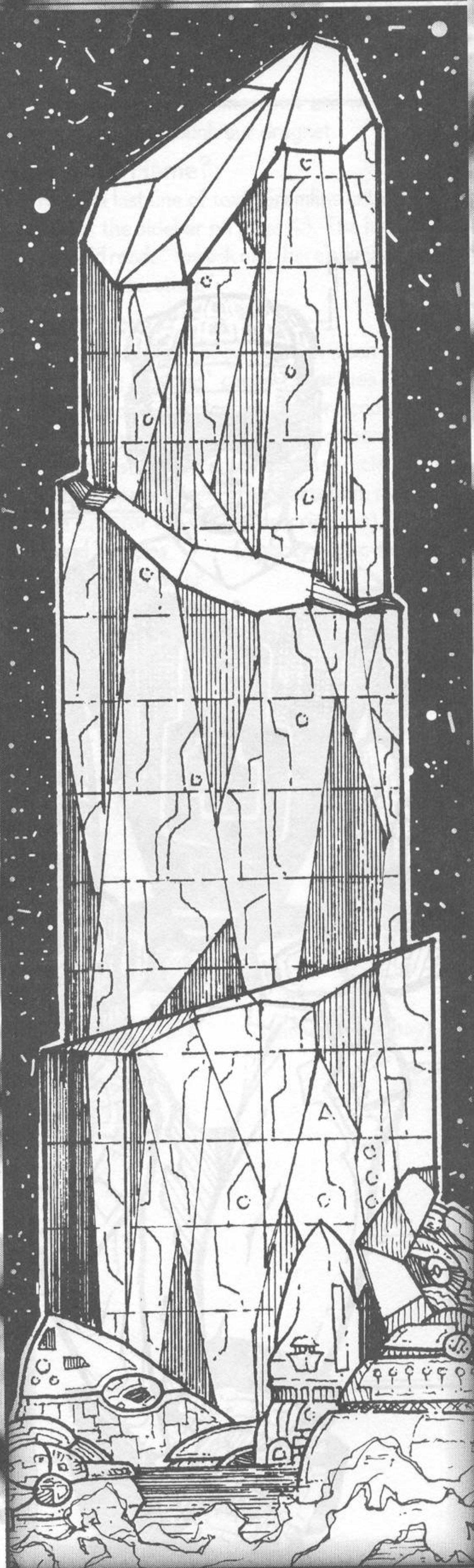
Constructed with the joint assistance of China and Orgotek, Summit Center is used primarily as an upscale vacation site.

Jupiter: Redeye

This is the last of the Mhula resort projects that were built, simply because its power requirements are astonishing. Redeye does not orbit Jupiter. Rather, it maintains a steady position above the Great Red Spot, at an altitude where the planet's gravity is diffused significantly, by exerting constant thrust. Like Pterodactyl Station and Summit Station, Redeye is another transparent structure, this one composed of optical bioglass elements designed to resemble giant bubbles rather than crystals. The main attraction of Redeye is not just the view, but The Drop: a 10-kilometer-long bungee jump, which is performed with carbon-nanotube elastic cords. Guests who wear reinforced vacuum-environment suits simply step through an airlock system at the underside of Redeye, and down they go. Those who wish to can wear a parafoil and spend some time windsurfing once the cord has finished unwinding.

Sports and Recreation

Many of the sports that were popular in previous centuries are still enjoyed in 2120. Games like soccer, baseball and football retain loyal followings and have even spawned a number of variations. A few of the more notable new sports have developed from humanity's expansion into space.



Gravball

Gravball is the ultimate extension of indoor-court sports, such as handball and *jai alai*. The game is played in a 50 x 30 x 20-meter, zero-g environment. Armed with only polymer gauntlets, protective helmets and knee and elbow pads, competitors try to propel a 4 cm elastomer ball past their opponents and into wall-mounted, sensor-activated scoring zones.

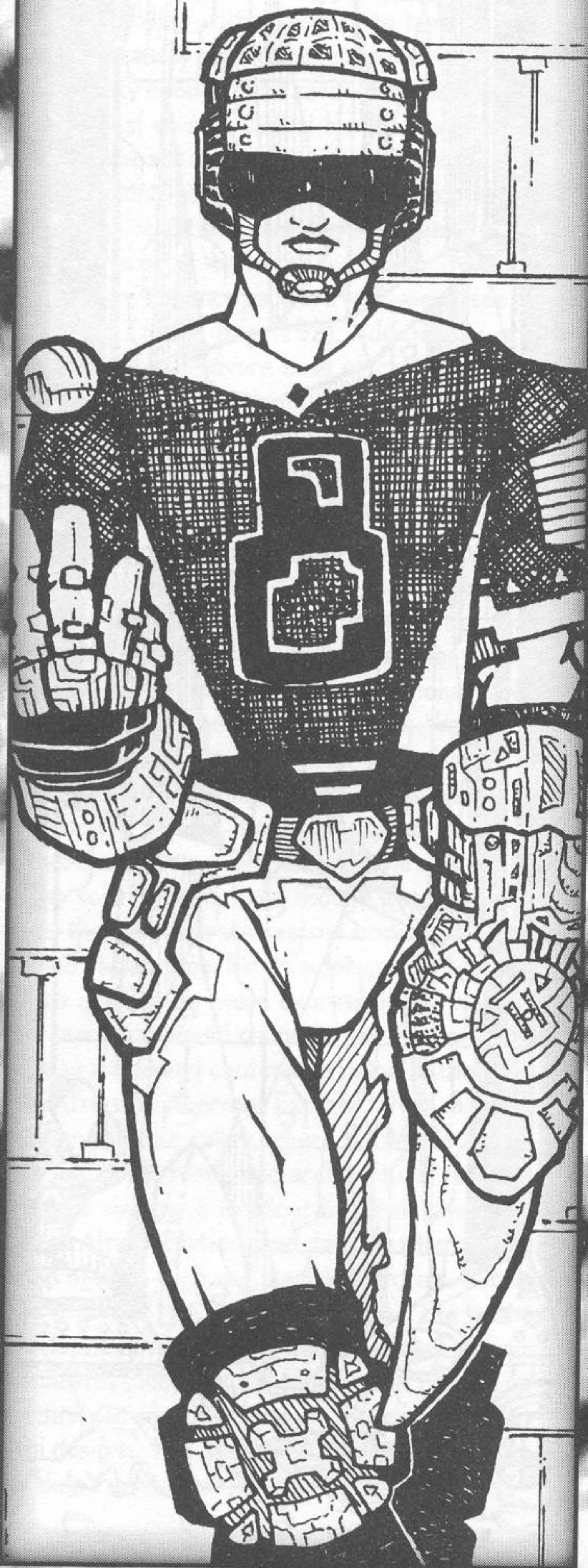
The game is extremely dynamic. Players can literally climb the walls and leap from floor to ceiling to make or block a shot. There's no significant gravity or resistance (short of the court's walls) to stop a player's momentum, so players commonly careen around their halves of the court. Simply hitting the ball is challenging; lining up for a shot requires not only striking the ball accurately, but also recovering from the subsequent tumble that the player takes due to his momentum. A solid strike can also send the ball rocketing along at speeds approaching 300 km/h! Such complexities make gravball an immensely popular spectator — and gambling — sport.

A typical gravball facility consists of two to four clear, Mylex or bioglass courts, surrounded by arena seating and huge closed-circuit vidscreens. Singles, doubles, and five-person-team versions of the game are popular as both recreation and professional sport. A lucrative pro tour is on its ninth highly successful year — this time sponsored by Apoderado Designs. Lunar and orbital-station natives dominate the sport, although Technonesians have shown quite a knack for gravball in recent years.

Gravball as recreation is a game for the affluent; court practice time and training are expensive.

Lowball

This variation of gravball is in its infancy. It developed from youths in Luna's Underground who tried to play gravball in areas with shorted-out pseudo-gravity systems. Although the Moon's gravity is only 0.17 Earth-normal, it's enough to alter gravball dynamics. Since the game is played in low-gravity instead of in zero-gravity, it was only natural that it came to be called "lowball." The two games are similar, although lowball is increasingly accepted at Olympus since it can be played on the Moon itself.



Hoverjousting

If gravball represents the elegance of athleticism taken to its extreme, then another popular 22nd-century "sport" falls at the opposite end of the spectrum — that of social Darwinism run amok. This isn't surprising, since the sport evolved from gang fights involving anywhere from a couple to a dozen combatants on hovercycles charging one another with taser batons or melee weapons like chains, hammers or nunchaku.

Organized hoverjousting still boils down to little more than legalized gang violence, even though it involves two teams of six with competitors using "tag" batons and sensor padding. The team that has one or more players untagged at the end wins. "Untagged" is synonymous with "mounted," since jousters are known to strike opponents with bone-jarring force. Hoverjousting has a rabid fan base, despite — or quite possibly because of — its extreme violence.

Hoverjousting competitions are especially popular in North America and Australia (being the sport of choice among Legionnaires); arenas routinely sell out in a matter of hours. Skilled jousters attain working-class-hero status in their arcologies, and command high appearance fees. However, careers in hoverjousting are often as short as the sport's brutal nature suggests. Indeed, careers would be even shorter if not for the fact that one or more rexs is kept in attendance at most events to tend to the injured.

Errata

It was bound to happen. While we tried to account for every detail in creating **Trinity**, we're

only human. A couple things that are worth addressing slipped through our dragnet.

What's in a Name?

Not the last line of text! Gremlins cut off the final line of the sidebar on page 43. The last sentence should read, "You ask me, there's such a thing as too much education."

Cargo Space

Our math skills went on vacation when it came to calculating vehicles' cargo capacities. While **Trinity's** focus is on roleplaying over accounting, the listed cargo spaces are off by an embarrassing degree. The list below contains each vehicle's correct cargo capacity (see **Transportation**, starting on page 277, for full vehicle descriptions).

Ground Vehicles	Capacity (cubic meters)
Concurso MH-1 Hauler	85
Concurso T-10 Minihauler	15
Mashindano Kuchuka Bronto	200
Mashindano Rover	10
Orgotek Cicada ATV	15
Hybrids	
Bakuhatsu E-15 Fighter	10
Bakuhatsu GPT-03 "Trey"	1,500
Banji Raven II	900
Banji Falcon	1,200
L-B MEL	5,000
Frigates	
Banji Kestrel IV	80,000
L-B Supernova IPF-Delta	50,000
Orgotek Scarab Strike Frigate	15,000
Freighters	
L-B Venture B-9 IFT	1 million (each bay)

This short adventure is designed for Storytellers to use with just about any **Trinity** series. It can be used as the first story that you ever tell, and to bring the players' characters together for the first time. It can also be integrated into an ongoing series, as yet another adventure in the psions' dangerous lives.

The Last Gasp is significant in that it can also act as a springboard into the **Darkness Revealed** adventure series. **Darkness Revealed** consists of three interrelated storytelling adventure books that create an epic scope for your **Trinity** games. *The Last Gasp* leads the psions to Luna, and introduces them to the investigation of missing persons and grizzly murders — events that lead directly into **Darkness Revealed**. The only problem here is, the characters get sidetracked along the way...

This story can be told with any number of psion characters, although the group probably shouldn't consist of more than six members. Characters can also belong to any order; motivation is provided to introduce characters of almost any background.

Premise

The story concept in *The Last Gasp* is deceptively simple: Events seem to proceed along a clear path, but then they make a sudden left. A flurry of events blinds the characters to what's really going on, possibly distracting them from the truth until it's too late. Only the characters' sharp wits and quick actions can save them from their ordeal.

While investigating disappearances on the Moon, the psions are caught in an explosive decompression at Olympus. The breach seals, but the characters fall unconscious during the disaster. They awake to discover themselves trapped in the breach zone, and they must find a way out.

In truth, the characters have been abducted by special forces in the Federated States of America. This group, the Central Security Agency, is conducting experiments to determine the threat that psions pose to the military-corporate nation. The psions actually awake on a Federated States Military space station, in an advanced virtual-reality simulator that replicates the decompression zone they were in on Luna. The characters must realize what's really

going on and escape with their lives, or become the CSA's lab rats and be disposed of when they're no longer needed.

Theme

The prevailing undertone of this story is paranoia. At first, characters investigate apparent crimes on the Moon. Those mysteries suggest either Aberrant or psi order involvement. None of the characters knows how deep the conspiracy runs, or if there's one at all. However, as the psions undoubtedly belong to a variety of orders, the question arises: Who can be trusted and who is an unwitting pawn of a corrupt organization?

When the decompression occurs, paranoia persists. Why aren't the psions rescued by Olympus authorities? Was the explosion a trap, and if so who planned it?

When the characters realize the truth of their situation, the paranoia of the FSA becomes apparent, hopefully as a counterpoint to the characters' own. If they intend to escape the orbital station with their lives, the psions had better put their perceived differences aside and work together.

Mood

The atmosphere of this story should be tense and claustrophobic. Life on Luna is crowded as millions of inhabitants and travelers cram into the compact Lunar colonies. That closeness is made all the more unnerving when it becomes apparent that gruesome crimes are occurring — how could someone find the opportunity to murder and disfigure people in such tight quarters?

Continue to convey a sense of claustrophobia when the characters are caught in the explosive decompression. They're trapped in the confined space of a cargo bay with only an unstable barrier between them and the cold of space.

Even when the psions break free from their controlled test environment, they must stick closely to each other as they search for escape routes from the FSM orbital station.

How do you create this close atmosphere? Play the game at a small table. Force the player to sit close to each other. Allow them to use only one set of dice. Dim the lights. Play music softly with a low but in-



tense beat. The players should be uncomfortable with each other and wrestling for space before long. Make them extrapolate that feeling to their characters. As always, make sure you don't go overboard. You want to create a feeling of tension and paranoia, not make the players so physically uncomfortable that they forget about the game.

Introductions

Psions of different orders and backgrounds can be introduced to this story in a variety of ways. The reasons for the characters' presence at Olympus and for their meeting should make sense in terms of what the players have decided about their characters, and in terms of the plot of your ongoing series. Possible motivations are provided here for different kinds of psions. Use these ideas, alter them or disregard them as you see fit.

Common Knowledge

Reports from Luna claim that people have disappeared from Olympus' Downside. Missing persons aren't entirely uncommon in the Lunar city-state's low levels, but they usually occur in the depths of the colony — in the infamous Pit. (And if you're

in the Pit, you're probably up to no good anyway.) However, these disappearances are reported to have occurred just a few levels below the surface of the colony — in middle-class sectors.

Lunar officials aren't clamoring for help just yet; they're relying on their own security forces to solve the mystery.

Æsculapians

The Æon Trinity has taken interest in the disappearances, and has asked that your order get involved for two reasons:

Some of the missing people have turned up — murdered. The Lunar government is trying to keep that fact under wraps because of the gruesome circumstances of the crimes. The murder victims suffered a truly horrific fate. Their bodies were dismembered and mutilated, with major organs removed, some literally torn out while others were removed cleanly, with surgical precision.

Rexs on Luna are stumped. Someone is gathering human body parts, but no one knows why — or at least no one is talking....

Basel is very concerned. Proxy Zweidler and his people fear that vitakinetics on Luna, especially the ones with loyalty to the Haitian clinic,

can't be trusted in this matter. They want a neutral, trusted member — you — to investigate.

ISRA

Of course, who better for the Æon Trinity to call upon to investigate a crime than ISRA? Clairsentients' sensory powers, postcognition and insight make them, and you, the ultimate detectives. You have been assigned to the job, and can coordinate with the Lunar authorities or conduct your own investigation. Trinity members on Luna are expecting you, though; you don't have to be clear to predict that. You've been told that other orders have been called on for help, too, so there's no telling who you might work with.

You have a strange feeling about this mission. There's more to it than meets the eye. That someone, perhaps even in your own order, is holding out on you.

The Legions

The Trinity has asked your order to help out with investigations into some disappearances on the Moon. Your superior was charged with the assignment, and she passed it to you. It doesn't sound too interesting. Some freak has probably snapped after too many pressure-mining tours, and is taking it out on the normals.

Then again, rumor among the Legions has it that someone in the Seventh, the Legion that not only patrols space but also polices Luna, stumbled on a murder in progress. He went to stop the freak and was ripped to shit. He regained consciousness hours later, but was almost mistaken for another victim, like the eviscerated body beside him.

The Ministry

Telepathic scans of Trinity agents and members of the other orders indicate that something important is going on at Olympus — something that Neptune Division and high-level psions want nipped in the bud or kept quiet. The Ministry wants you to find out what's truly behind these disappearances on Luna. The Ministry doesn't want to leak anything — if one order looks bad, they all do — but information is power, and blackmail can be a greater weapon than any psi aptitude.

Your own research into the disappearances indicates that Lunar citizens are growing nervous — there's something more to this than just a few missing persons. The colony's government is putting spin control on the mystery, but its efforts can't succeed for much longer.

You have also learned that psions are working for the Trinity on this case. You should prob-

ably intersect them and prove your value to the investigation, if not because you're a telepath, then because of the information that you have to offer. Even if the other psions are hesitant to cooperate, you learn through further investigation that they plan to meet a contact who might tell them more. You need to be at that meeting (or at least be close enough to read attendees' thoughts).

The Norça

Something odd is going on at Olympus, and your superiors want you to learn more about it. They're tight-lipped about what you're looking for, but you're told that disappearances have taken place, and that ripples are being made in the Lunar black market. Given what you know about your order's business relations, your superiors are probably more interested in the underground disturbance than they are with the Downside mystery. You have been given the name — Wickum — of a contact in the Pit who can supposedly tell you more about events on Luna. Wickum is supposedly an ex-Orgotek employee who sold stolen tech and secrets about his former employers.

Orgotek

Ever since your order sold off many of its holdings on the Moon, it hasn't taken much interest in what goes on there (or so it seems). As far as the public is aware, Orgotek's attention on Luna is focused on continued jump-ship development. Cassel still has some holdings at Olympus, though, and a murder victim — one of the missing persons — was supposedly found near a disused Orgotek cargo hold. You've been sent to Luna to make sure that Orgotek isn't involved or implicated in anything "embarrassing." Check out the cargo bay and any other unused Orgotek holdings to make sure they're clean. Appearances are everything, after all.

Æon-Affiliated Psions

You may not be associated with a specific order any more, but you have to pay the bills somehow, and the Æon Trinity makes sure to keep its psions busy. You're assigned duties by the Trinity in exchange for a fairly comfortable lifestyle. This time you're being sent to Luna to look into disappearances and horrible murders that have occurred in the past few weeks.

Evidence found thus far seems to suggest Aberrant — or perhaps even psionic — activity. The Trinity contacted some orders to request their help, in part to bring their powers into the investigation, but also to observe the orders' reactions to the crimes.

The Trinity doesn't trust the orders fully in this situation, so you're Aeon's ace in the hole. Though you'll be working with other psions, you're really on your own. Watch out for any suspicious behavior.

Pre-existing Teams

If your players' group is already formed when this story begins, only one or two players need to have a direct motive to get involved in events on Luna. Perhaps a character's order or the Trinity directs her to investigate as described above. Perhaps one of the missing people was known to the character. The characters' own interconnections, friendships, debts and loyalties can result in the whole team joining the mission.

The Investigation

Characters largely have free reign in conducting their investigation of the disappearances and murders. The Storyteller's job is to know what the psions can learn, and to reveal information as the characters search crime scenes, question Lunar authorities, seek out contacts, research victims' backgrounds and maybe even lurk around among the colony's lowlifes. Ultimately, the team doesn't get too far into the investigation before a bulkhead breach and the threat of being sucked into the vacuum of space distract it.

There have been four disappearances in as many weeks. The body of one of the missing persons has turned up. It was found in a relatively quiet corridor off the beaten path, only a few levels below the Lunar surface. The murder was apparently committed elsewhere, and the corpse dumped. The site lacks blood or signs of a disturbance — and there would have been a mess if the crime was committed at the location. The body lacks vital components — not only were the victim's arms amputated at the elbow, but her kidneys and thigh muscles were also removed. Additionally, the victim's brain was taken. The cuts were made with surgical precision, but apparently with no regard for what remained.

A Legionnaire of the Seventh claims to have stumbled upon the murderer dumping the victim. The psion came across the messy remains, but he was attacked from out of nowhere before he could act. The Legionnaire's body was found next to the mutilated murder victim. He survived the assault, but received several serious injuries. Why the psychokinetic was not killed and disfigured as well is not known.

Beyond learning these details, the characters do not uncover much more to help them solve the crimes. No known evidence links the other three victims aside from the disappearances. Still, the

psions are encouraged to investigate as if there is a connection. During their investigation, the psions might also develop healthy doses of suspicion for one another, or for their fellows' orders. The maimed bodies aside, anyone who can take down a Legionnaire in a matter of minutes must be an Aberrant — or a skilled psion.

Foster such suspicions among the players. This creates more tension later, when the plot of this story changes suddenly with the explosive decompression and when the psions find themselves in immediate danger. Should each character rely on only herself to survive, or should she trust the others who might have ties to the murders? And should she try to save the others at all?

The Plot Twists

After the characters meet, spend some time investigating and perhaps even clash on an issue, they get a solid lead. A garbled cell-message is transmitted to one of the character's quarters or minicomp. Olympus' heavy shielding distorts the message, but the voice seems to be a man's (no image, avatar or agent appears on the transmission; the message is purely audio, and broken at that).

I understand you're...murders. I may know...Wickum...help you. Meet me...observation room in Devere South, Sublevel Six in the Yutu Yinchon sector...I won't wait...so don't...me off.

If the players wonder how the message becomes much clearer when the meeting place is provided, shrug and look innocent.

A computer search for the name Wickum in the Lunar residence logs (standard **Engineering** roll) brings up a file on a cargo-bay laborer of no fixed address who used to work for Orgotek, here on the Moon. An extra success on the **Engineering** roll indicates that Wickum was fired for theft. A second extra success indicates that he was stealing cargo of an unspecified type, presumably bioware of some sort, and turning it around to the FSM and perhaps to even the other orders.

A computer check (standard **Engineering** roll) into old Orgotek storage files on Luna indicates that nothing was ever stolen, at least that was recorded. In fact, Orgotek records indicate perfectly orderly transactions, whether it was cargo delivered or goods transported elsewhere. Shipments were being delivered even a few days after most Orgotek holdings on the Moon were sold. Of course, that begs the questions: why? to whom? and where did everything go?

The last shipment arrival is dated about a year ago. A successful standard **Awareness** roll allows a character to match that date with the Aberrant The Colony's attack on the jump-ship base secretly orbiting the Moon.

While the characters investigate the message from this so-called Wickum, they may try to trace its source. Apparently, the same shielding that garbled the message makes it impossible to trace. However, a successful **Investigation** roll (at +1 difficulty) indicates that the message was sent on a Federated States Military channel. Someone with FSM access must have sent the message, but being a cellular transmission, it could have been sent from anywhere.

The Meeting

Regardless of what the characters learn from the message (or surmise from it and grow more suspicious of the other orders), there is still the meeting with Wickum to attend.

Any character who is familiar with Olympus knows that Wickum's meeting place is in a sector of Lunar docking hangars. Computer access (standard **Engineering** roll) confirms that the specific section is an observation chamber overlooking an old Orgotek-owned bay.

In reality, the meeting doesn't relate directly to the disappearances. It's a ruse created by the Central Security Agency to draw the psions into a trap. The North American delegation on the Moon learned of the characters' investigation into the recent disappearances and considered it an ideal opportunity to conduct research if its own. When else might psions of various orders be brought together, and right into CSA hands? And if people are disappearing, why not psions, too? No one would trace the psions' loss to the American government, and the CSA could conduct all the tests it wanted to on its guinea pigs.

Wickum's name is used to make the bait seem authentic; if electrokinetics are among the psions, they may be able to confirm Wickum's sordid past with Orgotek. In truth, the former techie is not involved in this case. He also disappeared from the Moon months ago. No one noticed his loss, and his body has never turned up. However, his apparent involvement in the recent Lunar crimes doesn't make Orgotek look good — an added bonus for the CSA.

Explosive Events

The characters arrive at the Devere South bay to find the main access door unlocked — unusual for a facility that's supposed to be unused. Perhaps

Wickum still knows how to gain access and has left the entrance open. The observation bay is just off the entry, and a wide corridor leads from the main entry past it to the cargo area. The observation bay itself is separate from the cargo area, and has two large Mylex plexi panels — one looking down on the cargo dock (the exterior doors of which are open, although there's no activity on the dock), the other facing outward to the crater. The observation lounge is empty; cargo bins, debris and dust patterns indicate that it has been used recently, though (standard **Awareness** roll) — also odd for a supposedly vacant facility. Not even Orgotek employees can explain why the bay would have been used of late.

Wickum nor anyone else is to be found. When the psions realize this (and everyone is in the observation bay), all hell breaks loose. A booming sound echoes through the chamber, followed by a deep rumble and the moaning of plexi and plasteel. Sirens blare, warning lights flash and a crack spiderwebs across the supposedly durable external window. The entire Mylex plate shatters outward an instant later while emergency doors in the chamber's ceiling slam down with blinding speed. The emergency panels over the broken viewport screech and grind, then freeze to a stop less than a quarter of the way down. Unbeknownst to the hapless characters, the CSA set up a well-placed charge to shatter the bay's atmospheric seal and sabotaged the panels to ensure decompression.

If a clairsentient was attuning his Danger Sense, he has a chance of recognizing the impending disaster, but it's on such a large scale that there's nothing to be done beyond yelling an alert before emergency doors close.

Power to the chamber, including to its lights and pseudo-gravity grids, shuts off. Only red warning lights cast dim illumination. The chamber decompresses with violent suddenness. Cargo bins, floor panels, air-duct conduits and other debris shoot through the breach and into the vacuum of space. The chamber's atmosphere screams out in an ear-splitting shriek. Grit, broken glass and dust blind everyone. The psions tumble toward the opening, the air sucked from their lungs.

Each character may try to grab something to remain in the bay (players can make **Might** rolls for excitement's sake), but really can't do anything productive. The psions have a difficult enough time staying conscious and resisting the suction, let alone performing other feats. Ask the players for their characters' **Endurance** Skill Totals, then roll secretly



for each (act concerned with the results). The characters all fall unconscious in a few moments in the order of the lowest to highest successes that you roll. If a player with a *Norça* claims he isn't affected by the pressure loss, point out that, although biokinetics can draw air from the surrounding atmosphere with *Oxygen Absorption* (**Trinity**, page 197), if there's no atmosphere, they can't breathe.

If you're feeling malicious, you can allow one of the psions to struggle toward the emergency latch, only to find it frozen in place (mechanically, not by temperature). If a player botches a roll, don't have the character get sucked outside, since this will cause problems with the remainder of the scenario (to say the least). Have the victim ricochet off a tumbling cargo bin at the last minute (breaking an arm in the process), or have some other last-minute save.

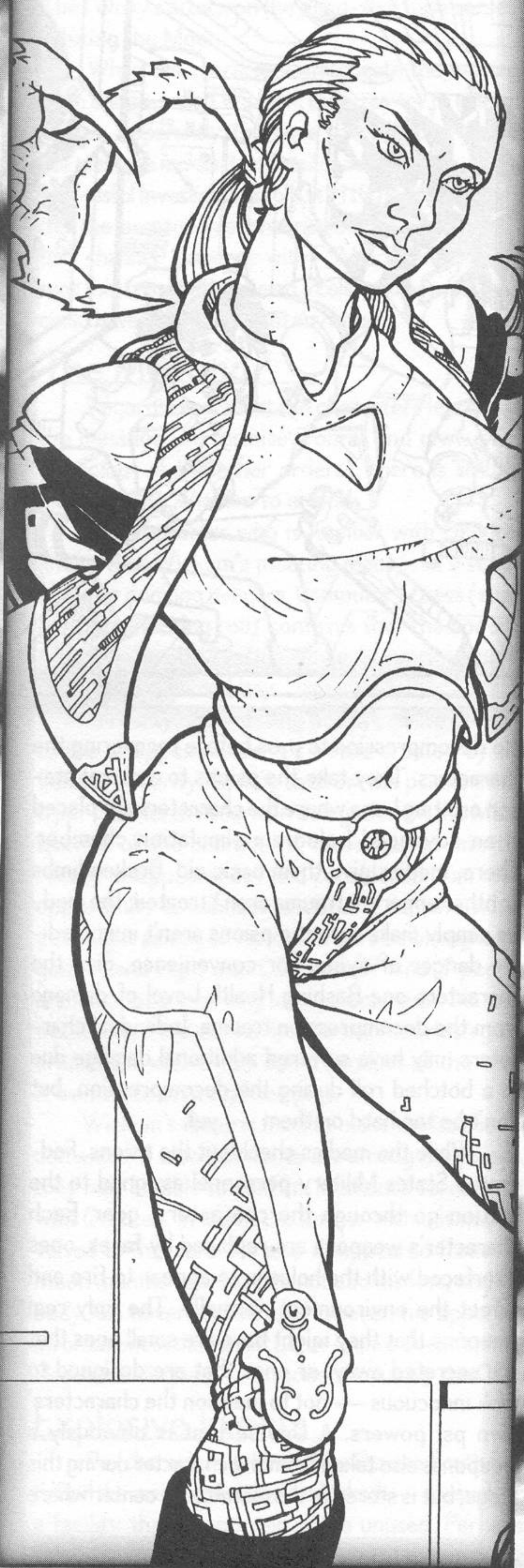
Play up the chaos of events and the lack of control that the characters have. Events occur within a matter of seconds, so characters have very little time to accomplish anything.

Lab Rats

CSA agents stand ready in a ship above the cargo bay, waiting for the most violent stage of

the decompression to pass before recovering the characters. They take the psions to a secret station orbiting Luna where the characters are placed in an advanced hologram simulation chamber. There, medics give them basic aid. Broken limbs or other apparent trauma aren't treated; the medics simply make sure the psions aren't in immediate danger of dying. For convenience, give the characters one Bashing Health Level of damage from the decompression trauma. Individual characters may have suffered additional damage due to a botched roll during the decompression, but don't be too hard on them — yet.

While the medics check out the psions, Federated States Military personnel assigned to the station go through the characters' gear. Each character's weapons are replaced by fakes, ones interfaced with the holosim to appear to fire and affect the environment normally. The only real weapons that they might have are small ones that are secreted away, or ones that are designed to look innocuous — not to mention the characters' own psi powers. A Device that is obviously a weapon is also taken from the character during this stage, but is stored in the monitoring center where



she can regain it later. (If and when the psions escape the holosim chamber, they will have to overpower guards and take their weapons if the characters want to be fully armed.)

Each player makes an **Endurance** roll. The characters wake up in the order of highest to lowest successes rolled. They're not sure how long they've been out; checking a timepiece, it seems to have been about an hour. They all see the same thing: The walls, ceiling and floor of the observation bay have buckled and are swollen inward, effectively blocking off or jamming shut both the main exit and the emergency hatch. Apparently, a combination of the jammed emergency panels, buckled bulkheads and large debris caught in the hull breach have plugged the hole by pure chance. The seal does *not* look stable at all.

Gravity is reduced to 0.17 Earth-normal — the Moon's natural gravity. Presumably, the grav-grids are shattered. Most of the power systems are out, too. Only a few red emergency lights still function. The air is thin, with a strange tang, and sounds are strangely muffled. The characters seem to be trapped.

Distances seem skewed to a clairsentient's perceptions; objects register as being closer to the psion than they appear to be. If a clairsentient uses Danger Sense at this point (it being a new scene), he won't detect any threats (even though the hole looks weak and air seems like it's running out). Leave it at that, and let the player draw his own conclusions.

If an electrokinetic tries to interface with a power system, there are no results. If she jury-rigs a power supply (from a concealed or small weapon that the FSM overlooked, or through use of multiple Static Bursts) and then interfaces with maintenance panels in the observation bay, there are still no results. Such failure is odd; even if the bay's electrical system is cut off from the rest of Olympus, a tek should still be able to pick up basic status transmissions from the bay's rudimentary systems.

If a Ministry agent tries to use Mindscan to find people who should be beyond the bay, he makes no contact. Presumably, there's no one nearby whom he knows well enough.

If the characters try to open the observation bay's emergency doors, they don't budge; the buckled walls seem to have made the doors immovable. Similarly, the emergency hatch is stuck shut. Looking through the other plexi win-

dow into the cargo area, the characters see that its exterior doors are still wide open. Breaking this viewport isn't an option, either.

The psions can even tamper with the plugged hull breach. The debris shifts ominously if they do, the creaks and groans echoing unnervingly throughout the small observation bay. A clairsentient with active Danger Sense finds that, while the shifting debris looks and sounds like it's about to go at any moment, he doesn't feel any danger from that area.

Almost anyone can guess that an event of this magnitude should lead to a rescue; alerts should be triggered all over Olympus. Legionnaires, characters familiar with Olympus, and psions tied closely to Æon should all know this. It's just a matter of time before an emergency team arrives. Considering that the characters were unconscious for about an hour, a rescue shouldn't be long in coming. When more time passes and still no team arrives, let the players speculate about what's going on. It's not the Storyteller's problem other than to say, "It's not here."

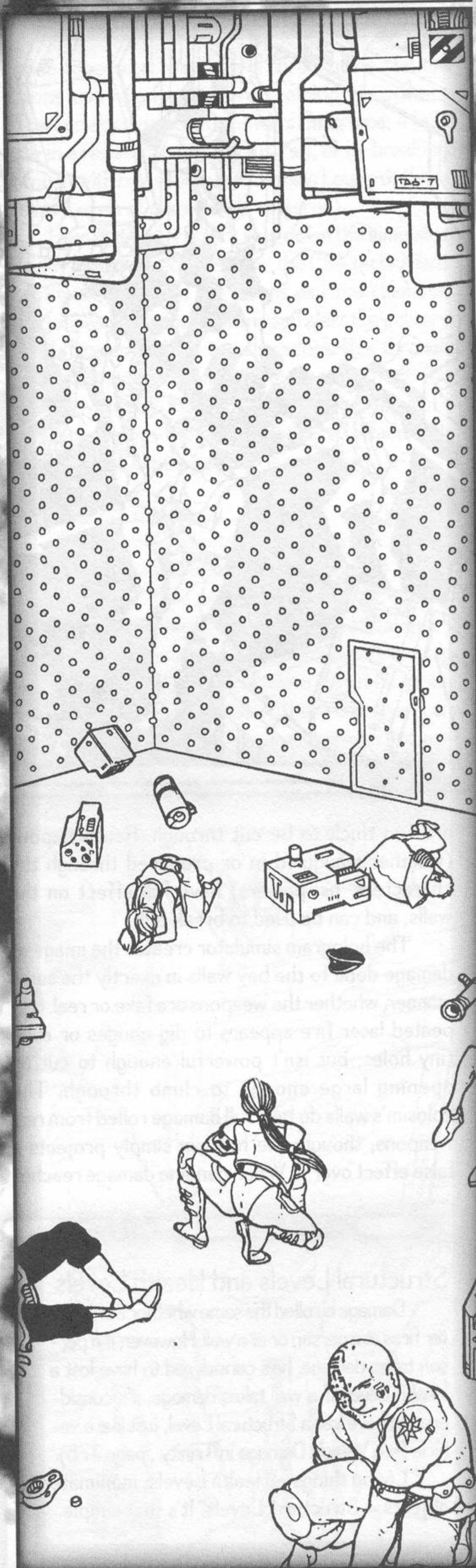
Telesthesia and the Plot

Clairsentience can be problematic for the Storyteller in any scenario. A well-crafted mystery often falls apart when an ISRA projects his psionic powers back a few hours to view previous events. There are many ways a Storyteller can combat this (applying difficulties to pinpointing a specific time frame, for one), but in this scenario, it isn't a problem. A clear projecting back his perception in the room an hour or two sees the chamber for what it is — an empty holosim (see the description below).

The psions must discover that they're in an experiment if they're to survive — this is simply the quickest way to do so.

Breakout

Sooner or later, the characters will attempt to break their way out of the observation bay. Their natural tendency will be to try opening the main or emergency exit, instead of re-opening the breach. (Ironically, the breach is actually the way they'll need to go in the end.) Weapons that have been replaced by fake ones don't seem to penetrate the bay's walls or doors. Laser shots leave scorch marks and bullets ricochet, but do no real damage. Apparently, the walls and doors





are too thick to be cut through. Real weapons (whether smuggled in or produced through the characters' psi powers) have full effect on the walls, and can be used to break out.

The hologram simulator creates the image of damage done to the bay walls in exactly the same manner, whether the weapons are fake or real. Repeated laser fire appears to dig gouges or even tiny holes, but isn't powerful enough to cut an opening large enough to climb through. The holosim's walls do take full damage rolled from real weapons, though; the holosim simply projects a false effect over it. When genuine damage reaches

four Lethal Structural Levels on one spot, the simulator malfunctions and shuts down.

Sufficient damage to shut down the simulator does not create a hole large enough for the psions to escape through. It does, however, activate the holosim's standard emergency systems, restoring Earth-normal pseudo-gravity and ending the holographic transmissions. A holosim is typically a box-like chamber with walls lined by hundreds of projector balls located behind plexi panels. Physical objects, such as cargo bins, are either actual objects or props on movable mounts.

If the characters use real weapons on the "observation bay's" walls, but don't inflict enough damage to end the simulation, the CSA technicians monitoring the psions try to knock them unconscious again. One of the characters' attacks seems to strike a gas main, spewing noxious fumes into the cargo bay.

The gas is actually a poison triggered by the technicians. The technicians plan to knock out the team, search the psions for more hidden weapons, run a few final scans and then toss the characters out of an airlock.

If the psions inflict enough damage on part of the room to end the simulation, the technicians set off the gas anyway, but the pretense is over.

Structural Levels and Health Levels

Damage is rolled the same whether a character fires at a person or at a wall. However, if a person takes damage, he's considered to have lost a Health Level. If a wall takes damage, it's considered to have lost a Structural Level, just like a vehicle (see **Vehicle Damage** in *Trinity*, page 278).

Living things = Health Levels; inanimate objects = Structural Levels. It's that simple.

Have each player roll **Resistance** when the gas is emitted. The number of successes rolled is the number of turns after the first that each character resists the gas' effects. If the psions get out of the chamber before falling unconscious (see below), they escape the gas completely.

A Norça with Metabolic Efficiency can resist the gas, as can an Æsculapian who uses Antitoxin on herself or another person. These characters can then fake unconsciousness. Antitoxin can also be used to rouse any character who does fall victim to the gas, after the Æsculapian is able to ensure her own consciousness.

Two CSA technicians and two FSM goons come up to the holochamber to collect the psions if the characters have not escaped. The newcomers' profiles are provided at the end of this story. If the psions escape the room first, the alarm sounds (go to Into the Fire).

Characters who shut down the holosim quickly have a few options about how to escape the chamber before the technicians trigger the gas. There are two exits: the main door and a maintenance access panel. The former, located where the simulated breach was, leads to an antechamber. The latter, set against an adjoining wall, leads to mainte-

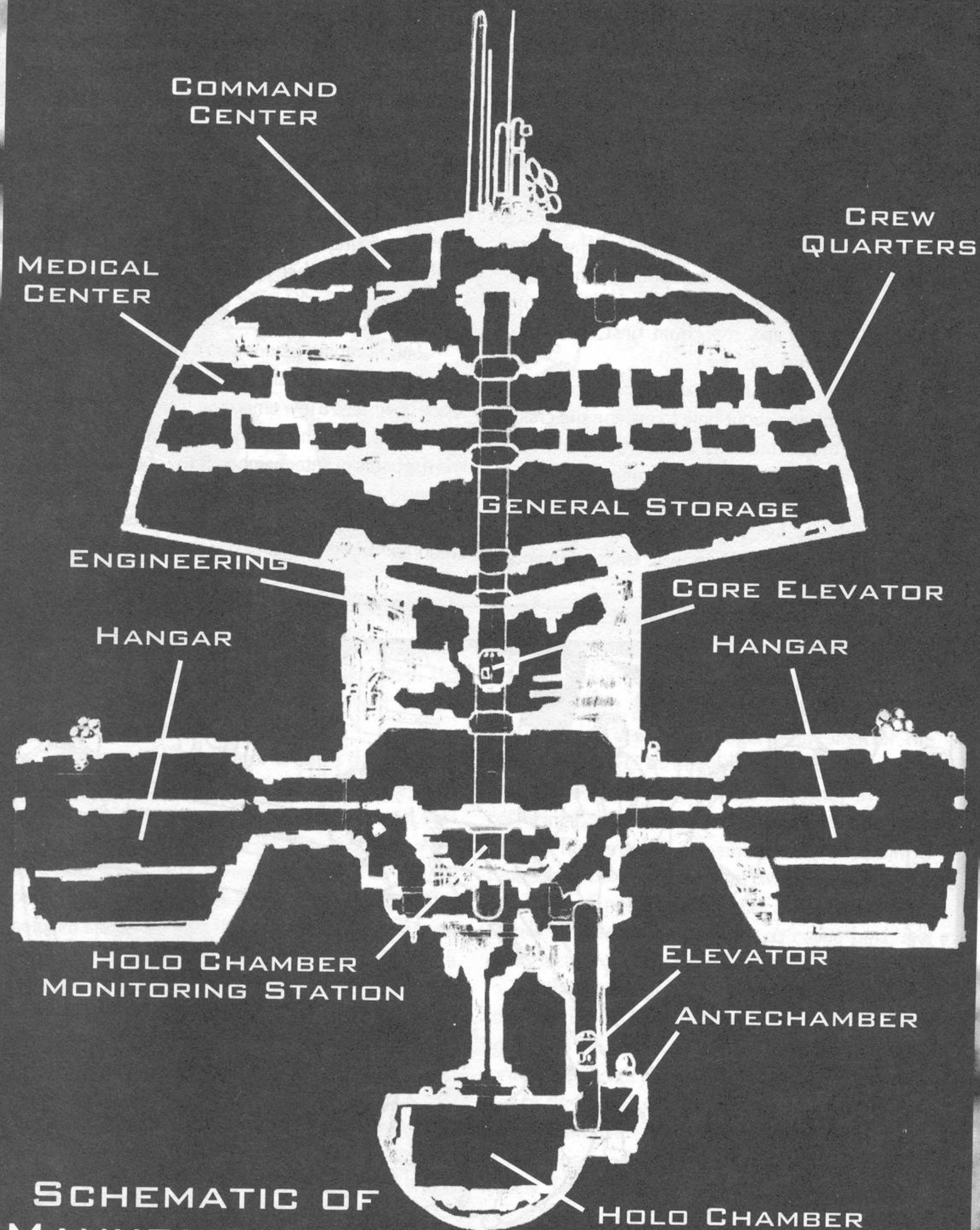
nance tubes that wind down through the station. Psions can open either with telekinetic powers (**Tow**) or electromagnetic powers (**Interface**; 4 fail-safe in a resisted action versus Psi), or by breaking through with brute force (six Bashing Levels or three Lethal Levels of damage are required).

Even if the characters shut down the simulator quickly and proceed to escape, the CSA technicians monitoring them see the psions exit the chamber. The technicians trigger sirens and alert the military guards immediately. If the characters flee through the maintenance tunnels, the technicians flood the tunnels with gas. Escaping through the holosim's main door brings the characters face to face with FSM soldiers. Neither option is appealing.

Into the Fire

The escaping psions don't have much time to plan. Eight storage lockers (containing a half-dozen spare coveralls, a few emergency air masks, a spanner or two, a flashlight and other incidental gear) line the holosim antechamber. If the characters could use an advantage, they might hide in these and spring out at approaching guards. Otherwise, they can stand and fight. In this first wave, a soldier for ev-





SCHEMATIC OF
MANUFACTURING
PLATFORM
AOMP-67G

ery psion in the team enters from the elevator. If the characters can't seem to defeat the guards, the psions can at least flee back into the holosim chamber and through the maintenance tube.

If the psions defeat the soldiers and move down into the station proper, or the characters take the tube, they find themselves in the monitor station below the holosim. The two technicians remain here, awaiting what they believe will be the victory of the soldiers they've called in — the monitors view only the holosim chamber, after all. These technicians can be disposed of quickly.

Once the characters are free and in the control room, they can access the station's computers to silence the alarm, deactivate gas in the tunnels (if it's been triggered) and find an explanation of what's going on.

Shutting off the alarm requires a standard **Engineering** roll and a **Subterfuge** roll (+1 difficulty). The first roll turns off the alert, while the second requires the characters to communicate with the station's security personnel that everything's under control. If the characters neglect to turn off the alarm or fail the **Subterfuge** roll, they have only five turns before a second squad of soldiers arrives in the monitoring room (this time, there are two goons for each psion).

Searching the computer for answers (standard **Engineering** roll), the psions find they're on a small orbital station, designated *FSA AOMP-67G* (Automated Orbital Manufacturing Platform), orbiting Luna. Apparently, the American military has compromised Orgotek property on the Moon and kidnapped the characters for some reason. An extra success (or another successful roll on the next turn) reveals that the North American Central Security Agency is behind this operation, running tests on the psions to learn what extremes and pressure they can endure — to see what it takes to kill them. The tests are designed to better understand psions, and to learn what is required to defend against them "in case they prove uncontrollable, as the Aberrants did."

A final standard **Engineering** roll allows characters to draw up schematics of the station. Two hangar bays — the only means off the station — are located nearby, and can be accessed through the facility's main hallways or its maintenance tubes. Either route takes the characters into conflict with the station's guards (any gas emitted into the tubes can be deactivated from the monitoring station). FSM soldiers are encountered as often as you like, as often as is required to make escape to the hangar tension-filled.

If the characters silenced the alert successfully, they have an opportunity to surprise the soldiers — however, if any scuffle lasts more than one turn, one of the soldiers calls in a new alarm (any **Subterfuge** attempts by the psions to "recall" the alarm are at +3 difficulty — soldiers aren't stupid). While the alert is sounded, soldiers are ready for action everywhere. They patrol halls and act as sentries over accessways to maintenance tubes. Fights with guards should be dramatic and fast; use "extras" profiles for soldiers.

The Hangar

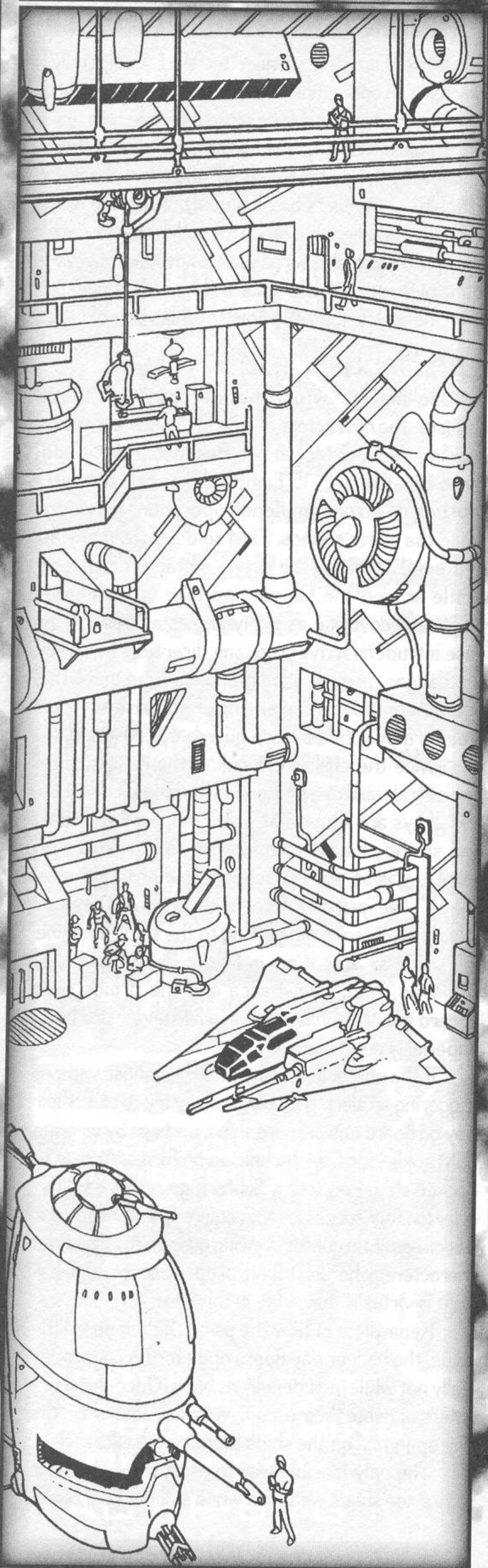
No matter which hangar bay the team chooses, the characters end up in the one currently housing two L-B MELs, two Bakuhatu Treys and three Bakuhatu E-15 Fighters. Several techs are shutting down or completing operations hurriedly while the alarm sounds. FSM soldiers (as many as you need to make the scene suitably dramatic) hustle around the hangar and take up defensive positions, covering as many angles as possible in case intruders arrive from any direction. Entering the hangar through a maintenance tube gives the characters a certain element of surprise — one free turn of action before guards can respond.

Once the characters get to the hangar, they can rush aboard one or more of the ships. The MELs and Treys are somewhat slow compared to fighters, so the characters may wish to hijack one or more E-15s as well, to support one of the "space boats." The guards will certainly do what they can to stop the team from getting to the ships. Imagine the scene in *Star Wars* in Mos Eisley when Luke, Obi Wan, Han, Chewbacca and the droids rush aboard the *Millennium Falcon* while under fire from Imperial ground troops.

If the characters make it to the hanger without triggering an alert, they can actually try to bluff their way on board one or more ships, perhaps by wearing FSM soldier or CSA technician uniforms. Access to docked ships requires a **Subterfuge** roll at +3 difficulty (so four successes are required). An unsuccessful roll results in guards drawing guns on the disguised characters, who don't have proper access codes. A fight is virtually inevitable in this case.

Regardless of how the psions get on board the ships, the hangar bay doors open for no one, especially not while intruder sirens blare. Once the characters activate their escape vehicles, soldiers in the bay open fire on the ships themselves.

The only feasible way to escape the station is to fire the ship's weapons while still docked, blow-



ing out the bay doors. An exterior door can suffer six Lethal Structural Levels from a ship-scale weapon before being compromised. The characters' pirated ships can escape through the breach that's created (**Pilot** rolls at +1 difficulty), but dozens of North Americans will die during the explosion, decompression and engine firing.

Space Battle

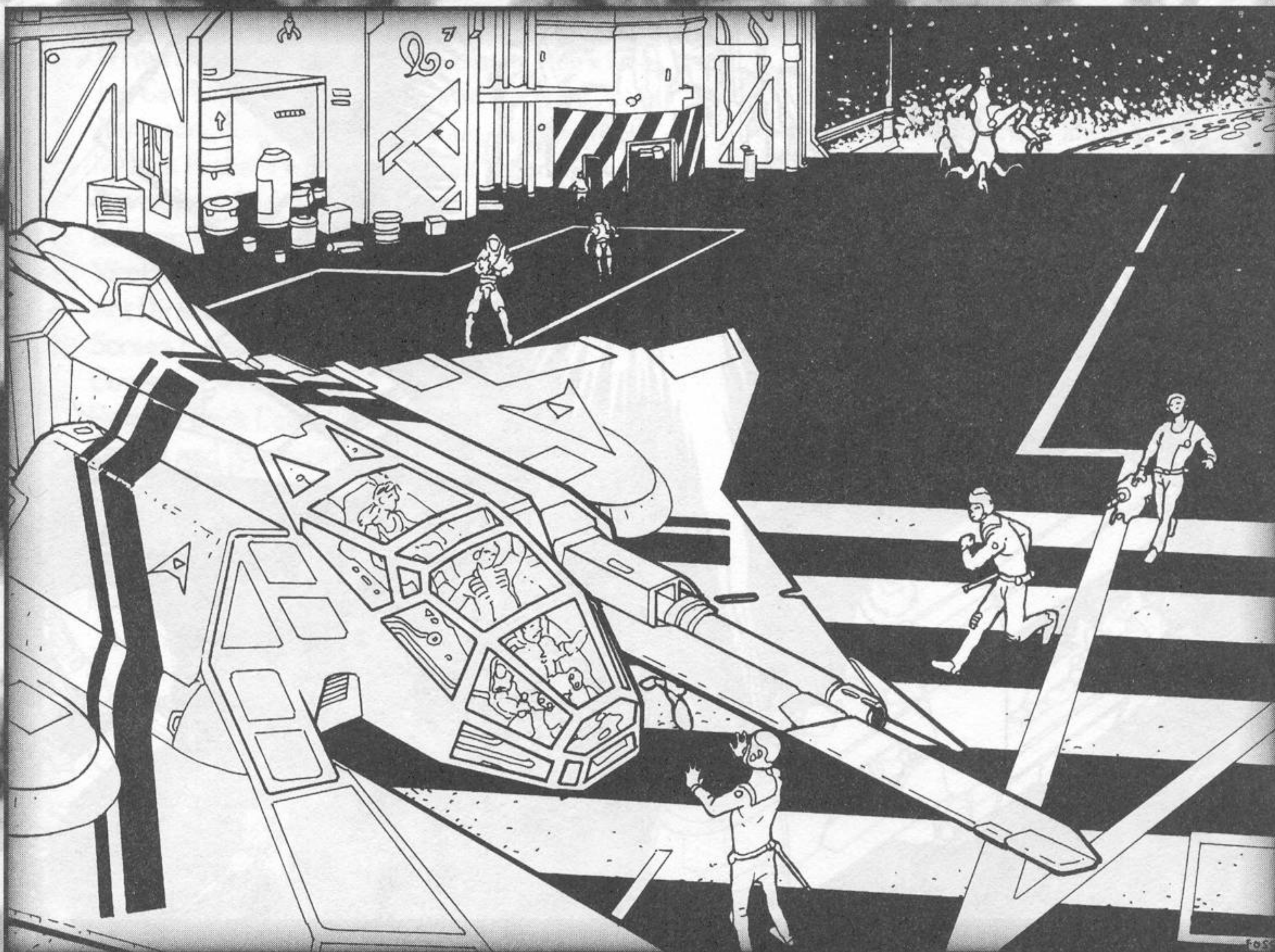
The orbital station's second bay launches as many as four E-15 fighters in pursuit of the characters. Treat the fighters as extras, with only four Structural Levels each. The characters should get away at this point; the chase is simply a fun, climactic ending.

The End

After the characters escape their pursuers, they undoubtedly get in contact with their superiors or the *Æon Trinity*. Even before the psions file a report, the authorities receive word that a minor Federated States manufacturing platform, *AOMP-67G*, has suffered a hull breach and is destroyed. The station is reportedly automated, with a skeleton crew, so only four lives are supposedly lost. The psions know the truth behind this cover story, but it gives rise to a grim question. Could it be that the FSA would kill hundreds of its own to cover up its operations?

In an official statement, the FSA claims that records and debris indicate the station suffered a malfunction — wrongdoing or Aberrant activity played no part in the station's destruction. Thus, while the characters are undoubtedly believed by the Trinity and their orders, and the FSA develops an even more infamous reputation among psions, no retaliatory action can be justified against the North American government...at least not publicly.

If the characters never searched data files while in the station's monitoring room, they probably never learned what the FSA was up to with its experiment. The Trinity may fill in the blanks for the psions, explaining how the FSA has been suspected of performing illegal tests on psions for some time. Intelligence has it that since the American government controls no order of its own, paranoia has run deep and the FSA is researching psion countermeasures. No one can confirm whether the FSA intends to go to war against psions, but if it did, Orgotek — located in the FSA's own backyard — would undoubtedly be its first target.



Of course, after all is said and done, there's also the unresolved issue of the disappearances and murders on Luna. Who's responsible, and when can the characters resume their investigation?

The Storyteller may address such questions on his own, or turn to the upcoming **Darkness Revealed** trilogy for answers.

Experience Awards

The following are suggested experience point allocations that you may award. These points go to every character in the scenario, and are listed aside from any areas described in **Awarding Experience Points, Trinity**, page 172.

- One point if the characters discover they're in a simulation through deduction and creative problem solving, not by simply bashing through the walls.
- One point if the team works together to escape. Key points include: turning off the alarm, discovering the reason behind their abduction, taking out any guards along the way without setting off another alarm.
- One point if the characters had the presence of mind to download any of the information they uncovered, and turn it over to their superiors.

Extras

Federated States Military Soldier Profile

FSM soldiers are well-trained and coordinated troops. They're prepared to fight psions with everything they have (especially given that exposure of their operation will probably mean the station's self-destruction).

Physical Attributes

Strength 2
Dexterity 3

Stamina 3

Mental Attributes

Perception 3
Intelligence 2

Wits 2

Social Attributes

Appearance 2
Manipulation 2

Charisma 2

Abilities

Brawl 2, Might 1
Athletics 2, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 2, Stealth 2
Endurance 1, Resistance 1

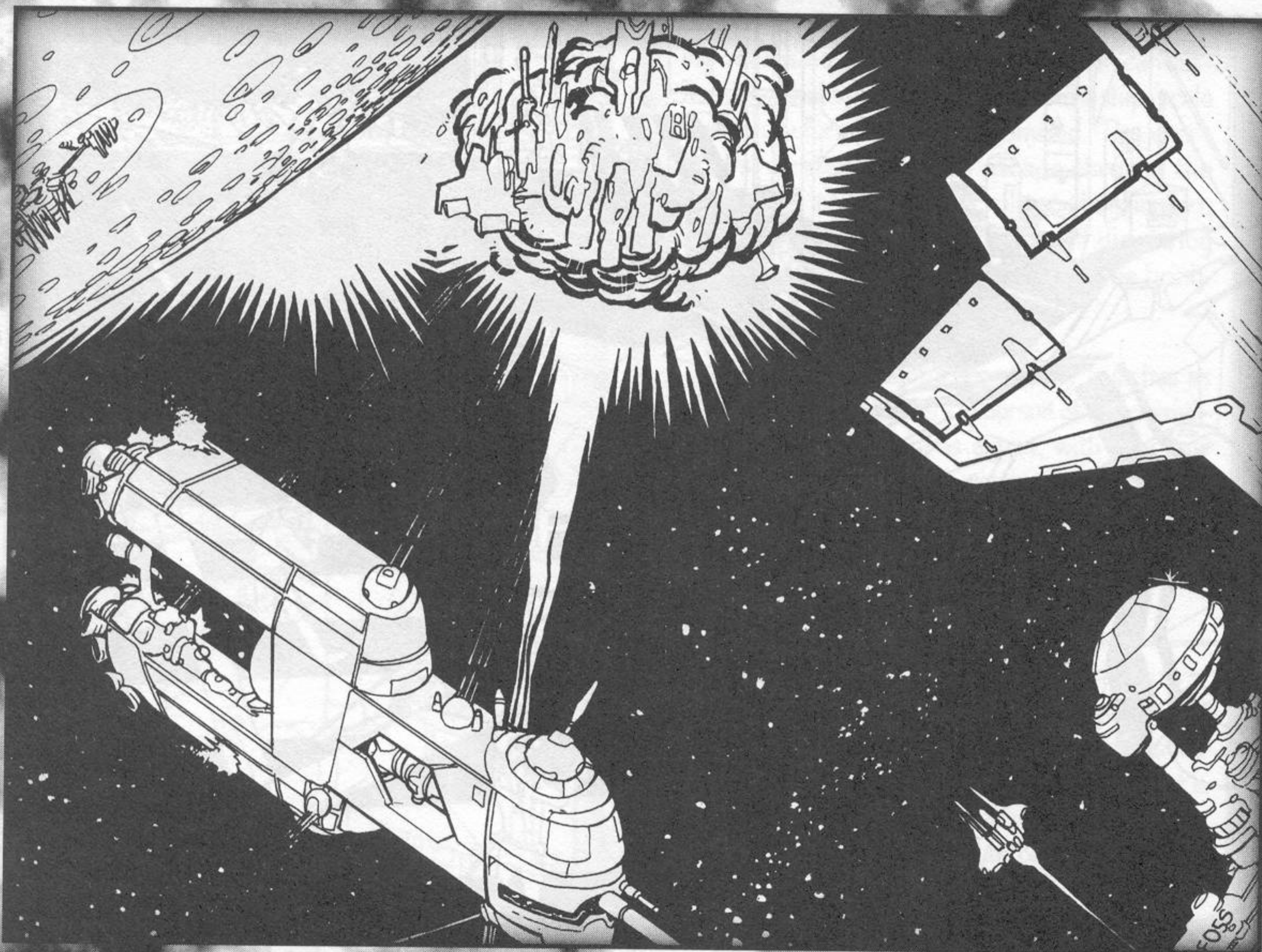
Abilities

Awareness 2, Investigation 2
Bureaucracy 1, Engineering 2,
Intrusion 1, Medicine 1,
Survival 1

Rapport 1

Abilities

Intimidation 2
Command 1, Interrogation 1,
Subterfuge 1



Backgrounds: Contacts 1, Influence 1, Resources 2

Willpower: 4

Psi: 1

Health Levels: Hurt -1, Maimed -3, Incapacitated and Dead

Gear: L-K Defender 9 mm autopistol [4d10 L dmg/50m range/2 rof/18 clip], L-K Vindicator II laser carbine [8d10 L dmg/550m range/20 rof/40 clip], Steinhardt MI-CC PC, vocoder, field suit [1/3, 0], medkit, flashlight, binoculars, fieldkit

Central Security Agency Technician Profile

These technicians are professional and defend themselves, but they're not front-line troops. Their main purpose is research or maintenance; they leave the brute-force techniques to the FSM.

Physical Attributes

Strength 2
Dexterity 3

Stamina 3

Abilities

Brawl 1
Athletics 2, Drive 3, Firearms 2, Melee 2, Stealth 2
Endurance 1, Resistance 1

Mental Attributes

Perception 2
Intelligence 3

Wits 2

Social Attributes

Appearance 2
Manipulation 2
Charisma 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 1, Influence 1, Resources 2

Willpower: 3

Psi: 1

Health Levels: Hurt -1, Maimed -3, Incapacitated and Dead

Gear: Banji Lightning Taser Baton [6d10 B dmg/10m range/1 rof/20 clip], Steinhardt MI-CC PC, vocoder, reinforced clothing [0/2, 0], flashlight, toolkit

Abilities

Awareness 2, Investigation 2
Bureaucracy 1, Engineering 3,
Intrusion 2,
Rapport 1

Abilities

Intimidation 2
Command 1, Subterfuge 1
Savvy 1

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Special Mention

It's worth noting that there is life outside of the salt mines.

Brian and Tonya

Ethan and Aileen

Congratulations on your marriages. I wish you long and happy relationships!

C R E D I T S



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