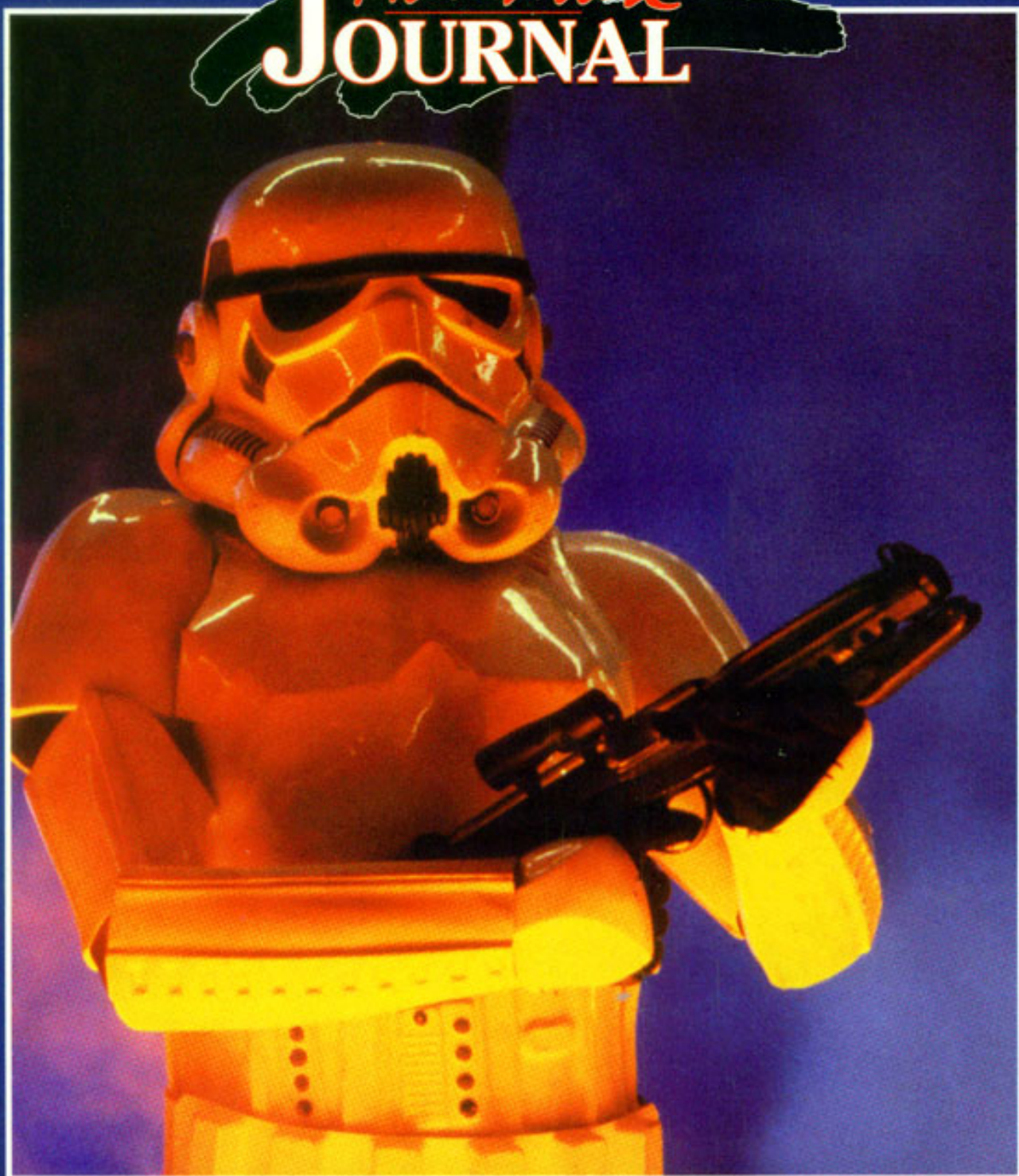


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A Living Galaxy

The phrase "thousand-thousand worlds" has often been used when referring to the Empire, but think about what that really means. This is a civilization not with "just" 20, or 100, or even 1,000 worlds, but millions of worlds. Each of those worlds has its own unique culture, with its own cities, histories, languages, and just about anything else you can think of.

These differences are shown in even the most minor ways. For example, "hyperdrive," "lightspeed," "light-speed," "jump" and "Big L" all refer to hyperspace travel. None of these phrases are "right" or "wrong." Rather, they are all terms used somewhere to describe the same idea.

Diversity is magnified by the communication and travel time lag. While some worlds are only hours apart, it can take days, or even weeks to get to some places; it takes months to cross the Empire. In addition to language and slang, differences will be found in "common" technology. Different technological standards will be established in certain areas — maybe the "local" blasters use different power packs and blaster gas blends.

This isn't as unlikely as you might think! On Earth, Japan has had high-definition television (HDTV) for years, yet that technology is just now being brought to the United States. Europe has different voltage standards than North America — and that affects every electrical appliance! And then think of all the unique slang that's in use ...

As various comic, novel and roleplaying authors explore the *Star Wars* galaxy, we'll encounter more and more of those differences. The result will be a galaxy that's more vibrant, more diverse, more exciting — and more believable. So climb aboard your "jumper" (freighter) and "flood the lanes" (jump into hyperspace) — it's time to go exploring!

Commander Bill Smith
Admiral's Tactical Advisor
June, 1994

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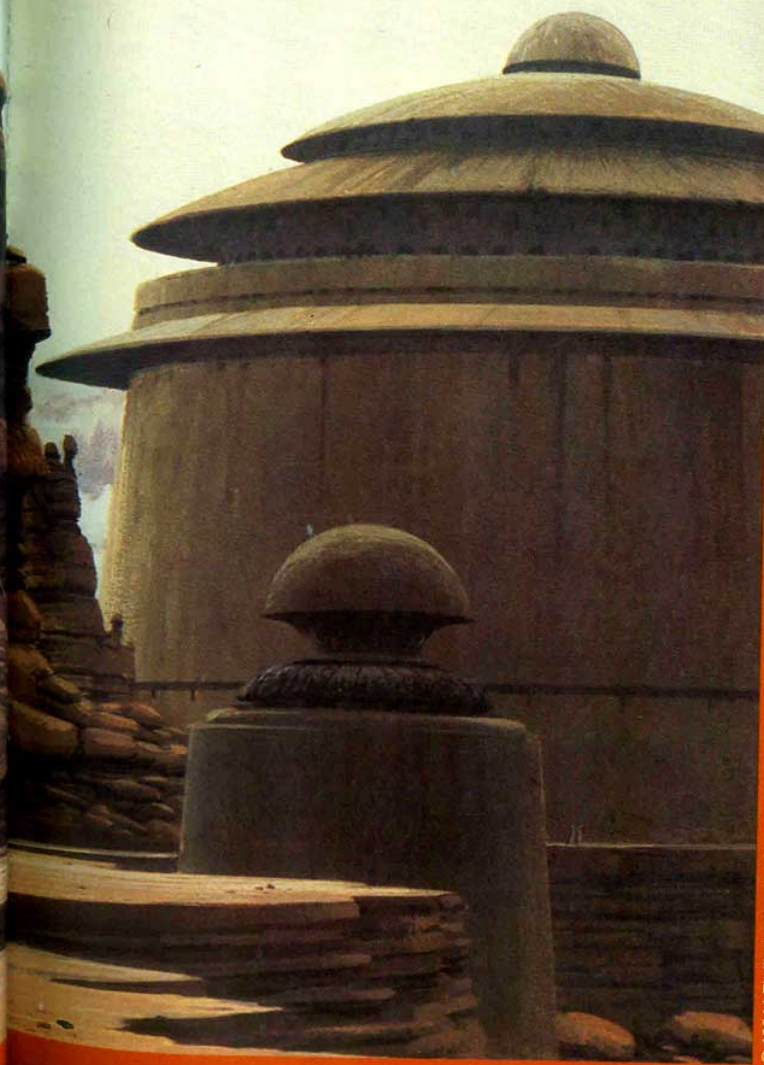
Adventure JOURNAL

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**NEW
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**Vonda McIntyre
Writes
The Crystal Star**

Vonda McIntyre, author of the *Starfarers* series and several *Star Trek* novels, will be

spinning a tale from the *Star Wars* galaxy in *The Crystal Star*. The hardcover novel from Bantam Books will be on sale in November.

In *The Crystal Star*, Leia and Chewie hunt for her three children — Jaina, Jacen

and Anakin — who have been kidnapped. Their search leads to a group of drifting starships, where they find a woman who has clues to the missing children. Meanwhile, Han and Luke investigate the report of a lost group of Jedi and McIntyre introduces an Imperial officer named Hethrir who has his own twisted plans for restoring the glory of the Empire.

Bantam Books will also be releasing *Champions of the Force* — the final



August, 1994

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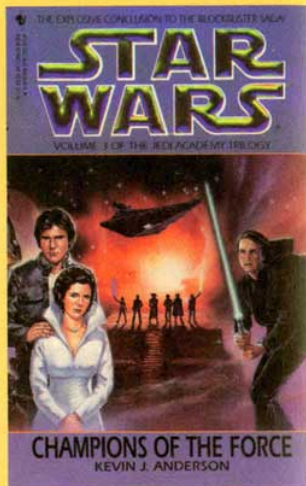
paperback novel in Kevin Anderson's *Jedi Academy* trilogy — in September. As the New Republic continues its struggle for survival, a scattered but powerful remnant of the shattered Empire seeks to destroy Han and Leia's three precious children who represent the next generation of Jedi Knights.

In November, Bantam Books will release Kathy Tyers' *The Truce at Bakura* in paperback. Just after the Battle of Endor, the Alliance intercepts a call for help from a far-flung Imperial outpost. Bakura is on the edge of known space and the first to meet the Ssi-ruuk, cold-blooded reptilian invaders who, once allied with the now dead Emperor, are approaching Imperial space with only one goal: total domination.

Fans of Timothy Zahn's *Star Wars* novels will want to read

LucasArts Entertainment Company Creates Star Wars Screen Entertainment

Remember the first time you saw *Star Wars* — the edge-of-your-seat space battles, Darth Vader's ominous presence, and the vast array of alien characters both aiding and daunting Luke, Han and Leia in their quest to fight the Empire? The upcoming *Star Wars Screen Entertainment* from LucasArts Entertainment



his latest science fiction novel, *Conquerors' Pride*, on sale in August. Although not a *Star Wars* novel, *Conquerors' Pride* has exciting characters and plot twists, which are Timothy Zahn's trademarks.

Company will let you re-experience all the action of George Lucas' spectacular film. The expansive modules in this screen saver program for Windows and Macintosh will feature many of the well-loved characters and action scenes from the original *Star Wars* movie, as well as reveal a behind-the-scenes look at

artists' conceptual designs, spacecraft schematics and little-known trivia.

"*Star Wars Screen Entertainment* will easily distinguish itself from the many screen saver products available," said LucasArts' Producer Kalani Streicher. "We're in a 'galaxy far, far away' from flying pigs and toasters. *Star Wars Screen Entertainment* combines high-end video production techniques, multimedia effects and high speed animations with an insiders' guide to the *Star Wars* universe."

A selection of detailed modules represent a wide variety of action sequences reminiscent of the scenes portrayed in the *Star Wars* movie. One such module depicts a variety of battle scenarios from the bridge of a capital ship. Out the window, among the planets and moons, laser shots will fire away as TIE fighters and X-wings engage in space combat. A more humorous module will feature the shifty Jawas and scheming Tusken Raiders of Tatooine as they shuffle across users' screens to steal and blow up icons and folders, stopping only long enough to terrorize R2-D2.

Another screen saver module looks at how *Star Wars* was created from conception to reality. Here, the entire *Star*



Wars screenplay text scrolls by, as storyboard art fades into its corresponding scene from the actual movie. The *Star Wars Screen Entertainment* also will provide fascinating trivia not revealed in the trilogies. For the first time, users will have direct access to detailed background information on the main *Star Wars* characters and aliens portrayed in the movie. For example, one module features an alien almanac set in the seedy cantina in Mos Eisley. A camera pans the cantina, stopping for close-ups featuring over 10 aliens, including Greedo, the Cantina Band and Ponda Baba. As their faces are highlighted, key information is displayed such as the alien's species,





plant of origin and occupation — a good reference for role-playing gamers looking for information and adventure ideas.

Users will have the opportunity to confront the dark side in *Star Wars Screen Entertainment*. In a particularly ominous module, Darth Vader takes over the screen — breathing menacingly — as stormtroopers, torture droids and Imperial officers march by, reflected in his mask.

While the graphics are visually impressive, riveting music

is included with the screen saver. Approximately 100 digitized sound effects will be featured, including Darth Vader's breathing, the Jawas' chatter, R2-D2's beeps, Chewbacca's growls, and battle sounds

from lasers to explosions.

Star Wars Screen Entertainment is being developed for LucasArts by Presage Software Development, Inc., the company responsible for the Macintosh versions of *Might & Magic III*, *Prince of Persia* and *Lemmings*. Presage co-designers Glenn Sugden and Mike Kennedy are both big *Star Wars* fans.

The screen entertainment program will release this spring for both Macintosh and Windows platforms.

Dark Horse Releases "Sith" Comics

In September Dark Horse will release a two-part *Tales of the Jedi* miniseries covering the Freedon Nadd Uprising. The story features characters from *Tales of the Jedi*, and sets the scene for *Dark Lords of the Sith*.

Dark Lords of the Sith will be on sale in October. The 12-issue series will feature artwork by Chris Gossett, who

illustrated *Tales of the Jedi* #1 and #2 and contributed artwork to the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*.

In August Dark Horse releases the first issue of *Classic Star Wars II*, reprinting and coloring the original syndicated comic strips by Russ Manning. Dark Horse will also release the first of a two-part reprint of the original Marvel Comics

movie adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back*, re-formatting and re-colored. Dark Horse has already released the

comic book adaptation of *Star Wars*, and plans to release the adaptation of *Return of the Jedi* in October and November.

West End Premieres World of Indiana Jones

West End Games is releasing *The World of Indiana Jones* in August as part of the new *MasterBook* roleplaying game system.

Players can adventure in Indy's exciting world, visiting exotic locations, fighting Nazi agents and seeking fantastic treasures. West End will release a campaign pack, *Indiana Jones and the Rising Sun*, in September, and the *Raiders of the Lost Ark Sourcebook* in November.

Other Releases — *Galaxy Guide 11: Criminal Organizations*

will be on sale in September. Slaving, spice mining, smuggling, gun-running... whenever there's a demand for a product somebody will supply the goods no matter what. From huge crime bosses like Jabba the Hutt to low-life thugs and slavers, this book provides details on crime and criminals in the *Star Wars* galaxy.

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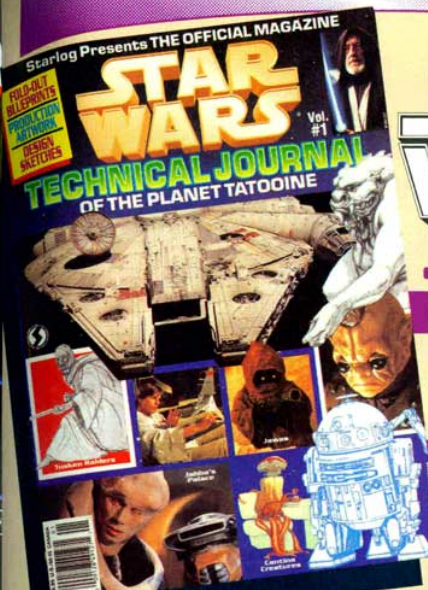
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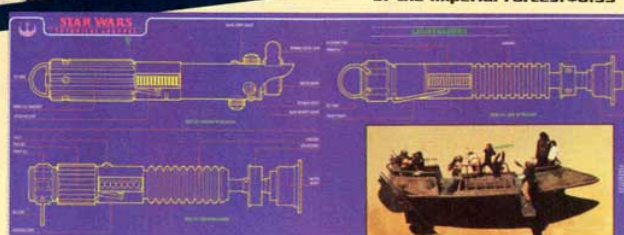
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GALAXYWIDE NewsNets



by Paul Sudlow

Danna sauntered into the lounge and found Gabriel chuckling over her computer console. "Well, just popped us into hyperspace. We ought to hit Gyndine in a couple of hours. It's late in the season, but hopefully their grain market can stand one more hold full of denta beans." He looked down over her shoulder and glanced at the lines scrolling up her screen. "What's new on the NewsNets, Gabby?"

Gabby rolled her eyes and snickered. "Oh, not much, really. Snowmen crashing parties on freedom-loving worlds everywhere, a tariff increase on Brentaal has put imports in the can, bad year for hemmel crops on Delle II, and would you believe Serra Hailey is trying to revive her holo career?"

Danna chuckled. "So? That's what's got you chortling?"

Gabby winked up at him. "Nahhhh. Ran into an old smuggler pal turned code dealer at the spaceport, and got him to sell me this month's access codes to the big CYN." Danna looked blankly at her. Gabby sighed in exasperation. "You know, Cynabar's InfoNet. Strictly blackmarket node outta Nar Shaddaa. Ring a bell?"

Danna raised his eyebrows in dawning comprehension, and whistled. "Hoo boy, Gabby ... you mean we're plugged in?"

"Yeah, that's what I mean, sport, and big time. With a CYN code dealer in pocket, the sky's the limit!" Gabby rose, cracking her knuckles with satisfaction. "Why don't you talk the nav computer into rerouting us out to Lan Barell? Word has it that Lommite is going real cheap out there, no questions asked. And besides," she said, pulling him close for a quick kiss, "if we dump the beans, we might be able to pack in enough Lommite to pay off this crate on one run ..."

"Crate?"

The galaxy is a big and busy place. With millions of inhabited worlds interacting in a complex dance of commerce, diplomacy, and politics, the need for the exchange of reliable and timely information is obvious. Despite various restrictions and barriers placed upon the communication networks of the Empire, news organizations and computer networks play a gargantuan role in keeping the citizens of the Empire informed about the universe around them. Naturally, not all news is accurate, but there are alternative networks that speak to a sector of the body politic not entirely satisfied with the Imperial side of the story.

This article discusses some of the ways news is distributed in the galaxy, provides a sampling of news services that produce newsfiles, and shows how player characters can access these newsfiles, and how gamemasters can produce and use them. Finally, it introduces a new feature of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* that will provide a regular diet of newsfiles.

The Birth of the NewsNets

In the days of the Old Republic, the HoloNet used hyperspace technology to provide real-time links between all points of the inhabited galaxy, allowing the free exchange of information, images, and ideas. The infrastructure allowing such communication, made up of huge computer sorters and decoders, was incredibly complicated and expensive to maintain, but various governments and corporations subsidized it, since it was the HoloNet that helped hold the Old Republic together. The bandwidth of the HoloNet allowed millions of general broadcasts and encoded messages to flit from world to world in a blink of an eye.

Soon after coming to power, Emperor Palpatine discovered that a great deal of communication hostile to the New Order was taking place on the HoloNet, and that news of Imperial atrocities was reaching the Core even as he brought the outlying systems forcefully into the fold. He shut it down with little warning, maintaining only a skeleton network for use by his military machine. This threw the young Empire into chaos, but Palpatine now controlled the distribution of information.

Naturally, Palpatine's drastic measures did not shut down the flow of information for long. The fastest ships commercially available were quickly outfitted with sophisticated broadcasting gear, and sent up and down the trade corridors, system by system, reverting from hyperspace only long enough to uplink and downlink

huge message packets before moving on. The first of these courier shuttles were sent out by trading firms, financial exchanges, and governments.

As fully automated hyperspace-capable courier droids began to replace the shuttles, the major HoloNet networks resumed broadcasting, although now with a perceptible timelag between initial transmission and endpoint reception. An ancient method of communication was being rediscovered, one not entirely controlled by the Empire — a loose conglomeration of sanctioned and pirate networks collectively known as the NewsNets.

Note: In the New Republic era, the HoloNet has been restored in territories controlled by the New Republic, though it is still reserved for high-level military and diplomatic transmissions. Some Imperial-held areas have lost access to the HoloNet entirely.

The NewsNets in Action

While the term "NewsNets" might suggest a centrally organized and orderly reincarnation of the HoloNet, the information distribution system that has grown up in its place is an unruly, chaotic mess. To be sure, the end user is presented with a neat package of newsfiles to choose from. But on the distribution end, there are hundreds of thousands of networks, news agencies, and distributors, all of which deliver their message packets at different times and at different locations in any given system.

When a courier droid pod emerges from hyperspace, the droid broadcasts its message packets to a prearranged target location in a tight beam transmission. The target location might be a communications station on a planet in the system, or a relay buoy orbiting its star. Not every courier droid will beam its packets to the same location, since there are a number of distributors who maintain news services.

As the message packets are received, the local uplink stations send the droid that system's message packets (encrypted to prevent tampering), for immediate broadcasting farther down the pipeline, or (more often), for delivery to the intergalactic news organizations for distribution under their masthead.

The received message packets are stored in the receiver's computers, then transferred to other insystem computer networks that subscribe to the NewsNets, such as community computers, university systems, and corporate computers. Many of the services provided by the NewsNets are not aimed at end consumers, but local networks, businesses, and financial institutions. Some of its files are

two-dimensional and three-dimensional images, intended for use by the local networks in their own broadcasts. Other services, many of them providing millions of newsfiles on a myriad of subjects in a text file format, are available to everyone.

Local Networks

Local networks, those based in individual star systems, operate much as they did in the days of the HoloNet. A network of subspace relays broadcasts two- and three-dimensional images in real-time throughout the system, with none of the time-delay associated with the NewsNets.

The local networks meet most consumer needs through news-casts, sports programs, entertainment programs, and such. Where contemporary local broadcasts differ from those in the days of the HoloNet is in the reception of out-system newsfeeds from the NewsNets. These broadcasts are subject to the time delay imposed by courier droid movements. This news can be hours, days, or weeks old, depending on the distance from the original uplink the message has traveled.

Private citizens who use the NewsNets do not generally downlink the message packets directly from the courier droids. Instead, they log onto private or public computers and use either a household computer or droid to scan the thousands of newsfeeds for items of interest to the household's inhabitants. The selected newsfiles can then be sorted and read on the monitor or datapad.

The message packets *can* be directly intercepted by those with the proper access codes, but the transmission must be intercepted en route to its target location and unscrambled. The memory required for storage of all the incoming information is enormous, utterly beyond mere droids and most ship computers.

Average citizens do not delve too deeply into the NewNets. They tend to let the local networks cull through the courier droid transmissions to find the most interesting intergalactic stories. According to interest, profession, and world of origin, however, an Imperial citizen may also choose to receive an intergalactic newsfeed, or a local newsfeed from another world.

Sanctioned Networks

There are thousands of licensed networks using the NewsNets, ranging from the old HoloNet news agencies and government, political and Imperial feeds, to corporations and trade organiza-

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Jatz Musician Roi Deported From Rimma

Recardeon, Rimma

Jatz musician Fitz Roi, perhaps as well known for his flamboyant and often disastrous stunts as for his magical touch with the Faln horn, has once again managed to bring his concert tour to a blasting halt when his latest exploit resulted in immediate expulsion from Rimma, where he was due to perform in a concert the following morning.

Rimma officials were not amused when Roi, while patronizing the Teirra Parko, wildly shot his famous antique projectile pistols at random fixtures in the Crystal Room. Several of Rimma's historical artistic artifacts on display in the Crystal Room were damaged or destroyed in the chaos, and officials moved quickly to deport Roi permanently from Rimma. Roi had reportedly been drinking prior to the incident, and was responding to a challenge issued by a fellow occupant of the Crystal Room.

Roi's millions of Rimma system fans, who had descended en masse on Recardeon for the concert, went on a rampage upon hearing that the concert had been canceled, causing several hundred thousand credits of damage to downtown property.

Flangth-2-Go, the sponsor of the concert tour, is reportedly considering dropping sponsorship due to the incident. They nearly did so last month when Roi appeared on stage in Camalar, Esseles in the garb of a Jedi Knight, but relented at the last moment. Roi may not be so lucky this time.

TriNebulon News

tions. Some are universally available, some are regional services, while others are limited in distribution to a few systems.

Among the established intergalactic news agencies are Galaxy News Service and Imperial HoloVision. These networks have bureaus on all Core worlds, and in most systems on the major trade routes. In addition, they accept freelance work from smaller local networks throughout the Empire. TriNebulon News and NovaNetwork are examples of regional agencies, and are known for

their tabloid, sensational approach to news. More details on TriNebulon News, NovaNetwork, and Imperial HoloVision can be found in Chapter 11 of *Galaxy Guide 9: Fragments from the Rim*.

Other licensed networks represent corporations. When Ubrikkian Transports announces the debut of a new hovervan, or new stock options available to investors, it places a press release into its newsfeed transmission. This is the only form of promotion possible on the NewsNets, though local networks air ads on their holo channels.

Organizations of all sorts have NewsNet access, and offer a wide range of newsfiles and magazines. The New Order Party's daily newsfeed, the *New Order Progressive*, presents pro-Imperial commentary to party members and interested non-members throughout the Core. A related service, *Coruscant Daily NewsFeed*, covers events in the Imperial capital, and offers readers a glimpse into capital life. *Imperial Defense Daily* provides articles of interest to those who follow the defense industry, and is widely read by weapons enthusiasts, since it profiles all new weapons systems and spacecraft as their existence becomes declassified.

Still other newsfeeds represent financial and trade organizations. The *Corellian Times* and the Basic language edition of the *Herglic Trading Journal* are two of the prime financial publications available. The Independent Traders' Infonet is a borderline case, one carefully watched by the Empire. It is easily obtained in space ports, trading co-ops, and other places spacers frequent, and covers a wide range of issues of interest to small time traders. It does not openly advocate smuggling, which is why the Empire suffers it to be openly distributed. However, its editorial offices are located at an unspecified node, probably because smugglers who can read between the lines often find the ITI aiming articles directly at them.

NewsNet Bias

Licensed networks must present news in a light favoring the Empire (though a certain level of objectivity and criticism is permitted), and are subject to Imperial review by the Imperial Intelligence's Analysis and Media bureaus and COMPNOR's Sector Monitors. Specialized droids sweep the nets, looking for certain key phrases and words that suggest a newsfile might be critical of the Empire. These articles are red flagged for review. If they are found to be overly critical or subversive, the articles are eliminated from the nets, the reporter is censured, fired, or arrested (according to the

violation), and the parent organization fined. Repeated violations, of course, incur more stringent measures.

Such measures are seldom called for in the larger news services, since publishers and editors are careful to ensure their stories adhere to acceptable Imperial standards. Naturally, pretending that there are no Imperial standards or review boards is an important part of adhering to these standards.

35:2:13/IHV/G52E/GER.1.HMD/MIL

Imperial Forces Restore Peace to Gerrard V

Harazod, Gerrard V

After a brief but bloody battle, the Rebel uprising that has held Harazod in a grip of terror for the past week has been put down. The Imperial Star Destroyers *Adjudicator* and *Relentless*, under the command of Admiral Jion Trynn, arrived in the system two days ago, and moved quickly to neutralize the small Rebel navy that had circled the planet. The planetary shield was disabled soon after by an Imperial strike team, and Imperial forces moved into the city early yesterday.

The Rebels fell back to the capitol building, and their leader, General Camon Udeon, read from a manifesto as his small band of terrorists prepared a last-ditch defense. Trynn offered Udeon generous surrender terms, but the latter refused them by shooting the courier. Trynn withdrew his forces last night, and sadly ordered the orbital bombing of the central urban area of Harazod.

Troopers have been moving through the ruins for the past several hours, rounding up surviving Rebels. Trynn suspects that the Rebels here have ties with Mon Mothma's terrorist organization, but until Udeon and the local leadership are rounded up and questioned, this remains a speculation.

Anti-Empire sentiments have long been evident on Gerrard V, but the sudden armed insurrection of last week by segments of the Gerrard military caught Imperial observers by surprise. Governor Danna and Senator Chelo have been ordered to report to the Emperor on Coruscant to explain their failure to eradicate the disease of rebellion while it was yet in its embryonic stage.

Imperial HoloVision

Pirate Networks

There are those who crave news not passed through an Imperial filter, and properly motivated beings can find alternative news sources if they work at it. A significant number of the transmissions originating from courier droids and freighters that appear briefly at the edge of any given system are not Imperially-sanctioned, but are maintained by organizations that have their reasons for avoiding Imperial attention.

Such pirate networks tend to fall into one of two distinct classifications. The first group is made up of the true criminal organizations that would be banned no matter who held the reins of power. These are the smugglers' exchanges, the crime consortiums, the spice shippers and the assassin guilds. The second group is made up of the organizations which have sprung up in opposition to the Imperial machine, either out of local oppression or general principle. Many of these networks are political in nature, though many of the Alliance-affiliated ones are paramilitary as well (and there are even anti-Imperial terrorist groups who think the Alliance doesn't go far enough).

Unlike the licensed NewsNet networks, of course, the pirate networks are not underwritten by government agencies and corporations, and do not downlink their signals to the established government and corporate receivers. They must rely on alternative distribution and payment schemes. Most pirate networks maintain a network of affiliated distributors, who deliver message packets to the systems in their territory via courier droid or shuttle. Their coded signals are broadcast on a wide beam, and picked up by various pirate receivers. The message packets are then decoded and forwarded to interested parties through private distribution channels.

Availability and payment vary according to the sort of network involved. Criminal networks are commonly distributed by local crime bosses, who broadcast encrypted signals system-wide. They sell the decryption codes through a network of code dealers, and the codes are changed periodically. Those tempted to resell codes or pass them on to their friends should be wary. Most code dealers tag each code with a distinct ID pattern, which they use to trace and shut down unauthorized pipelines.

Access to pro-Rebel pirate networks is usually granted to participants in local underground cells, and there are also several prominent propaganda networks which broadcast without encryption. There may or may not be a fee involved in receiving the encrypted newsfeeds. Some networks are underwritten by their host organiza-

tions or by local sponsors. Others require a donation in exchange for access codes.

Naturally, not every dealer will offer every network (very few offer both criminal *and* political networks, for example), and codes will vary from dealer to dealer and system to system. Those who follow a variety of banned networks will likely have to interact with a number of dealers. Likewise, those who travel extensively must either maintain separate accounts in the main systems they frequent, or content themselves with access only when they pass through certain home systems.

Smuggler NewsNets

Two of the most common smuggler's networks originate from Nar Shaddaa (or at least they *seem* to). The Basic edition of the *Nal Hutta Kal'tamok* is a formal trade journal that provides advanced economic and political coverage relating to the buying, transportation, and selling of banned merchandise throughout the galaxy. It is probably the most common pirate network, and is considered to be so reliable that many insurance firms take these financial reports into consideration when determining the value of legitimate cargoes that may be affected by illicit trade. Officially, the Empire would dearly love to shut down this network, but so many bureaucrats and government officials use the *Kal'tamok* to research their own illegal trade activities (among them a considerable number of Moff's and governors), that this has proven difficult.

Cynabar's InfoNet is a less organized newsfeed consisting of the observations of a smuggler known only as Cynabar. Cynabar is the king of rumor mongers, and offers extremely useful advice on hot markets, new Imperial customs tactics, and other areas. He (she, it, they — no one seems to know) also follows the exploits of various prominent smugglers, though he will not betray a confidence. A smuggler can be sure she is up and coming if she finds her name in a Cynabar newsfeed. Indeed, a smuggler is up and coming to gain access to the "big CYN" at all. Access is very exclusive, very expensive, and strictly by invitation only. Interested smugglers must distinguish themselves to get the notice of local dealers, or otherwise tap into the "old being network."

There is a reason for the exclusivity. The information acquired in Cynabar's newsfeeds can lead to very high profits, but only if the pool of smugglers is small enough and skilled enough to be trusted with it. One amateur smuggler can spoil a valuable tip for everyone with one blunder.

Rebel NewsNets

Of the many Rebel-affiliated NewsNets, the most prominent is HoloNet Free Republic. Still bearing the name of its HoloNet origins, the HFR was one of the first subversive holobands which sprang into being soon after Palpatine declared himself Emperor. The HFR presents news free of Imperial propaganda and lies, provides support to Rebel groups on a variety of worlds, and generally encourages citizens of the Empire to support the Alliance to Restore the Republic. It is broadcast unencrypted in most Imperial systems, and anyone knowing the channel number can pick it up.

Other pro-Rebel news services exist. One that is particularly effective in disseminating uncensored news is the Alderaan Expatriate Network, a NewsNet that arose soon after the destruction of Alderaan. Many of the AEN's support staff are former members of Alderaan's media who were stationed in offplanet bureaus when their homeworld was destroyed. As a result, reporting from AEN is thorough and professional.

35:2:19/CYN/NAR.4.SHD/TRD

Ithorian Shamarok Flitters Rage of Lianna

Nar Shaddaa Node

For those looking for a quick turnaround, word's out that Ithorian flitters have become very hot items on Lianna amongst the well to-do. Flitters are small flying rodents that can imitate other beings' speech, for those who aren't familiar with this particular rodent. I sure wasn't a month ago. I have no idea why anyone would want such a little horror in his or her home, but there you are.

Ithorian herd ships are selling the flitters for about 400 credits, and the going price in Lianna Metro is 1,200 credits. Obviously, this price won't last long, but the window of opportunity will likely remain open for at least another week before everyone catches wind of it. To expedite customs at Lianna, be sure to carry an IC-40X1-CRE permit from Imperial Commerce. Note that only ships with livestock transport rated main cargo holds qualify for the permit.

Cynabar's InfoNet

Virastacks

A final comment must be made on virastacks. Virastacks are newsfiles in the form of virus programs that insinuate themselves in mainstream newsfeed transmissions, only to pop up without warning in the strangest places. Since news distributors expend a great deal of energy in finding and stopping such programs, few spread very far.

Two virastacks which have achieved a certain level of infamy are the Justice Action Network and *Galactic Weekly NewsStack*. The former is an extremist (even by Alliance standards) network that encourages mass revolution against the Empire, and the latter is an irreverent publication poking fun at authority figures of all stripes (more details on the *NewsStack* can be found on page 82 of *Galaxy Guide 9: Fragments from the Rim*).

The newfiles of these two organizations have spread far and wide, and have appeared in the middle of military training tapes, flower arranging holoshows, and swoop racing digests. COMPNOR and Imperial Intelligence are beside themselves to stop the spread of these newsfiles, but the engineers and programmers who produce them have thus far managed to keep one step ahead of the Empire in terms of circumventing anti-virus measures.

NewsNets and the Game Campaign

The NewsNets can be a useful tool in promoting game campaigns and fleshing out the universe. Perhaps the most practical way a gamemaster can use NewsNets is to provide adventure hooks to player characters. If a gamemaster has prepared a new adventure environment, such as a new planet, cruise ship, or city, it can easily be presented in a newsfile designed to attract the attention of the player characters. Smuggler groups can be introduced to new markets and hot new smuggling opportunities. Freelance Rebel operatives can be exposed to worlds ripe for revolution and Imperial weaknesses ready for exploitation.

Gamemasters can also use the NewsNets to impart knowledge that will play a role in future adventures. If a gamemaster knows the players will soon need background information about an adventure, the NewsNets can provide a more elegant manner of introducing this information rather than simply telling them at the proper moment in the adventure.

This use of the NewsNets works particularly well when it comes to introducing gamemaster characters. Meeting a movie character

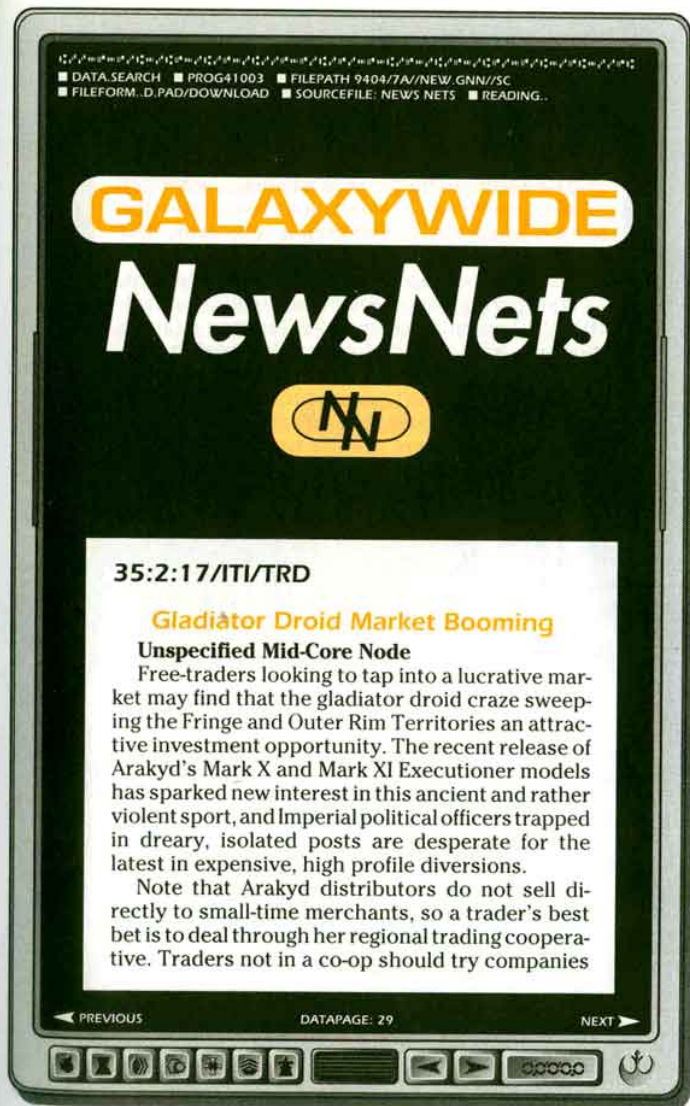
like Han Solo in a gaming environment is a big thrill to players. Why? Because all the players know who Solo is, they know of the outrageous stunts he's pulled, and have followed many of his adventures through movies and books. He's a living legend. Players have an immediate handle on how their characters will respond to Solo when they encounter him.

Gamemasters can achieve some of the same effects by introducing their own supporting characters into the game environment — through the NewsNets — before the player characters actually meet them. Players can form opinions about people they read about in the NewsNets, especially if the same names keep appearing. When the player characters finally meet the legendary smugglers Bettle and Jaxa after months of following their exploits, the roleplaying opportunities will be richer than if the players are informed by you that the smugglers their characters just met are infamous. Naturally, the NewsNets are a two-way affair — the player characters may find their own exploits spreading via the NewsNets as their own careers progress!

Sources for NewsNet Ideas

In writing newfiles, gamemasters have many resources at their disposal. The various *Cracken's* books are great sources of colorful gamemaster characters who may make the news in some manner. Raymond Velasco's *A Guide to the Star Wars Universe* has long been out of print, but a second edition by Bill Slavicsek was recently published. Either book is a gold mine of information about *Star Wars*. News stories drawn from contemporary newspapers and magazines can also provide inspiration for newfiles. The *New York Times* and the *Economist*, both available at public libraries, often have newfile sections that can get the creative juices flowing.

While gamemasters will want to write most of their own NewsNet newfiles customized to fit in their campaign, there is a whole galaxy out there, and many events going on beyond the scope of one little corner of the universe. The *Star Wars Adventure Journal* is launching a new regular feature this issue, *Galaxywide NewsNets*, which will present a wide selection of newfiles from around the galaxy that gamemasters can intersperse among their own newfiles. Chronologically, the newfiles begin shortly before the events described in *Star Wars: A New Hope*, and will proceed in a chronological fashion, with roughly three months of *Star Wars* universe time passing in every issue. They will present details on various cultures, events and personalities around the galaxy.



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which do deal with small cargo merchants (such as zZip). Be advised that even at wholesale, gladiator droids demand a considerable investment—the Mark X unit costs 29,000 credits wholesale. The initial sale can be followed up with further sales in maintenance packages and battle arena equipment.

Transporting these legitimately requires an LQ-1010-DNG permit from Imperial Commerce (and a thorough background check). If Imperial inspectors discover a trader with a cargo hold of the things and no permit, they'll assume that she's running assassin droids and are rather likely to shoot her on the spot. Traders are *strongly* advised to carry a permit.

Independent Traders' Infonet

35:3:3/GNS/923E/RAL.3.GRA/MIL

Ralltiir Uprising Quelled

Grallia Spaceport, Ralltiir

Imperial forces commanded by Lord Tion moved to suppress Rebel terrorist activities on Ralltiir early this week. Tion evoked emergency powers with the Emperor's blessing, effectively sealing the entire system as the Imperial task force moved in to seize strategic assets and restore stability and peace to the embattled planet.

Imperial intervention came after a month-long

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investigation revealed that Rebel revolutionaries had infiltrated the Ralltiir High Council, intent on sowing discord and unrest among the populace. The entire High Council has been disbanded, and its members are being detained under charges of treason.

An Imperial spokesman for Lord Tion stated at a press conference that due to the wide-spread Rebel underground on Ralltiir, the Imperial blockade is expected to continue for some time, as officials move to identify and eradicate Rebel Alliance resistance fighters and sympathizers.

For the safety of the citizens, all travel privileges offplanet have been revoked, and onplanet travel is restricted.

Numerous disaster relief organizations have been denied access to the system, and emergency powers statutes have permitted Lord Tion to rebuff several attempts by elements in the Imperial Senate to launch independent investigations.

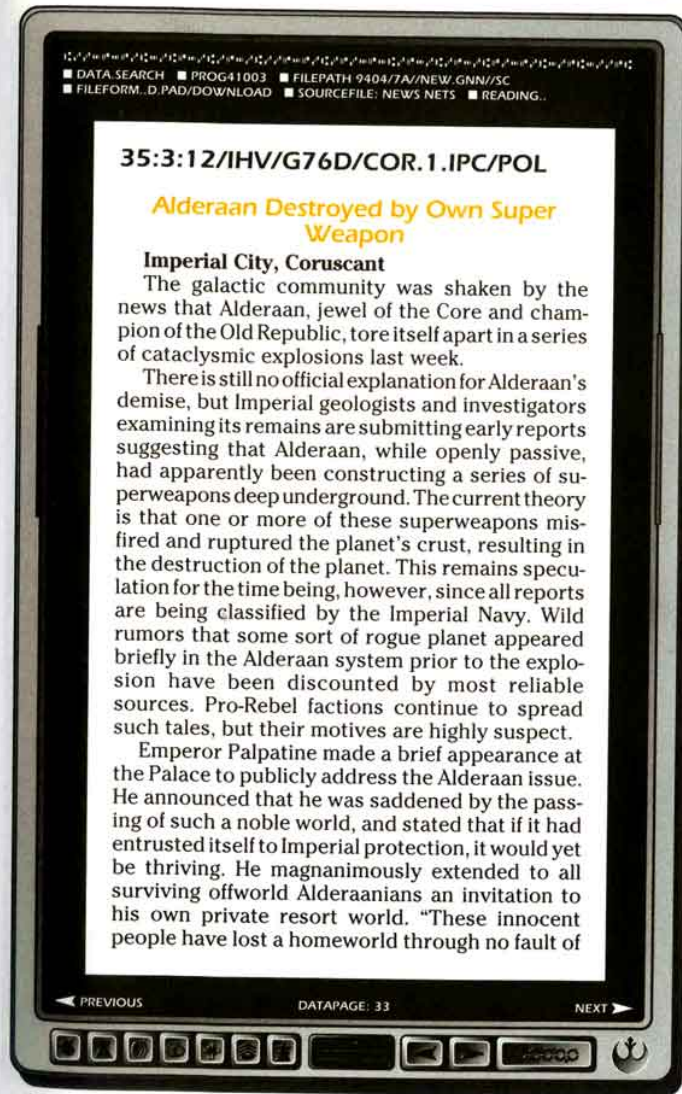
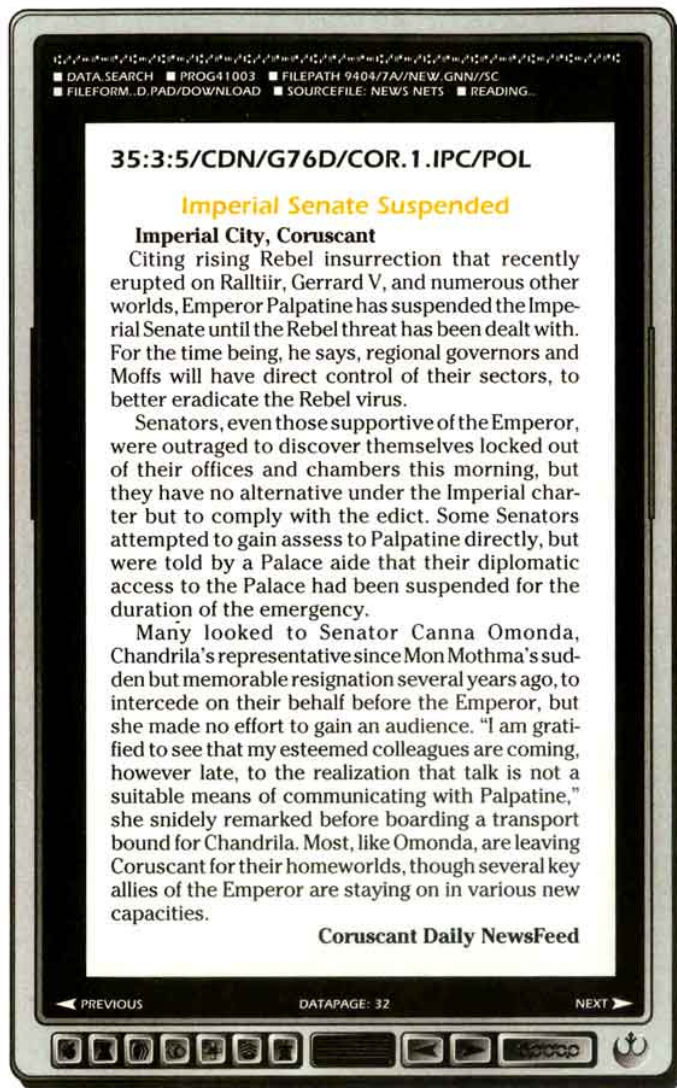
Those traveling along the Perlemian Trade Route in the Darpa Sector are advised that the entire Ralltiir system is off limits until further notice.

Galaxy News Service

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their own," he stated. "Offering them a new home-world is the least I can do to compensate them for their loss."

Imperial HoloVision

35:3:14/HER/G76R/LAZ.4.LAR/TRD

Kira Run Opening Up to Mainstream Trade

Lazeria, Lazerian IV

It has been several decades now since the Haik expedition blazed a reliable hyperlane through the Kira system, linking the Harrin Trade Corridor with the Enarc Run. Up until now, the hazardous Run has been seen as a route only for the daring and reckless. Independent traders, hungrier and more desperate for income than larger concerns, have for years braved the uncertainty of the route, reaping the rewards of a successful run, and occasionally paying the price of an unsuccessful one.

Of late, however, several small shipping companies have committed to servicing the Kira Run, bringing it into the community of established trade routes. Should the large megacorporations likewise determine that the Kira Run is a safe venture, the region may soon experience a robust surge in trade activity, making it an ideal location for support industries and concerns. Indeed, many speculators are now forecasting an explosion in the economies of the Lazerian and Ropagi systems, which serve as the endpoints of the Kira Run.

Herglic Trading Journal, Basic Edition

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 D.Mipps

Ralltiir Blockade Impacting Sector Economy

Camalar, Esseles

The Imperial blockade sealing the Ralltiir system to cargo transports is beginning to take its toll on the Darpa sector. The economic impact is already being felt both here on Esseles and in other nearby systems linked to Ralltiir via the Perlemian Trade Route, as interstellar trade grinds to a halt and millions of vessels are turned back at the blockade perimeter.

The cessation of trade along the Corridor is hitting the alien sector of the economy particularly hard, since many of its members work in the transportation industry. Labor organizations are making plans to open support networks to help disadvantaged members.

Governor Jander Graff, busily working to replace departing Senator Gabrial Atanna's bureaucracy, has not yet commented on the blockade, though one key official on his transition team stated off the record that the Governor hopes to have normalized trade relations to Ralltiir restored within a month.

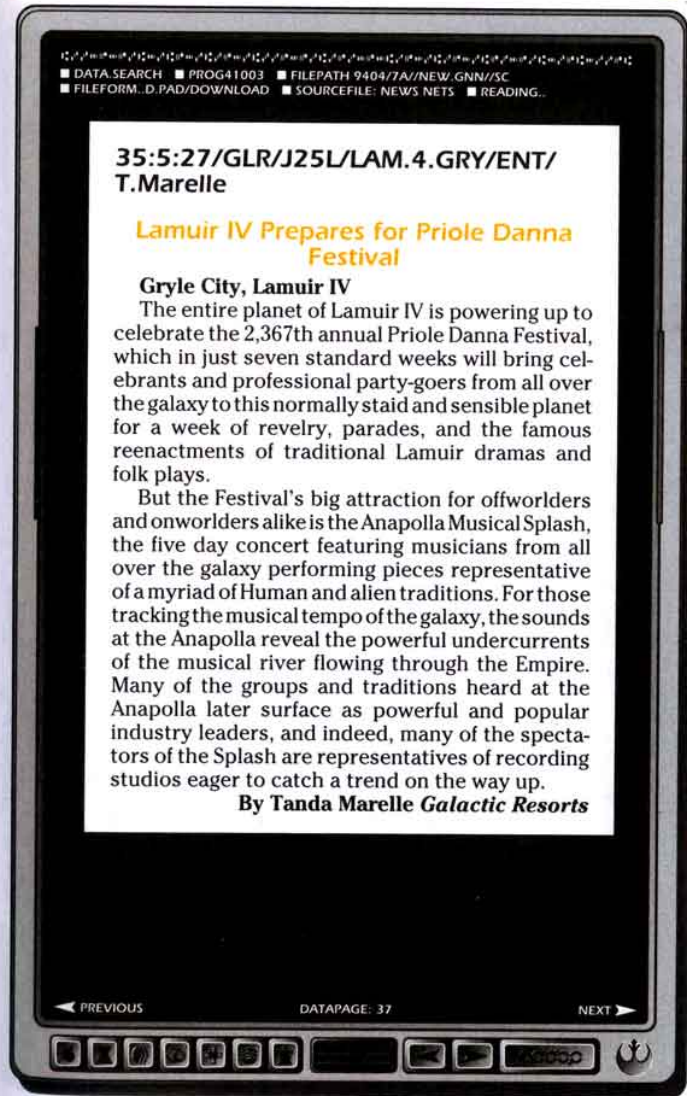
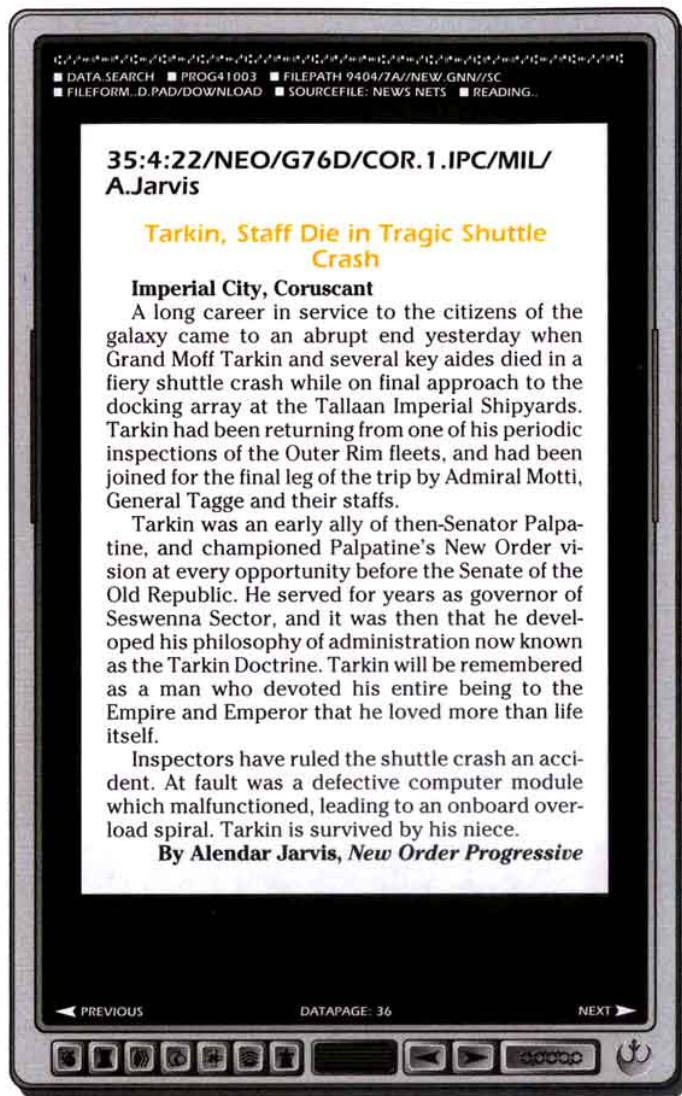
By Deena Mipps, Darpa SectorNet

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Ralltiir Wide Open

Nar Shaddaa Node

With the official blockade still locked tight around the Ralltiir system, the corporate bulk cargo transports are effectively denied system access. Word has it that certain CSA contractors are attempting to obtain special exemptions from the Emperor, but until they do, anyone with the bolyatze to run the blockade is facing a captive and now desperate market.

Small cargo items in high demand are personal expendables, luxury foodstuffs, heavy-duty survival equipment and firearms. We would not advise transporting weapons if you cannot outrun an Imperial frigate, since the current penalty for being caught with such a cargo insystem is immediate execution.

Sharky's gang has reportedly already cracked the market, and if Bettle and Jaxa can find Doc and get the *Mallixer* souped up, we figure they'll be making the run as well. Nada Synnt (oh, *please*, Trooper ...) has been keeping his operatives away, but this must have changed with Tion's death, since Danken and a couple of others are definitely drifting in that direction. We're kind of surprised that Solo and the Wook aren't making a run, but they seem to be laying low these days. This certainly is their style ...

Cynabar's InfoNet

GALAXY GUIDE 11

CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

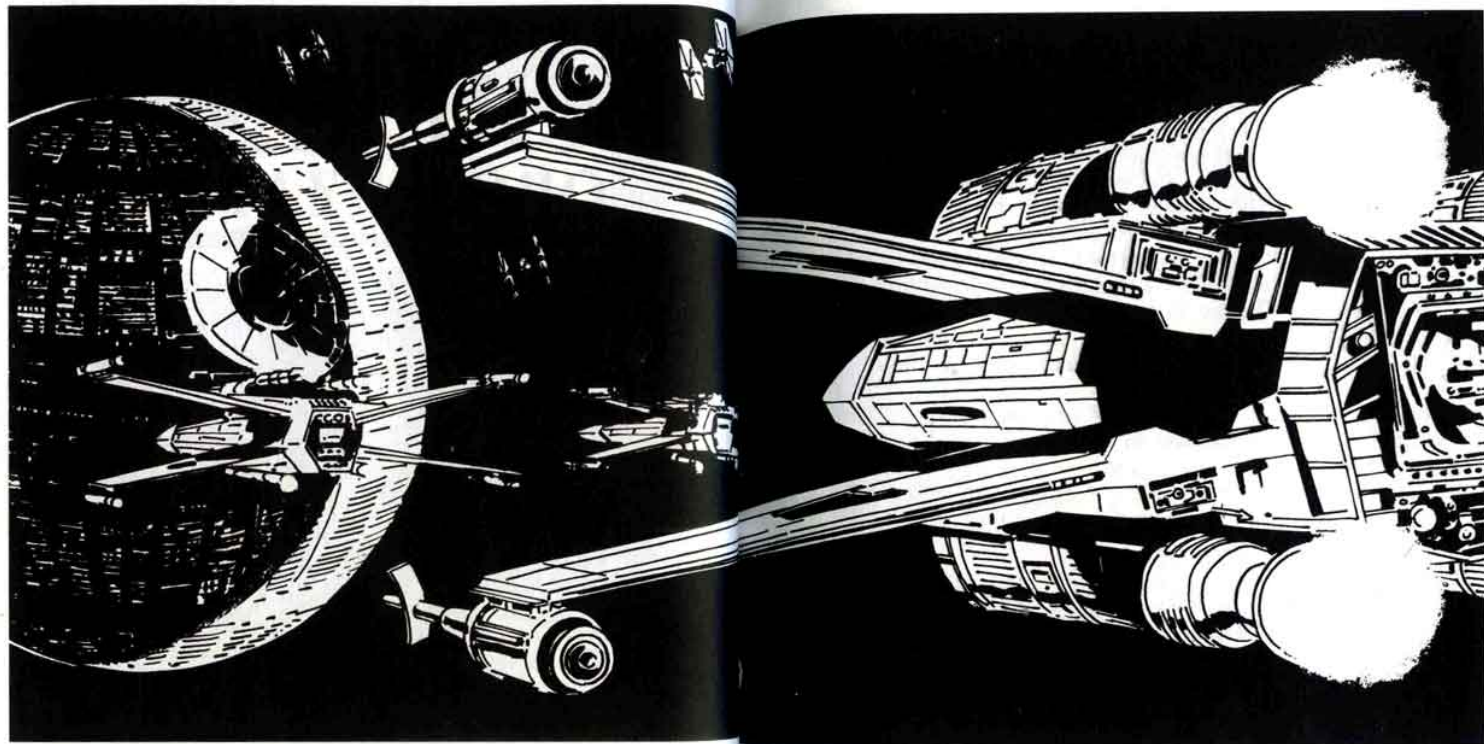


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Al Williamson:

Drawing A Daily Diet of Star Wars Comics

By Ilene Rosenberg

Illustrations by Al Williamson
Illustration Text by Archie Goodwin

Shortly after *The Empire Strikes Back* hit the big screen in the early 1980s, newspapers across the country began running daily accounts of the lives of *Star Wars* heroes and villains. The story of their adventures between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* was told on the "funny pages" of the American press. Their biographer was Archie Goodwin, and the man who captured their lives in still pictures was Al Williamson.

Williamson illustrated the black-and-white syndicated *Star Wars*

comic strip that ran in newspapers between 1981 and 1984. In 1993, Dark Horse Comics began editing and coloring the strips, which the company is currently presenting in comic book format.

The American-born artist lived in Bogotá, Colombia, with his family until he was 12. While a child in the South American country, he discovered comics and began drawing. When he was 17, he started working for Famous Funnies. In 1952, after working on western and science fiction comic books for various publishers, Williamson began working for EC Comics.

In the 1960s, Al Williamson worked for King Features Syndicated and illustrated one of the premier "space opera" comic strips — *Flash Gordon*. In 1978, Lucasfilm asked him to draw a new "space opera" book — something later called *Star Wars*. But a shortage of time and plenty of other commitments caused him to turn the offer down.

Williamson worked on Marvel Comics' adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back* with Archie Goodwin. In 1981, he teamed up with the

On the neutral planet of **KABAL...**
Leia watches the **MILLENNIUM**
FALCON depart.



writer again and produced the daily and the Sunday strip, which ran until 1984.

Today, Williamson inks Marvel's *Spiderman 2099* and *Ghost Rider*. He has not stopped illustrating *Star Wars* completely, however. He recently drew pictures for Dark Horse Comics' *Classic Star Wars* covers and for West End Games' *Star Wars* roleplaying books as well.

Williamson now lives in Pennsylvania with his wife, Cori. He has a daughter, Valerie, and son, Victor, 12, who, like his father, is "drawing up a storm."

• • •

Q: How were you picked to create the *Star Wars* comic strips that are now *Classic Star Wars*?

A: When the movie came out, it was such a success that they wanted to have comic books. In fact, I was approached before that to do it in comic book form, before it was known as *Star Wars*. I



remember later, George Lucas had seen my work in the science fiction EC books and in the *Flash Gordon* books, and he wanted me to do it. That's the story I get. They did get in touch, and there was no way that I could do anything. I didn't know who it was and what it was for. It was sort of out of the blue and I was so busy with work. In any case, I couldn't have done it — I had a contract with King Features to do *Secret Agent X9* and I was doing another strip, so there was no way I could do it.

That was the first time. The second time was when the movie came out, somebody from Lucasfilm did get in touch with me in late '77. He told me all about it. He told me that George liked my work and that they still wanted to do a Sunday page and a daily, and they wanted me to do it. But again, even though I did a couple of samples, I couldn't do it.

They gave the strip to a very good artist named Russ Manning, who did a very good job, but unfortunately Russ got sick after about a year or two of doing the strip. At that point I had given up my contract, and they asked me again. At that point, Marvel asked me

to do the adaptation to *The Empire Strikes Back*. They had liked what I'd done on the adaptation of *Empire*, and they asked me again if I'd like to take it over, because Russ was giving it up. And at that point, I said "sure." I started working on that in '81.

Q: Your work shows your love for the *Star Wars* trilogy. What about the movies made you fall in love with them?

A: I always liked films and movies and serials very, very much, so it was right up my alley. It was a lot of fun. The characters are great.

It was just my kind of stuff. It was Edgar Rice Burroughs. It was *Flash Gordon*. It was everything all rolled into one. It was very exciting. I was just like a kid. I took the kids to see it and they had a great time. We went to see it about five or six times — the first movie.

Q: The original comic strips were published in newspapers across the country at a time when everyone was awaiting the next film. Did you know what was going to happen in advance so you could avoid plot conflicts?

A: No, we didn't. When we had taken over the strip, we knew the first movie, of course, and we knew the second movie. Archie Goodwin was the writer, and a very good writer. He had decided to have our strips done between the first two movies. So that's how we did it. We just took from the first movie and worked it up to the second movie. We did stories and introduced characters. Toward the end of the third year, we were able to use Jabba the Hutt, because by that time the third movie had come out, so we knew what Jabba looked like.

But, basically, Archie created characters and brought some from



the first movie. We did introduce a character from the third movie. We introduced, before the movie came out, Admiral Ackbar. That was about the only thing we knew about the third movie.

Q: How closely did you have to work with Lucasfilm to do this project? Did you have to work under any restrictions from Lucasfilm?

A: There were no problems. We just wrote it, they okayed it. They were the sweetest people to work for. They never asked us for corrections or changes in the script or in the drawings.

Q: Have you ever met George Lucas? What's he like?

A: I met him briefly. He's a very nice guy. He struck me as the kind of a person that people want to do their best work for. When you meet him, and if you are working for him or working on a project, he's one of those rare people who get the best out of you.

He's very quiet, but he knows what he wants. And he seems like a very nice person. He was very nice to us. My wife and I met him briefly back in 1987. We went to the Skywalker Ranch and they showed us around. He spent about half an hour with us, which was very nice, because I knew he was in the middle of a couple of films. There were people all around, in conference rooms, talking. There was an awful lot going on, so he didn't have to do that.

Q: How has space opera changed since you began drawing it?

A: It's gotten a little grimmer, except that *Star Wars* isn't really grim. It's exciting, it's adventurous.

In my time, science fiction started to get serious. The science fiction stories I did for EC publications were pretty much science fiction, not space opera. It wasn't *Buck Rogers* or *Flash Gordon*. It was pretty much Ray Bradbury. They were all serious science fiction stories that had never been done in comic books before. Everything up to that time had pretty much been a rip-off of *Buck Rogers* or *Flash Gordon*.

Q: How is *Star Wars* different from other space operas?

A: I guess it's because of the good story and the good characters. It's a world on its own — [George Lucas] created a special world. It's a very interesting world, I think. He created Darth Vader and Ben

NOT EATEN...YOUR MILLENNIUM FALCON WAS MERELY HAILED TO THE MUD LAKE'S BOTTOM! ESCAPE PODS WHICH CARRIED ME...MY MEN... SUFFERED THE SAME!



Kenobi and some very interesting characters. In the old *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon* there was never anything really serious, or any messages. Not that George is giving messages. He's just giving very positive stuff — the idea of the Force. In that case, it's a vast improvement, story-wise, to the old science fiction heroes.

Q: What, in your opinion, makes a good *Star Wars* comic book?

A: First of all, it has to be fairly well drawn and very close to what George Lucas has done. You get away from that, and it isn't *Star Wars* anymore. You have to try to keep the spirit of the film. That's what I tried to do and that's what Archie tried to do. We tried to keep the characters looking as close as possible to what the characters looked like in the film. Otherwise, I don't think the kids would pay attention.

Q: What was it like working on the comic book adaptations of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* while the movies were being made?

A: It was very exciting because here we are in this little town. *Star*



Wars, before the second movie came out, was just an incredible thing. All the kids and everybody were just talking about it, even up to the time that the movie came out. So, we had all this information here in this little town, and nobody knew it. We had movie stills, we knew what the story was about. It was very exciting to be working on it. We knew exactly what the story was because Archie had to take it from the movie script. There were no restrictions. They just asked us not to tell anyone or show the stuff, and we didn't.

Q: Were you surprised with the popularity of the *Star Wars* cycle so many years after the movies had come out? Why do you think the *Star Wars* series continues to remain so popular?

A: It never really died, but it seems to be booming again. It's such a marvelous idea. It'd been about 20 years since the first movie, maybe a new generation of kids [is discovering it]. Look at all the stuff that we have to put up with; all this violence and garbage. That's okay I guess, if you go for that sort of thing, but I don't think kids like it that much.

It's really good stuff. And if it's really good stuff, it won't die. It's

fun and entertaining. It's not stupid, it's a positive story. The characters are noble, they're good people, and I think that's important. I can't think of anything else that's been done for kids that has that — that kind of story, that is.

Q: What projects have you worked on for West End Games?

A: I've done interior work in the books. They were drawings of all the characters from the film.

Q: Do you think the gaming industry is a new training ground for new artists?

A: When I started, I started right off in comic books and I'd never done anything like that. For me it was kind of fun to do something different. I think it is a good training ground, when you think about it.

Q: What's it like working with artists who once idolized your work when they were kids?

A: It's very pleasant to have someone say they like my work. I kind of take it with a grain of salt, but it's nice.

Q: What was your initial reaction to Dark Horse's decision to release the black-and-white comic strips in a colorized comic book form?

A: It was pleasant. I didn't think it was going to work. I didn't think it was going to sell. It turns out that it's doing fairly well, considering that it's a reprint book. So I guess the kids like it, which is great.

When you do something for a newspaper strip, you do it for the newspaper — you never expect it to be in comic books. And, unfortunately, when they put it into a comic book, they have to cut out a lot of stuff because it's repetitive. It follows every day and sometimes we have to recap a lot of stuff that you wouldn't otherwise. So [in the comic book version], a lot of stuff is dropped out. And, unfortunately a lot of the panels that they drop out are panels that I particularly liked.

Q: Do you think today's readers are seeing the books differently than fans of the original strips because of their knowledge of the trilogy's plot?

A: Most of the readers, I think, are seeing our strip for the first

time. It looks different. You look at one of the pages in comic book form, and it doesn't look like a comic book. It looks like a lot of panels put together with balloons coming from them. They don't have the layout that a regular comic book has. And I would think that they would find that a little bit boring.

Q: Do you have plans to work on any other *Star Wars*-related projects?

A: Not really. I'll still do a couple of covers of *Star Wars*-related stuff for Dark Horse, but that's about it. Most of my work is at Marvel.



HoloNet Hype



Terrific Writers!

To the Editor:

Wow! The first issue of the *Adventure Journal* was fantastic! It was great to read another wonderful story by Timothy Zahn. I had always wondered how Talon Karrde met Mara Jade. *Chessa's Doom* brought tears to my eyes. Keep recruiting terrific writers!

Thanks for the interview with Timothy Zahn. I had reservations about someone other than George Lucas writing in the *Star Wars* universe. My fears disappeared after the first 10 pages when I could hear the music and the actors I adore so much ...

I am looking forward to playing the solitaire adventure when I get some spare time. I'm afraid it will take the Force to get my roleplaying group together to use the other adventures, but maybe ...

The only question I have is about the 12 books that Bantam will be publishing. What are they about and when will they be out?

Keep up the good work and I will be waiting with anticipation for the next issue of the *Adventure Journal*!

May the Force be with you,

Kristina Brimm, Weldon, IA

Thanks for your praises, Kristina. I also made a quick phone call to find an answer to your question about those 12 *Star Wars* novels. According to Bantam Books' *Star Wars* editor, the 12 novels after Tim Zahn's trilogy include Kathy Tyers' *The Truce at Bakura*, Dave Wolverton's *The Courtship of Princess Leia*, Kevin Anderson's *Jedi Academy* trilogy, Vonda McIntyre's *The Crystal Star*, a paperback trilogy by Roger MacBride Allen, hardcover novels by Margaret Weiss

and Barbara Hambly, and a final book by Tim Zahn. The short story anthologies Kevin Anderson is working on are in addition to those 12 novels. Watch the New Horizons column for more details.

Solo Star Wars

To the Editor:

I just received the first issue of your *Star Wars Adventure Journal*. I love it! I am very new at playing the *Star Wars* roleplaying game and I have a question. In the *Adventure Journal* there was a roleplaying "solitaire adventure" entitled *Regina Cayli*. Do you publish entire books of solitaire adventures? If not, it is something worth looking into. I only have one friend that would be interested in playing the roleplaying game with me ...


Kareem Badr, North Babylon, NY

I'm glad you enjoyed the solitaire adventure. Although West End Games is not planning on publishing any solitaire adventures as supplements, we would like to include some in the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*. Look for *The Void Terror* in this issue. You might also want to look for two solitaire game books West End published in the past — *Jedi Honor* and *Scoundrel's Luck*. If you can't find or order them at your local hobby, book or game store, West End Games still has a few in stock.

Tell Us What You Think!

What do you think of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*? What would you like to see? Write a letter to the editor. We might print it in a future HoloNet Hype column! Letters must be no longer than 200 words, signed and should include your name, address and phone number.

Send your letters to: HoloNet Hype, West End Games, RR 3 Box 2345, Honesdale, PA 18431.

For a guaranteed response, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your letter. All material (including letters) published in the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* becomes the property of Lucasfilm Ltd. Letters are subject to editing for publication. 

SHATTERZONE

WHERE
NO ONE CARES
IF YOU SCREAM!





Mission to ZILA

By Charlene Newcomb

Illustrations by Mike Villardi

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The room was dark, lit only by the soft glow of medical equipment. Its hum was the only sound that broke the silence.

Alex felt exhausted. Her body movements seemed sluggish. Her head ached. *How did I get here, she wondered. Where am I?*

There was a movement outside the door. She sensed a familiar presence, as if someone thought about entering the room but was frightened away. Then, another pair of footsteps echoed through the corridor. The door into the room slid open. A sudden stream of light caused her to squint at the figure who approached the bedside. She could just make out the insignia of a captain in the Imperial Navy.

"Alexandra?" he called, his voice so distant.

"Where am I?" she asked, barely able to form the words.

"You're on the *Judicator*."

"What?" Alex looked up into the face standing over the bed. She recognized Captain Brandei.

"Don't you remember what happened?" he asked.

She shook her head slowly.

"Your fighter was hit, then caught in our tractor beam."

My fighter?

"Your father doesn't know he raised a traitor to the Empire."

Father?!

"No!" Alex sat straight up in bed. Her heart pounded as she gasped for air. Her eyes darted around the room. There was no medical equipment, no Captain Brandei. She was in her dorm at the University.

She fell back on the pillow and stared at the ceiling. Was it just a dream? *Me? Flying a starfighter? Captured by an Imperial Star Destroyer!*

Could this be a vision of her future? Would the New Republic come to Garos IV? And would she work with them to free this world she called home? That's what she had always lived for —

It's what she might die for —

An alarm buzzed. As sunlight streamed through the window, Alex glanced at the chronometer. 0715. She was supposed to meet her father at Imperial Headquarters in 45 minutes.

"Good morning, gentlemen," Alex greeted the two officers in General Zakar's reception room.

"Morning, Miss Winger," Lieutenant Nilo said, nodding his head.

Dair Haslip stood up and walked over to Alex. He squeezed her hand gently. "Hello, Alex. I didn't think I'd see you today."

"Father had an early meeting with the general and needed to pick up some reports before we left for Zila. I've only got a minute. Can you walk with me to his office?" she asked him.

Dair threw a glance toward Nilo. "Yeah, I think I can trust him to keep an eye on things."

"Thanks for your vote of confidence, o wise lieutenant!" Nilo kidded him.

Alex led Dair out into the corridor where he delicately slipped his hand out of hers. Proper military protocol. He was genuinely fond of Alex. This "relationship" they'd established as part of their cover with Garos IV's underground was a lot harder for him than he'd ever admit. But he knew how Alex felt. She'd always been honest with him. Friends, she'd said — just friends.

Alex Winger



Type: Underground freedom fighter
DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 7D, dodge 5D, grenade 4D, heavy weapons 5D, melee 5D+2, melee parry 5D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 5D, languages 3D+2, planetary systems 4D+1, streetwise 4D+2, survival 5D+1, value 5D

MECHANICAL 3D+1

Astrogation 4D+2, beast riding 4D, repulsorlift operation 6D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, command 6D, con 5D+1, hide 5D+2, search 5D+1, sneak 5D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 3D+1, stamina 6D+1

TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 5D+2, demolition 5D, droid programming 5D+1,

repulsorlift repair 4D+2, security 4D+1

Special Abilities:

Force Skills: Sense 1D

Sense: Life detection

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 6

Character Points: 12

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), blaster rifle (5D), comlink, macrobinoculars

Capsule: Alex Winger is a 20-year-old freedom fighter and daughter (by adoption) of Imperial Governor Tork Winger of Garos IV. She is poised and graceful when the situation demands it, but privately is all tomboy. Those who know her well agree that Alex is bright, quick-witted, and loyal — someone they can always count on.

She has worked with Garos' underground for four years, and is wholeheartedly committed to every aspect of their struggle against the Empire. She willingly risks her own life in these troubled times.

Alex is a Force-sensitive individual. She experiences visions, some of which have come true. At times, she has been able to sense danger, but she has not learned how to call on this power at will.

Ultimately, Alex and her friends in the underground realize they will need the help of the New Republic to remove the Imperial threat from Garos IV. But every little dent they can make, every weapon they can steal or supply line they can disrupt only furthers their resolve to continue the fight for freedom and justice.

"When will you be back?"

"Tonight. There's a study group meeting at 2100 that I plan to attend," she told him.

He nodded — he was planning to be at that meeting of the underground, too. "Well, then, I guess I won't see you until tomorrow," he said, playing along with the conversation for the benefit of those they passed in the corridor.

"Maybe we can have lunch," she suggested, nodding to a group of officers who greeted her.

"Can I hold you to that?"

"Of course," she smiled at him, stifling a yawn.

"Are you okay?" he asked her.

"Just a little tired. I had the strangest dream."

"Maybe you can tell me about it over lunch." He stopped just outside her father's office. "Listen, you be careful out there today — no crazy stunts."

"Hey! I'm always careful, Lt. Haslip!" she laughed.

He grinned, shaking his head. The door slid open into the Imperial Governor's reception room. The distinguished looking gentleman standing by the desk turned and smiled at the young couple.

"Well, I'm not surprised!" he exclaimed. "I knew exactly where to send the search team."

"Oh, Father!"

"How are you, Governor?" Dair asked, extending his hand. For a 70-year-old man, Tork Winger had a grip as strong as any 30-year-old.

"I'm just fine, Lieutenant. Good to see you again. Why hasn't Alexandra brought you for dinner at the mansion recently?" he chided.

Dair shrugged his shoulders. "You'll have to ask your daughter that, Governor."

"All right. If you two are going to gang up on me, I'm leaving!" Alex groaned.

Winger placed an arm around his daughter's waist, but winked at Dair. "I'll put in a good word for you, Lieutenant."

"Thank you, sir."

"Shall we go, my dear?"

"Yes, Father." Alex smiled, looped her arm through her father's arm, and led him toward the door.

"Have a good flight, sir."

"Thank you, Haslip."

"See you tomorrow," Alex called to him as the door slid shut behind them.

Ariana's spaceport was crowded with new arrivals, but the regulars couldn't help noticing one familiar face. Heads turned, faces brightened, and hands waved as Alexandra Winger walked confidently through the corridors. The 20-year-old daughter of Imperial Governor Tork Winger was well known here. She'd been flying since she was 11 — probably one of the best pilots on Garos IV. And if she wasn't in classes at the University, undoubtedly she could be found deep in discussion with the spaceport techs. Alex knew as much about airspeeders as most of them!

"Good morning, Miss Winger," the flight systems coordinator greeted her as she checked in with the controller's office.

"Good morning, Lt. Vilsics."

"Your airspeeder is prepped and ready to go. Technician Haras worked on the problem you reported. He said you were right about the stabilizer. It's as good as new."

"Good. I'd hate for the governor to have a rough ride this morning," Alex kidded him.

"He couldn't be in better hands," Vilsics replied with a smile.

"Thanks for taking care of it," she called, heading out the door and into the corridor.

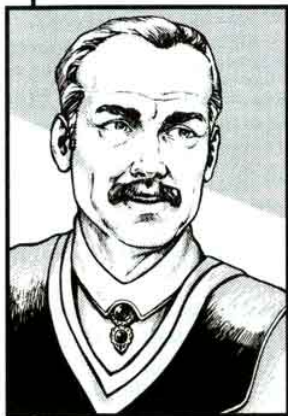
Alex hid her emotions behind a smile as she counted at least a dozen ships unloading supplies — supplies meant for the increasing number of Imperial personnel on Garos IV. Their presence on this world had grown significantly in the last few years.

The underground, which Alex had worked with for nearly four years, managed to dent Imperial operations whenever possible, disrupting supply lines, stealing equipment — anything to make Imperial lives miserable. But each day brought increasing dangers as the Empire sought to protect its interest in the mines south of the

Adventure Idea

The characters are the crew of a New Republic scout ship that tracks an Imperial Star Destroyer to the fourth planet in the Garos system. After landing in the spaceport, they notice a large amount of Imperial activity. The characters investigate why the Empire is so concerned with Garos and must avoid capture by stormtroopers and a suspicious Imperial customs officer at the starport before returning to the New Republic with their report.

Tork Winger



Type: Imperial Governor of Garos IV
DEXTERITY 2D+1

Blaster 6D

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 8D, bureaucracy 9D+2, cultures 8D+2, languages 8D, planetary systems 8D+2, survival 5D, value 6D

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 5D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D, space transports 5D+2

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 10D, command 10D+1, con 9D

STRENGTH 2D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 4

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster (4D), data pad

Capsule: Tork Winger was one of the first Garosians to enter the service of the Old Republic about 50 years ago.

After serving five years in the Army, Winger returned to Garos, and thanks to his family's position, he moved quickly up through the diplomatic ranks. Eventually he was chosen to serve as Imperial Governor of Garos IV by Emperor Palpatine.

Now, almost five years after the Battle of Endor, Tork Winger watches as events beyond his control affect the life he has envisioned for his daughter Alexandra, for she is the one truly bright spot in his life. Though she is adopted, he adores her, and wants only the best for her. He would do anything for her.

city of Ariana.

"All set?" Governor Winger asked as she entered the docking bay.

"Yes, sir. Lt. Vilsics said the flow rate problem on the systems stabilizer has been fixed. Shouldn't give us any problems today," Alex told him.

"Excellent," her father replied as they strapped themselves into the airspeeder.

Alex guided the craft out of the spaceport. She took off to the west, flying beyond the Tahika Cliffs and out over the Locura Ocean. It had to be one of the most breathtaking views on all of Garos IV. The Cliffs stretched treacherously along the coastline, presenting an ominous obstacle for those few adventurous souls who dared to climb them.

The airspeeder skirted the Cliffs heading south for about a kilometer before Alex moved farther out over the ocean away from

the restricted flight zone the Imperials had imposed around the mining center complex. She could fly the route to Zila blindfolded if she had to. It was a trip she made often to visit an old friend, Shana, who also happened to work for the underground.

"It's great that we were able to coordinate our schedules for a change, Father. Your meeting, my visit with Shana."

"Yes, Alexandra. It gives us a chance to talk. I don't see nearly enough of you since you moved on campus," he said. It had been his idea that she move out of the governor's mansion. He worried about her safety after the underground had targeted supply convoys that passed near their home.

"I know, Father," she agreed. "I miss our chats after mealtime, too." It had been a ritual in the Winger household that Alex had participated in since her adoption at the age of six. Countless meals eaten in silence, followed by conversation. She had gained an immeasurable amount of insight, not only into her adoptive father, but also into politics and Imperial activities on Garos IV. Quite useful for an underground operative. "So, tell me Father, what is so important in Zila these days?"

Tork Winger studied his daughter. It never ceased to amaze him that he had raised this child who could talk knowledgeably about any subject from politics to astrophysics and could handle the controls of an airspeeder like she'd been born to it.

"Councilor Baro wants assurance about the Empire's intentions toward his enchanting city," Winger told her.

Alex put on her best incredulous look. "Since when does the Empire need to explain its actions?" *I can't believe I just said that*, she thought. *The good Imperial daughter — agh!*

"Now, now, Alexandra. Diplomacy — that's the word. A demonstration of the Empire's good will, my dear," he replied quite seriously.

Alex nodded her head, but felt like crying inside. *Good will, indeed*, she thought. *That will be the day!*

"Father, there is speculation at the University that General Zakar will ask for TIE fighter reinforcements to help secure the mining center."

"We have been discussing that possibility. But many of the ships in our Imperial Navy don't have full complements of TIEs." He paused, wondering how much she knew. "I'm sure you've heard the talk about Coruscant."

"It's hard not to notice the additional military personnel here," she said.

"Yes, many of them were evacuated from Coruscant and other worlds in the path of the Rebel onslaught," Winger told her.

She grimaced to herself. "So, the rumors *are* true. The Rebels are within striking distance of the Capital?"

"It may be only a matter of days until Coruscant is in Rebel hands." He shook his head in obvious dismay. He'd visited Imperial City years before and couldn't bear to imagine the destruction.

Alex reached over and gave his hand a comforting touch. She knew what he was thinking. But in her own heart, she welcomed the news that the New Republic was about to take Coruscant — even if it did mean more Imperials on Garos. Hopefully that situation would be temporary.

Surely the New Republic would head this way. First Coruscant, then Garos IV. One more system slipping from the Empire's ever-weakening grip. "So, you don't think we'll get those TIEs?" she asked.

"Not right away. They can't be spared." He noticed her disappointment. "Why do you ask?"

Alex smiled mischievously. "Well," she said, "I was thinking that I'd love to try flying one!"

"I knew it! Alexandra, what will I do with you?!" he laughed.

"Watch this!" she said gleefully. Alex rolled the airspeeder, peeling off to the east. Second by second its velocity increased. The Tahika Cliffs loomed into view, and the ship dove sharply toward the ocean. With barely meters to spare, Alex pulled up on the controls and the airspeeder glided just above the surface of the water.

The comlink buzzed. "Unidentified ship, you have entered a restricted flight zone. Leave immediately or you will be destroyed," the voice called over the static as an Imperial patrol craft appeared out of nowhere to parallel her airspeeder's course.

"Alexandra!" Winger exclaimed.

"Whoops! Sorry, Father. Guess I went in too close to the mines," she said as she turned the ship toward the southwest to swing around the southernmost part of the continent.

"Open a channel, Alexandra."

She was surprised when he spoke into the comlink.

"This is Imperial Governor Winger," his voice boomed, commanding attention. "To whom am I speaking?"

The voice on the other end of the comlink seemed to hesitate a moment. "This is Lt. Norban, Governor." He paused to clear his throat. "We just received confirmation of your airspeeder's ID, sir."

"That's a little slow, isn't it, Lieutenant?"

Another pause. "Yes, sir."

"Work on that response time, Lieutenant," Winger said, giving Alex a sly wink. She shook her head in disbelief.

"Yes, sir."

"Carry on."

"Thank you, Governor," the voice called as the Imperial airspeeder moved away from theirs.

Tork Winger's face lit up with the biggest grin Alex had ever seen as he clicked the comlink off. She laughed so hard tears came to her eyes.

"Father, I didn't know you could be so devious!"

"Me? Devious? Alexandra, now really!" He sighed, then rummaged through a case filled with data cards, finally pulling one out. "Ah, yes, here it is. I must review this report before we arrive in Zila, my dear."

"All right, Father. I'll let you get your work done."

Alex stared out the cockpit. The Tahika Cliffs had given way to rolling hills as the airspeeder rounded the southern tip of the continent and turned eastward. Beautiful sand-covered beaches were brushed by a gentle blue sea.

But all Alex could think of was the encounter they'd had in the restricted flight zone. The defensive response time had not been that bad — couldn't have been more than 30 seconds, she figured, plus the few seconds it took them to ID the airspeeder. Of course, 30 seconds was plenty of time for a starfighter to move in on the mining center. Maybe, just maybe, the New Republic *would* be here to put them to the test. *Yes*, she thought. *They will come.*

A vision of a Mon Calamari cruiser filled her mind. She'd had this dream many times — X-wings in a landing bay preparing for battle. And she was there, sitting in the cockpit of one of those fighters, staring out at stars that formed a dazzling backdrop of diamonds on the black velvet canvas of space. But suddenly, Alex found herself flying in a pitched battle —

"Blue 4, two marks bearing 0-3-0."

"I see them, Blue Leader. I've got the guy on the left."

"Watch it, Blue 4, you picked up a tail!"

A shot blew past the canopy of the X-wing as Alex rolled the fighter sharply to port. Twisting through a half dozen turns, she maneuvered the ship until the TIE dropped in front of her X-wing. Alex locked on target and blasted the TIE into a thousand particles of dust.

Her victory was short-lived. Two shots from starboard rocked the X-wing violently. Then there was darkness —

That dream she'd had last night — her X-wing hit, and captured! Was this really a part of her future?

Nilo rolled his eyes as he clicked off the comlink with Major General Carner down at the mining center. He'd done more listening than talking while Carner complained about the normal bureaucratic mess-ups that seemed to plague every delivery he asked for. Nilo wondered if he'd ever get used to dealing with the delicate egos of his superior officers.

Dair noticed the exasperated look on Nilo's face when he returned to their office. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"Carner wants to know when to expect the supplies the *Tempest* delivered."

It certainly was helpful to have such a talkative office mate. "The *Tempest*? That's a *Victory*-class Star Destroyer, isn't it?"

"Right. From Dulathia," Nilo told him. "Our guys got out right before the Rebels overtook the place. She delivered some equipment they managed to salvage for us."

Dair shrugged his shoulders staring blankly off into space.

Nilo shook his head. "Where've you been, Haslip?" Then he noticed that lovelorn look in Dair's eyes. Every time Alexandra Winger stopped in, Haslip's brain seemed to take the rest of the day off. "Never mind!"

"What? Now, what was it you were saying?"

"*Tempest* had to store most of Carner's supplies in Zila."

"Why?" Dair asked.

"Guess they don't want the underground to get to it," Nilo said.

"So, what's being stored in Zila?" he asked.

"Weapons systems."

"What do you mean? Like SP.9s?"

"Think big, Haslip. We're not just talking anti-infantry here." Nilo nodded self-assuredly, his ego inflated by knowledge of the little details of this major shipment. "Only one minor problem." He chuckled softly.

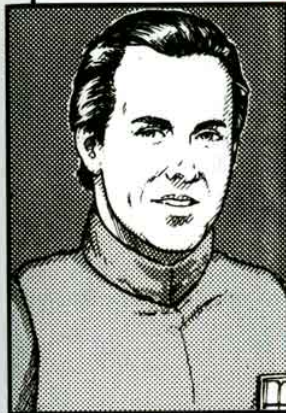
"What's so funny?" Dair asked.

"Seems that when our guys left Dulathia they forgot one vital piece of equipment." He chuckled again. "It's awfully hard to dig a 40 meter hole into a mountain without a plasma drill!"

Dair's eyes grew wide when he realized what Nilo was talking about. *A 40 meter hole. A shaft for a reactor?! Good skies! The Empire is putting anti-orbital ion cannon at the mines!* He felt sick just thinking about it.

"Hey, Haslip! You okay?"

Dair Haslip



Type: Imperial Lieutenant

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 6D, brawling parry 4D+1, dodge 4D+2, grenade 5D, heavy weapons 4D+2, melee combat 4D, melee parry 5D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Alien species 4D, bureaucracy 4D+1, cultures 4D+2, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 5D, survival 5D, value 4D+2

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 4D, beast riding 4D, repulsorlift operation 5D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, command 5D+1, con 5D, hide 5D, search 5D, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 3D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Force Points: 1

Character points: 5

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), datapad

Capsule: Dair Haslip is a native of Garos IV who joined the Imperial Army when he was 19 years old, the year the Empire first established a presence on his homeworld. He joined the Imperial Army, not because of his devotion to the Empire, but because of his hatred of it and everything it stands for. He was already working for the underground, but thought he might better serve the cause of freedom and justice by working from the inside. After spending seven years away from Garos, he returned to serve as an administrative assistant to General Zakar, the supreme military commander for the planet. His position has allowed him access to all types of useful information that he passes on to his underground colleagues.

Dair shook his head. "You know what that means, don't you?" he asked quietly.

"I do," he said, the cockiness gone as a frown wrinkled his brow. The only thing it *could* mean was more protection for the mines in anticipation of a Rebel Alliance assault. "You really think they'll head this way, Haslip?"

Dair swallowed hard, a worried look on his face. "Yeah," he said. *I'm counting on it.* A thousand thoughts raced through his mind as he stared out the window. "I wonder if they'll evacuate us."

Nilo looked at him. "Maybe we won't have to worry about it," he said hopefully. "Maybe that Grand Admiral will bury the Rebels once

and for all!"

"What Grand Admiral?" Dair asked, a feeling of dread coming over him.

"You *have* been out of it, haven't you?" Nilo kidded him.

"What Grand Admiral?" he insisted in a tone that caught Nilo off guard.

"Calm down, Haslip! Some Grand Admiral has taken command of the fleet. Captain Emba from the *Tempest* told the general that his ship's been called to a rendezvous out in the Borderlands with our old friends from the *Judicator*."

"What else have you heard about this Grand Admiral?" Dair asked.

"Not much," he said shaking his head. "Supposedly he's been working in the Unknown Regions all these years since the Emperor died."

"And he's reorganizing the fleet?"

"Yeah. Emba said this guy's a tactical genius."

"Genius, huh?"

"Those were his exact words. Guess he's planning something big — that's why the *Judicator* hasn't been here for a while."

For a moment Dair was lost in his own thoughts. Rumors circulated every so often about something big, as Nilo put it. But talk of a Grand Admiral — this was new. Could this Grand Admiral put the Empire back on the offensive? What would this mean to Garos IV?

"Haslip?"

"What?" Dair asked, vaguely aware of a buzzing coming from somewhere in the room.

"You going to answer that or just let it buzz the rest of the day?" Nilo asked, an amused grin on his face.

"Oh, yeah, right." He cleared his throat and clicked the comlink on.

"General Zakar's office," he paused, listening to the voice on the other end. He couldn't help but smile. Some captain wanted the general to know that Air Defense Systems had nearly shot down Governor Winger's airspeeder. Alex and her crazy stunts!

"Yes, Captain. I'm sure the general will make your apologies to Governor Winger." He paused, shaking his head. "Yes, sir, I'll tell him that. Thank you for your call, sir."

Dair clicked off the comlink and saw that Nilo had been listening in on the conversation. They both had a good laugh over that one while Dair silently thanked the Force that Alex was all right. He couldn't wait to hear her version of the story.

Shana Turi



Type: Underground freedom fighter

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 4D, dodge 3D+2

KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

MECHANICAL 2D+1

Repulsorlift operation 3D

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Hide 4D, investigation 4D, search 4D, sneak 4D+1

STRENGTH 2D+2

Stamina 3D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 4

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, macrobinoculars

Capsule: Shana Turi is a 23-year-old freedom fighter. She and Alex Winger have been friends since childhood. Before the Empire arrived on Garos

IV, their fathers worked together to negotiate a peace between native Garosians and colonists from Turi's homeworld of Sundari. The two men established a bond that survived the Empire's method of dealing with the Garosian civil war. And the two young girls spent countless hours playing together while their fathers left the negotiating table of political intrigue for the dinner table (and on many occasions, the sabacc table).

As Shana and Alex matured into young women, they found their politics had much in common. They both wished to see an end to the Imperial domination of Garos IV.

Shana became involved with the underground while she was a student at the University of Garos. After graduation, she accepted a teaching position at a prestigious Academy in the city of Zila. She now supplies information about Imperial activities in Zila to her friends in the underground.

"Alex!" Shana Turi called, waving to her friend. "On time — as usual!" she exclaimed.

"You can always count on me! Hello, Shana," Alex greeted her with a hug. "Any problem getting the afternoon off?" she asked.

"No. I just told them I was having lunch with my good friend Alex and her father, our Imperial Governor."

"You name-dropper, you!" Alex laughed. "C'mon, let's go!" she

said as they climbed into Shana's landspeeder.

"I didn't expect you for another 10 days. Tell me, is it just a coincidence that you came with your father?"

"Not entirely."

"I didn't think so. To tell you the truth, Alex, I was surprised when I heard he was coming to Zila."

"Imperial business. Which is why I thought I'd tag along," Alex explained. "Father is hoping to pacify the locals. He really didn't go into any details, but what's been happening here since my last visit?"

"Notice anything?" Shana asked as the speeder zipped through downtown Zila.

"Looks like you've got a lot more Imperials in town. Are they just visiting, or do you think they're going to stay for a while?"

"Just sit tight and I think I can answer that question. Check the package in my case."

Alex studied the holos that members of Shana's underground cell had provided. "These were taken at the spaceport?"

Shana nodded. "Late yesterday afternoon."

"Any idea what these modular units are?" she asked, though from her own knowledge of Imperial equipment she could make an intelligent guess. And she didn't like it one bit.

"No. But they've been moved into the mountains."

Who, or what, in Zila does the Empire plan to protect with a planet defender, Alex wondered.

Twenty minutes later, Shana stopped the landspeeder at the top of Mount Berin on the outskirts of Zila. From its crest, the young women could see the ancient city spread out before them. Beyond the old stone turrets that lined Zila's waterfront, the Cabalia Sea was an endless carpet of blue to the horizon.

Shana handed Alex the macrobinoculars. "Check out the view at 0-1-0," she said.

"Whoa!"

High atop a mountain to the east, construction droids were busy setting up an Imperial garrison. Cranes mounted atop the droids hoisted sections of the pre-fab units commonly seen on bases throughout the Empire. Technicians and support personnel scurried around the compound, checking the work in progress.

"Imperial Headquarters, Southern Sector," Shana said.

Alex shook her head. "No wonder Councilor Baro wants reassurance about the Empire's objectives here," Alex commented.

"Look toward the far western edge —"

"What is that?"



"Storage facility. That's where they moved those units."

Alex frowned. *KDY v-150s in storage? How strange*, she thought, as she studied the rest of the compound. "And I see they're building a shuttle landing platform, too. Busy, aren't they?" she said sarcastically.

"Crews have been working on it since late last night," Shana told her.

"What about security?"

"Two squads of scout troopers, plus a company of stormtroopers."

Alex grimaced to herself and wondered what the Imperials were up to. "Okay. Continue to document all traffic to and from the mountain, all schedules, shift changes — you know the routine. I'll need holos of the base, too. Our people will want to have a look at this."

"You'll have them before you leave today," Shana told her as she kicked the landspeeder back into gear.

Alex took one last look at the rising structures before they headed around a curve. A feeling of dread swept over her, and the air suddenly seemed cold —

A vision of a snowy mountainside filled her consciousness. It was a vision she'd had many times, but never in such detail — two figures, dressed in white, were barely visible against the white

Garos IV

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Temperate
Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)
Hydrosphere: Moderate
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Forests, mountains, valleys
Length of Day: 25 standard hours
Length of Year: 382 local days
Sapient Species: Humans
Starports: 2 standard class
Population: 20 million Garosians, 4 million Sundars
Planet Function: Agriculture, manufacturing
Government: Imperial governor
Tech Level: Space
Major Exports: Foodstuffs, metals, minerals
Major Imports: High technology

Capsule: Garos IV is the fourth planet of six in the Garos system. It was settled by humans more than 4,000 years ago. And until recently, it was a self-supporting planet with little contact outside the system.

The seat of government is located in Ariana on the western coast — known for the forboding Tahika Cliffs — on the larger of two continents. Ariana is an intellectual and business center, dominated by the prestigious University of Garos. It is also the home for Imperial Headquarters on the planet. Nine hundred kilometers to the east on the continent's south-central coast lies the resort city of Zila, known for its architectural diversity. The Empire has generally left Garos IV alone since establishing a quiet presence on the planet 14 years ago. Only in the last few years has the number of troops begun to grow. Their chief concern seems to be the mining of hibridium in a region south of the city of Ariana. But now other cities, like Zila, are beginning to feel what it's like to have the Empire in their own backyard.

backdrop. The wind howled. Snow whipped around their bodies. They rappelled down the side of the mountain, stopping on a ledge that jutted out no more than half a meter.

Suddenly, a strong gust of wind blew. Alex felt herself falling backwards, sliding down the face of the mountain. She grasped at the smooth surface of ice. But it yielded nothing to hold on to.

Then, unspoken words penetrated her being — *calm, be calm.*

Seconds passed. The rope went taut. She was afraid to look up, afraid any movement might jar the rope loose from whatever tenuous grasp had caught it.

Somewhere, above the shrieking wind, she could hear a voice calling her name. "Alex," he said, "take my hand."

"I — can't!" she cried.

"You can do it," he said.

She gazed up at the figure who called her. Perched perhaps a half meter above her head was a man she'd seen in many dreams — a man with sandy brown hair and blue eyes. He was leaning down, stretching his hand out to hers. "Take my hand," he said again, his voice almost hypnotic.

Alex slowly moved one arm over her head. With all her might, she stretched her hand over the icy slope until their fingertips met.

She sensed an energy surround her — it seemed to push her closer to him. He grabbed her hand tightly and pulled her up beside him.

They both stood pressed against the side of the mountain, trying to catch their breath. Every muscle in her body ached, but she gathered strength from the energy that flowed from his presence. It was unlike anything she'd ever felt before.

"You okay?" he asked her.

She nodded her head. "I'm all right —"

The boom of distant thunder brought Alex back. Shana was staring at her, a concerned look on her face.

"Alex, you're shaking! Are you all right?"

She managed to nod as she wiped the sweat from her forehead. She felt so cold, as if she *had* just been on that snowy mountainside. She took several deep breaths and closed her eyes.

Where was that mountain? Why did it dominate her dreams? And who was that man? Why did he seem so familiar to her?

Who are you?

• • •

"Alex," Magir Paca said, "looks like you've brought some interesting items from Zila." He queried the faces of the leaders of the underground who had gathered in the operations center. "If no one

Adventure Idea

The characters are members of the underground on Garos IV. They are assigned to perform reconnaissance work around a new base the Empire is setting up north of the city of Zila. They must examine the layout of the base, note any Imperial troop activity in the area and find good positions for a possible attack. They should also scout escape routes through the mountains. Characters must travel through the mountainous regions and dodge scout trooper patrols.

has any objections, let's begin with your report."

"Yes, Alex. Any idea what these modular units are the Empire has delivered to Zila?" Dr. Carl Barzon asked, pointing at the holos they'd passed around the conference table.

"Yes," Desto Mayda asked. "Why this surge of activity around Zila?"

"Just north of the city, the Empire is constructing a major new base. They've housed the units in a storage facility — here," she said, pointing to the second group of holos that were making their way around the table. "And I hate to say it, gentlemen," Alex told them, "but those modular units look like parts of a v-150 planet defender."

"What?" Mayda bellowed, his cheeks flushing bright red with anger.

Barzon closed his eyes and rubbed a hand across his forehead, not wanting to believe what he'd just heard.

"Dair, can you confirm this?" Paca asked.

"Alex is right about the holos. The units being stored by the Imperials in Zila are parts for KDY v-150s — heavy ion cannon. But those weapons aren't to defend Zila." He paused, looking at each face in turn. "They'll be set up at the mining center."

There was an audible gasp in the room.

"Heavy ion cannon? Right here in Ariana?" Mayda finally exclaimed.

Dair nodded as his friends tried to digest this information. "I do have one bit of good news," he told them.

"Well, we certainly could use some!" Paca said, hoping to lighten the mood of these people who had worked so hard to bring an end to the Imperial domination of their world.

Hopeful eyes focused on Dair. "They've run into a little problem," he explained. "They've got to wait until a plasma drill is delivered before digging the shaft that houses the reactor."

Well, that was good news, sort of.

"Why are they storing the units in Zila?" Dr. Barzon asked.

"They decided Zila was more isolated. Far removed from the underground activity that has plagued Ariana," Dair told the group.

Mayda was nodding his head slowly, as a smile cracked the face wrinkled less by age than by stress. "And Zila has not seen such activity," he said calmly.

Not yet, Alex thought. She could sense the minds at work. The underground would soon make its presence known in Zila.

"New base in Zila, more defenses at the mines — it sounds as if the

Magir Paca

Type: Underground leader

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D+1, grenade 6D, heavy weapons 5D+2, melee 5D, melee parry 6D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Alien species 4D+1, bureaucracy 6D, cultures 5D, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 7D, survival 8D, value 6D

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 4D, beast riding 5D, repulsorlift operation 6D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 6D, command 6D+1, con 6D+1, hide 7D, search 6D, sneak 7D

STRENGTH 3D+2

TECHNICAL 4D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), datapad

Capsule: Magir Paca is one of the original underground leaders known as COSGU (the Committee of Seven for Garosian Unification). Paca was an assistant to the Minister of Commerce when the Empire established a presence on Garos IV. Imperial Governor Tork Winger had been his close friend and mentor, guiding Paca's career in government service. This gave him access to all types of useful information. For 10 years he covertly passed information to the underground until the Imperials realized there was a leak in the system. Paca fell into their trap and only by a stroke of fate was he able to elude arrest. Alex Winger, then only 15 years old, was forever fiddling with computer files. She accidentally uncovered an Imperial file on suspected underground figures and the cases being built against them. She was able to warn Paca, and he disappeared hours before Imperial troops came to arrest him.

Paca has remained in hiding for over four years, and now coordinates much of the underground's activities.

Empire is digging in here on Garos," Barzon observed.

"No, I don't think so, Doctor. With the imminent fall of Coruscant, we're hearing a lot of talk at Headquarters," Dair said. "But the general feeling seems to be that the Empire is pumping up security here just long enough to get that ore transported from the mines to their secret research facility."

"So, you think they'll evacuate Garos?" Paca asked.

"If there is any indication that the New Republic is headed this way, I think you'll see a massive pullout of personnel."

"When is delivery expected for this plasma drill?" Mayda asked.

"Nothing definite, but the chatter on the comm seems to indicate we can't expect anything for at least two weeks. There's something

going on — a rendezvous out in the Borderlands," Dair explained.

"A rendezvous?" Paca repeated.

Dair nodded solemnly. As if they hadn't heard enough bad news. "Rumor has it that a Grand Admiral has returned from the Unknown Regions. He's reorganizing the fleet."

"A Grand Admiral? Force be with us!" Mayda exclaimed.

Alex felt shock waves as every mind in the room reacted to this dreadful announcement. Like the others, she was stunned. Rumors of the New Republic's push toward Coruscant had given the freedom fighters of Garos IV hope that help would be on the way. Now another threat darkened their vision of a free Garos. How much longer would their world remain in Imperial hands?

Paca finally spoke. "All right, my friends. I'm afraid we'll have to let the New Republic worry about this Grand Admiral."

"We must concentrate our efforts on the Imperials here," Dr. Barzon agreed.

"Let's assume we have those two weeks before the plasma drill gets delivered," Paca said. "They'll never suspect an attack on that base in Zila."

"Can our operatives there destroy the units in the storage facility?" Mayda asked.

"They're not equipped for a mission like this," Paca said.

"What can we do to help?" Dair asked.

"Desto, make arrangements with our people to begin moving into Zila immediately."

Mayda nodded, making a note on his datapad.

"Alex, when do you visit our friend again?" Paca asked.

"Eight days."

"You can deliver some weapons for our people in Zila. I'll contact our man at the spaceport and have your airspeeder prepped with a few extras."

"All right."

Paca picked up the holos from the table, eyeing them thoughtfully. "I don't think the Empire needs to worry about delivering that plasma drill." He shook his head slowly. "They won't have any ion cannon to put at the mining center anyway."

■ ■ ■

Alex sat in the underground ops center in Ariana. She'd wanted to help her comrades in Zila, but Paca was convinced her presence there for the third time in two weeks could arouse suspicion. So, here she was, waiting like everyone else, for news from Zila.

It had been a long afternoon. She glanced at the chrono above the comm intercept stations — still another half hour before the team was scheduled to penetrate the base.

She closed her eyes to rest for a few minutes. And suddenly, in her mind's eye, she could see a supply skiff pulling up to the Imperial compound in Zila —

"Look, Lieutenant, my orders say to deliver these supplies to the storage facility. Can I just drop them off?" Chance told the officer at the gate.

"I have no record of this shipment."

"With everything that's been coming and going off the mountain, that doesn't surprise me," Chance said, knowing the officer had probably experienced bureaucratic mess-ups before.

"Yes, that's true." He hesitated for a moment. "All right, go ahead."

"Thanks, Lieutenant," Chance called as he guided the skiff past the perimeter gate. He took a deep breath and glanced at his chronometer. Just a few more minutes.

He studied the layout of the compound as he proceeded. The underground unit in Zila had provided a detailed map — hadn't missed a thing as far as he could tell. Observation towers were still under construction, but the garrison itself looked ready to house some of the thousands of military personnel the underground estimated would move in any day. A shuttle platform loomed over the area. *Good, he thought, the walker docks are deserted.* There had been no reports of any AT-ATs in the area.

As the skiff moved behind the garrison toward the storage facility on the extreme western end of the compound, Chance tapped on one of the crates. Two men quietly emerged from their hiding place and jumped unnoticed off the skiff. They never looked back.

Chance pulled up to loading dock at the storage facility. He approached the duty officer.

"Good afternoon, sir," he said, handing the man a data card with forged, though well-documented orders from Imperial authorities in Zila.

"What is this?" the lieutenant asked, pointing toward the skiff.

"Don't know, sir. Some men from Major Rena's office in Zila loaded the crates. I just transported them up here."

The officer studied the information on the data pad. Nothing unusual. Mostly supplies that the Major wanted here when his new office was complete.

"Okay, let's get this stuff unloaded so we can call it quits for

Chance



Type: Underground freedom fighter
DEXTERITY 3D+2
 Blaster 7D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D+2, grenade 6D, heavy weapons 6D, melee 5D+1, melee parry 6D, vehicle blasters 6D
KNOWLEDGE 2D+1
 Alien species 3D, planetary systems 3D+1, streetwise 5D, survival 6D, value 5D
MECHANICAL 3D
 Astrogation 3D+2, repulsorlift operation 5D+1
PERCEPTION 2D+2
 Command 6D+1, con 6D+1, hide 5D, search 6D, sneak 6D+1
STRENGTH 3D+1
 Climbing/jumping 4D+1, stamina 4D+2
TECHNICAL 3D
 Demolitions 6D
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 5
Move: 10
Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink, detonite with timer fuses, 3 grenades, macrobinoculars

Capsule: Chance is a quiet man. He is 36 years old and a native of Corellia. Unbeknownst to his colleagues, he arrived on Garos IV with one of the first groups of Imperials. He had been in the Imperial Navy for two years when his ship, the *Star Destroyer Judicator*, arrived on Garos IV. Chance accompanied a detachment down to the planet and jumped ship. He had witnessed firsthand the destruction caused by the Empire during a raid that took the lives of thousands of innocent people.

Fate led him to be at the wrong place at the wrong time — he was caught in the middle of an underground raid on an Imperial supply convoy, and lent a helping hand to the freedom fighters. He's been working with them ever since.

No one questions his expertise with weapons. He is most skilled at all types of demolition work. He knows more about explosive devices than most of his comrades. He is also an extraordinary sharpshooter.

today."

"Sounds like a good idea to me, sir," Chance agreed, as the officer waved two technicians over to help unload the skiff.

Suddenly, a violent explosion rocked the garrison.

"What the —" the officer exclaimed.

A split second later, the underground opened fire with blaster rifles and heavy artillery from the hillsides outside the compound.

Chance pulled his blaster, and with only a second's hesitation he shot the two technicians and the shocked duty officer before they had any chance to figure out he wasn't on their side.

Stormtroopers patrolling the grounds reacted quickly. Their heavy blaster rifles were trained on the hillsides. Others scoured the compound trying to identify an enemy that remained unseen. Scout troopers sped outside the compound — some were caught in a vicious crossfire.

Two more diversionary explosions shook the garrison. Then the unmistakable whoosh of a Plex missile sounded overhead. The shuttle platform wobbled as it was struck. A second missile, then a third, exploded against one of its supports, neatly amputating the leg from the platform. The noise was deafening as the landing platform crashed to the ground.

Chance disregarded all the action around him and got down to business. He tossed a grenade inside the storage facility. Shots rang out from inside the building. He lobbed a second grenade through the open door. Across the compound, an Imperial officer spotted him and fired. A shot blew past his head as he dove inside the building. He rolled behind some neatly stacked containers left undisturbed by his attack. His blaster was ready, but the grenades had silenced all resistance.

Moving quickly around the room, Chance attached charges to a half dozen of the modular units. Two stormtroopers charged through the front entrance of the building just as he completed his task. There were precious few seconds to waste — those charges were going to blow and he didn't plan on being in the room when they did.

As the troopers moved to encircle him, Chance tossed a grenade toward one, and ran out from cover with his blaster firing at the other one. His bold movements surprised them. Both fell victim to his deadly aim.

Chance jumped over the prone body of one fallen stormtrooper and cautiously peered outside the door. Two speeder bikes were headed straight toward him. He looked closer just to be sure, then smiled to himself. Those weren't scout troopers on the bikes. Those were his comrades!

One bike slowed down. Chance took a flying leap over the loading dock and landed on the supply skiff. He jumped onto the bike behind his comrade. An explosion flared behind them. The first charge blew inside the storage facility.

"Let's get out of here!" he yelled.

The bikes roared through the compound. A steady stream of



blaster fire erupted all around them. Laser cannon on both bikes exchanged fire with guards at the gate. One stormtrooper got off a lucky shot. Chance saw his friend's bike explode in a fireball. He targeted the white-armored figure who'd taken out his comrade, and fired. That man would never kill again.

The speeder bike cut through the mountain passes away from the Imperial base. Several brilliant explosions lit the darkening sky behind them —

A buzz brought Alex back to the ops center. She looked around the room, and noticed that Dair Haslip had arrived. He stood behind one of the intercept ops smiling as he read of events transpiring in

Adventure Idea

The characters are members of Garos' underground assigned to provide fire support for a team which has penetrated the Imperial base at Zila. They must dig into defensive positions in the hillsides around the base. Once the attack begins, characters must pick off the stormtroopers in the base with blaster fire, while avoiding detection by scout troopers and AT-STs trying to find and destroy the defensive positions.

Zila. Alex grabbed her own headset and listened to the Imperial communications they were monitoring.

Through the static she could hear the report.

"... under attack!" An explosion crackled the comm channel. "... explosions in the compound. We are ..." More static. "... in the hillsides surrounding the com..." The comlink went dead.

The freedom fighters in the ops center quietly celebrated this victory. Alex let a slight smile form on her lips. Paca nodded to her from across the room where he sat monitoring the comms.

Alex shifted her gaze back toward one of the display boards. For a few brief seconds she felt a presence surround her, something she was familiar with, yet didn't fully understand. It was an energy so powerful that it filled the room. Then a voice called out, that same voice she'd heard in her dreams.

The Force will be with you ... always.

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SMUGGLER'S LOG



■ A WORD FROM PLATT OKEEFE

Most free-traders these days ply the space lanes in their heavily modified light freighters. The Corellian YT-1300 is the most common and well-known model, although the reliable Ghtroc light freighter is also popular. Some traders have been able to go into big business with bulk freighters. While these vessels are more costly to procure and operate, the payoffs for legitimate cargo-haulers are immense. Which means the payoffs for smugglers using bulk freighters are incredible.

These days, what with the Action V and VI Transports out, the older Action IV models are fairly affordable to smugglers (unless you've managed to make it really big already, and I seriously doubt that). The Action IV Transport isn't bad — it's the same basic plan as the others, just an older model. And it still has as much durability as anything coming out of Corellian Engineering shipyards these days. Remember, this is the same company that created the YT-1300 that's been modified since time began (or so it seems).

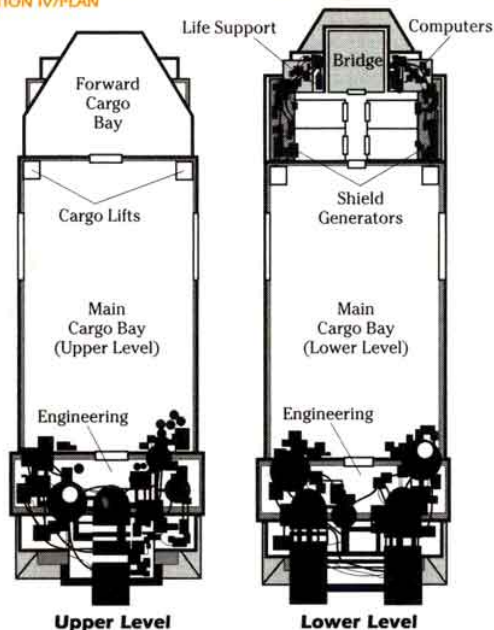
■ BULK FREIGHTERS/TEXTFILE/COMMENCE..

Engineer's Tour

A walking tour through a bulk freighter is pretty short. The forward section is the command deck, and contains areas for the crew and many ship's systems. Boarding ramps and hatches are located on the port and starboard sides of this deck, and lead into a crew lounge and galley. The bridge is located at the front of the command deck, and has stations for the captain, first officer or navigator, and sensors, communications and shields operators. Two escape pods can be entered

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■ ACTION IV/PLAN



■ Bulk Freighter

Craft: Corellian Action IV Transport
Type: Medium bulk freighter
Scale: Capital ship
Length: 110 meters
Skill: Space transports: Action IV Transport
Crew: 10, skeleton: 4/+10
Crew Skill: Space transports 3D, shields 2D+2
Passengers: None
Cargo Capacity: 70,000 metric tons
Consumables: 3 months
Cost: 750,000 used; no longer available new
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x3
Hyperdrive Backup: No

Nav Computer: No
Maneuverability: 0D
Space: 2
Atmosphere: 225/650 kmh
Hull: 3D
Shields: 1D
Sensors:
 Passive: 20/0D
 Scan: 30/1D
 Search: 40/1D
 Focus: 1/1D
Weapons: None

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■ BULK FREIGHTERS/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED ■ OKEEFE,PLATT..

through the crew lounge. Bunks in four rather functional cabins accommodate the captain and crew.

Most of the ship's electronics systems are located on the command deck, including shield generators, life support and computers.

Above this deck is the forward cargo bay. Cargo is loaded into this bay through the blast doors that connect it to the upper level of the main cargo bay. In some freighters, a ladder from the crew lounge to the forward cargo bay allows personnel access. Another ladder near the forward cargo bay blast door lets the crew reach the topside access conduit. The conduit houses wires and pipes connecting the systems aft with those fore, and feeds power from the main generators into the rest of the ship. It also allows personnel access to the engineering bays if the main cargo hold is packed full or depressurized.

The main cargo bay has two levels connected by large cargo lifts in the forward corners. Blast doors also connect it to the command deck and the engineering bays. Cargo is loaded on retractable ramps for the two immense hatches port and starboard.

The engineering bays allow maintenance crews access to the hyperdrives, ion drives, power generators, and other large systems in the freighter's aft section. Fuel is also stored in these areas, along with spare parts. Sometimes corners of the engineering bays are made into makeshift quarters for reclusive technicians.

Bulk Smuggling

Using bulk freighters for smuggling is a bit more challenging than using light freighters, but there are inherent advantages and disadvantages to any illegal activity, big or small.

The light freighters suffer a few drawbacks. The small cargo hold is easily and thoroughly searched. You're limited to about 100 to 150 metric tons of cargo. And Imperial Customs officials suspect any free-trader in a light freighter of smuggling — the reputation comes with the ship. Which is one reason bulk freighters can be a better bet for smuggling, if you can get your hands on one.

Bulk freighter captains don't have the reputation as vagabonds and rogues that tramp freighter captains do. Slap a legitimate-looking corporate logo on your uniform and customs inspectors assume you're a legitimate cargo hauler for some big company. They assume any smuggling you're doing is of the small variety — bringing in undeclared luxury items for your wife, or imported liquor for your husband — something that might cost you a week's pay if the "company" found out. Even independent bulk freighter captains are known to contract out to

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■ BULK FREIGHTERS/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED ■ OKEEFE,PLATT..

larger trade companies. The bottom line is that bulk freighters have much cleaner reputations than tramp freighters among customs personnel, and that can save you a lot of hassle at the starport. Remember, appearances are everything.

One of the benefits of smuggling with a bulk freighter is the sheer volume of contraband you can carry. Granted, you won't always fill your hold with 70,000 metric tons of illegal goods (and I don't advise it, either), but you can at least do some legitimate cargo hauling as a front for your less savory and more profitable activities.

Since a bulk freighter's cargo hold is quite a bit more voluminous than your average light freighter, it's easier for you to hide contraband. Smugglers using bulk freighters should always be hauling some kind of legitimate cargo. I know some smugglers who haul around the same cargo of spare repulsorlift parts, but use the other 1,500 metric tons for illegal cargoes.

A customs inspection team often examines a few random samples of cargo, and rarely looks at anything that's hard to reach in the cargo bay. If you pack your goods correctly in the cargo bay, you'll put the legitimate cargo up front, and hide all the illegal stuff in the corners, behind cargo that's heavy, bulky and hard to move. It's also a good idea to temporarily disable your binary cargo load lifter droid before a customs inspection. Imperial Customs officers sometimes ask that cargo be moved around for inspection — it's a lot tougher if the cargo lifter droid is malfunctioning off in the corner because one of its lifter arms "fell off" last week.

Unfortunately, this ploy does little good at starports requiring all cargo to pass through customs checkpoints after it's unloaded. However, the sheer volume of cargo passing through checkpoints is often enough to bore customs inspectors. Sometimes they accidentally overlook contraband or even approve the entire shipment just to get it through the checkpoint quickly.

Bulk Problems

Smuggling with bulk freighters presents several problems. The ships are awfully expensive, and require many credits and lots of work to maintain. You need a crew of 10 to run these ships effectively, but I've seen some run with as few as four smugglers, all of whom work constantly to keep the vessel in working condition. Docking and maintenance fees are also greater for bulk freighters than for light freighters.

Unless modified, bulk freighters like the Action IV Transport present

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■ Cargo Load Lifter

Type: Cybot Galactica's CLL-8 Binary

Cargo Load Lifter

DEXTERITY 1D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

MECHANICAL 1D

PERCEPTION 1D

STRENGTH 6D

Lifting 8D

TECHNICAL 1D

Equipped With:

- Two gyro-stabilized heavy lifting legs
- Two heavy cargo arms
- Armored systems housing

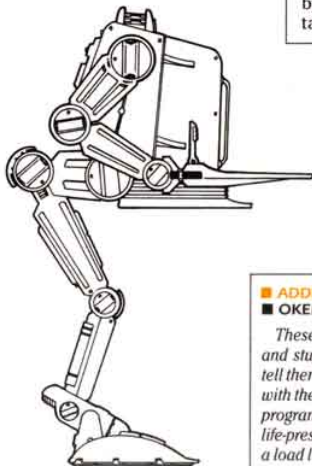
Move: 7

Size: 3 meters tall

Cost: 2,500

■ CARGO LOAD LIFTER/CAPSULE

The CLL-8 is a standard binary cargo load lifter found throughout the galaxy's starports. Its legs and arms are reinforced and filled with hydraulics that allow it to lift heavy cargo. The load lifter is a simple fifth degree droid, and it responds to simple verbal commands. Protocol droids are sometimes used to program binary load lifters to do more complex or extended jobs, such as unloading the entire cargo bay of a freighter while sorting the cargo by the data identification labels tagged onto crates.



■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ OKEEFE, PLATT..

These droids are incredibly simple and stupid. They'll do anything you tell them to do, as long as it conforms with the droid's basic cargo-handling programming and doesn't violate its life-preservation programming. While a load lifter won't drop a heavy crate onto your annoying local customs inspector, it can still stack crates to box him into a corner.

◀ PREVIOUS

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■ DATA SEARCH ■ PROG41003 ■ FILEPATH 9406/06P/SHIP_GDB/5C
■ FILEFORM...D.PAD/DOWNLOAD ■ SOURCEFILE: SMUGGLER'S LOG ■ READING..

■ BULK FREIGHTERS/TEXTFILE/CONTINUED ■ OKEEFE, PLATT..

the perfect targets for pirates, and are no match for Imperial forces. They're slow, not heavily protected, and maneuver like a drunken rycrit.

Modifications

While the basic Corellian Action IV Transport is pretty reliable, it doesn't have all the options smugglers rely on today, like weapons, increased shielding and extra hull plating.

Unlike modifying light freighters, making additional changes to bulk freighters is difficult and costly. You can't simply tinker with the hyperdrive, you need to graft in replacement units and upgrade your power output. Shields and an armored hull cost more, too, since there's more ship to protect.

Weapon mounts aren't as much of a problem. Most modified bulk freighters have turret guns below the bridge and topside above the engineering section, although turbolasers can sometimes drain power needed for hyperdrives, shields and sublight drives if they're kept fully charged at all times. Other customized weapons systems (like concussion missile launchers) are rarely seen.

Modifying the cargo space in a bulk freighter is possible, but tricky. Some freighters have compartmentalized forward cargo bays, with staterooms for carrying passengers. It's too risky to convert the main cargo bay into passenger space, unless the entire area is compartmentalized with pressurized seals. Hull breach of the main cargo bay is a common occurrence in most combat conditions.

I've heard rumors of some pirates and even the Rebels turning a bulk freighter's main cargo bay into a fighter hangar for snub fighters and X-wings, but that would take a lot of specialized work at a starport repair facility. Besides, when you figured out maintenance space and power requirements, you couldn't fit more than two or three X-wings into the cargo bays anyway. It's also difficult to explain an entire landing bay inside your ship to the curious Imperial Customs official.

Life on A Bulk Freighter

One of my first spacelining jobs was as a technician aboard a bulk freighter. Most of a bulk freighter's crew, except the captain and first officer, is working for passage. I needed to get from Wroona to Romar, so I signed on the first bulk freighter heading in my direction. Sure, I eventually got to Romar — two months and four bulk freighters later.

The busiest times are when a bulk freighter makes port. The crew is busy loading or unloading cargo, trying to keep an inventory of which

◀ PREVIOUS

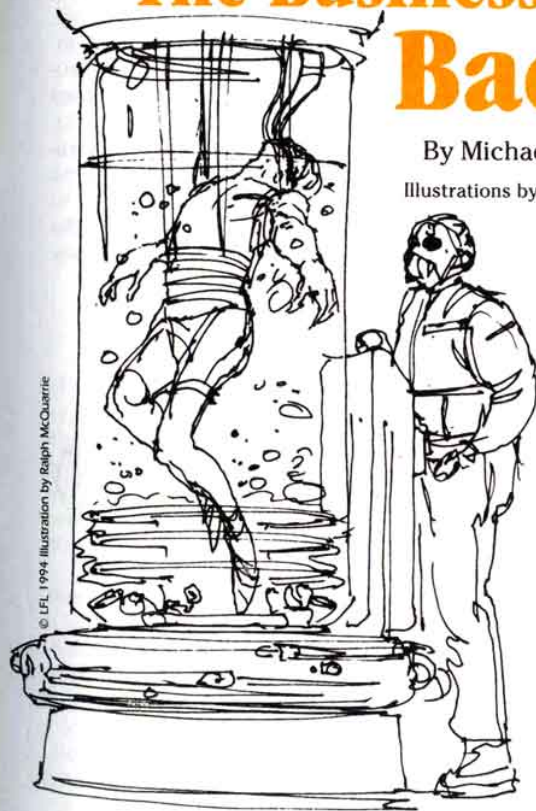
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The Business of Bacta

By Michael Kogge

Illustrations by Doug Shuler



© LFL 1994 Illustration by Ralph McQuarrie

Many galactic historians contend that the single most important event in the science of medicine for the common citizen has been the development of bacta, a gelatinous fluid that has amazing healing qualities. Bacta's characteristics range from quickly mending cuts and lacerations to quickly healing wounds without leaving scars. Bacta will easily combine with most any other medicine without producing severe side effects. All of these traits make bacta an essential and valuable commodity — a commodity that has influenced the trading patterns of giant corporations, starport mer-

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cargo goes where and who's paying for it, and trying to program or repair the ship's malfunctioning binary load lifter. The first officer usually gets stuck with administrative duties related to cargo transfers. The captain worries about starport logistics — paying for docking fees, maintenance, registrations and such — and commands the ship. Even the engineering crew is kept busy buying new parts and repairing those hardworking ion engines and hyperdrives.

During the actual journey, shipboard life is pretty quiet. The engineers are still patching the vessel's systems together with SoroSuub chew and bits of wire. The crew rotates watch on the bridge to monitor the nav sensors and diagnostics board. Sometimes they recheck inventory in the cargo hold, or separate cargo for future stops.

All in all, it's not a bad life. It doesn't pay much (unless you're the captain or first officer, who get a meager salary or a percentage of cargo profits). Most crew members work for passage (which includes a berth and a few meals). Most corporately owned ships have paid crews dressed out in nifty uniforms, but the pay isn't great, and you're contracted to stay with the ship for a designated time, usually a year or two.

At least until you get your own ship (or run your own bulk freighter), it's a great way to see the galaxy.

■ BULK FREIGHTERS/ENDFILE..

This issue's "Smuggler's Log" was created by Peter Schweighofer and illustrated by Kathy Burdette and John Paul Lona.

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chants, and even smugglers.

Bacta has done more than just generate money and heal wounds. Bacta has revolutionized a galactic species, the insectoid Vratix, who first discovered its healing properties and capitalized on them. Bacta now reigns supreme over their society. The Vratix cultivate bacta components to maturity, combine them and sell the finished product to distributors and manufacturers of medical equipment. Two big harvesting companies dominate the modern Vratix government — the government hires those companies to grow bacta components, combine the components and handle all sales to distributors, all along bringing more money for the government. The galaxy's need for bacta has created an intangible corporate tyranny that governs the lives of ordinary Vratix.

■ Vratix

Attribute Dice: 12D
DEXTERITY 1D/3D+2
KNOWLEDGE 1D/3D
MECHANICAL 1D/2D+1
PERCEPTION 1D+2/4D+2
STRENGTH 2D/3D+2
TECHNICAL 2D/4D

Special Abilities:

Bargain: Because of their cultural background, Vratix receive a +2D bonus for their *bargain* skill.

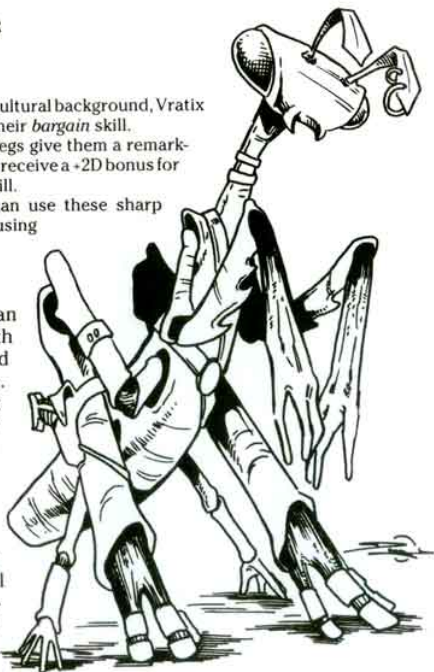
Jumping: Vratix's strong legs give them a remarkable jumping ability. They receive a +2D bonus for their *climbing/jumping* skill.

Mid-Arm Spikes: Vratix can use these sharp weapons in combat, causing STR+1D damage.

Move: 10/12

Size: 1.8-2.6 meters tall

Capsule: Vratix are an insect-like species with greenish-grey skin and black bulbous eyes. They stand upright upon four slim legs, two long, two short. The short legs are connected behind the powerful forelegs about halfway down on each side, and are used for additional spring in the tremendous jumping ability Vratix possess. Two



slight antennae rise from the small head that provide them with acute hearing abilities. The long, thin neck connects the head to a substantially larger, scaly, protective chest. Triple-jointed arms folded in a V-shape extend from the sides of the chest and end in three-fingered hands. Sharp, angular spikes jut the midsection of the arm, which are sometimes used in combat. Sparse hairs sprout all along the body — these hairs excrete dornin, a chemical used to change the Vratix's color and express emotion. Vratix have a low-pitched clicky voice, but they can easily speak and comprehend Basic.

The Vratix are a species torn by competition between the bacta manufacturing companies that control their society, Xucphra and Zaltin. They have exceptional bargaining skills, which make them great traders and diplomats. Many have left the bacta harvesting tribe life to escape social conflicts and become merchants, doctors or Rebels throughout the galaxy.

The Origination of Bacta

During the middle years of the Old Republic, scouts discovered the Vratix on their vegetative homeworld, Thyferra, in the Polith system. The Vratix had achieved an information-age technology, colonizing Thyferra's moon and establishing small outposts throughout their system. They possessed a planet-wide government, from which local tribes annually elected delegates to serve in a representative council. Every two years, the council appointed two *canirs* or chief officers to direct the council and act as world leaders.

Once new technical knowledge was revealed by the Old Republic scouts and subsequent diplomats and visitors, the Vratix went into a technological frenzy. They constructed advanced star vehicles, made huge breakthroughs in science, and finally developed one of the most significant accomplishments the science of medicine had ever known — bacta. By placing small bacterial particles of alazhi, a lotion Vratix used to heal cuts and burns, in a special liquid chemical, kavam, they created bacta. The bacta at first would quickly sour, becoming ineffective, but by circulating it through a regulating tank with a clear synthetic fluid similar to the body's own vital fluids, the bacta would last for an indefinite time. The healing results were simply amazing. Rejuvenation tanks with bacta have been an integral part of the medical scene ever since.

Vratix bacta-harvesting companies arose with the arrival of this new technology. The galactic population was eager to have this miracle cure. Money was made and deals were struck, but the lowly Vratix traders who started it were crushed in corporate competition.

Thyferra

Type: Terrestrial
Temperature: Tropical
Atmosphere: Type I
Hydrosphere: Moist
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Forests, tropical jungles
Length of Day: 21.3 standard hours
Length of Year: 479 local days
Sapient Species: Humans, Vratix
Starports: 3 stellar class
Population: 10,000 Humans, 2.8 million Vratix
Planet Function: Natural resources
Government: Corporate, tribal
Tech Level: Space
Major Exports: Bacta
Major Imports: Foodstuffs

Capsule: Thyferra is the homeworld of the Vratix. It also houses the headquarters for the Zaltin and Xucphra bacta companies, which control the planet's government and economy. Thyferra is also the administrative center for the Vratix's many colonies that synthesize kavam and harvest alazhi needed to create bacta.

Corporate Colonization

The original bacta commercial wars expanded the power of the Vratix and stretched their influence over many planets and systems. Kavam could be easily synthesized, but the bacterial particles of alazhi needed an ideal tropical environment with the correct chemical atmosphere to grow. Alazhi in ecologically controlled rooms was easily contaminated by small particles even with high-level technology, and could not be grown on the large scale needed for corporate profit. A whole world was needed to maintain the balances and make harvesting economically feasible.

To solve this problem, the Vratix entrepreneurs colonized many planets searching for such an environment. They found some suitable planets, but the planets were scattered about the galaxy. Unable to maintain a domineering presence on all the planets, the entrepreneurs contracted and divided their cultivation out among smaller, more local businesses and farmers, each supervised by a few corporate subordinates. The harvesters would sell the entrepreneurs all their harvested alazhi as part of their contracts leasing harvest lands. Since the components could now be easily synthesized and grown, bacta became a universal commodity.

The Emergence of the Empire

When the Empire grew from the ashes of the Old Republic, doctors, merchants, and many others were scared of the repercussions it could have over the bacta industry. But two major bacta companies, Zaltin and Xucphra, each made agreements with the Imperial factions, offering them an annual supply of bacta to sustain the Imperial military. In return, the Empire did little to suppress the bacta trade for the two corporations, only initiating a few modest tariffs and taxes. But the bargains also fabricated a virtual monopoly over bacta harvesting for the two companies, prohibiting all other bacta cultivators. This ended the bacta commercial wars and drove many small bacta traders and entrepreneurs underground.

The Vratix companies only produce the bacta fluid, using either their allied Vratix work tribes or licensed harvesters. Other enterprises throughout the galaxy package the bacta, distribute it, and make the actual rejuvenation tanks and medical equipment. All organizations and tribes under the service of Zaltin or Xucphra are strictly watched and directed.

Every batch of manufactured bacta has an identification number. This makes supervising and tracking easier, in cases of business trouble, Rebel entanglements, or bacta contamination. The numbers and batches are so thoroughly checked and inspected by the Vratix companies that it led to the uncovering of the Rebel base at Ketel. Xucphra promptly informed the Empire, and the base was destroyed.

Corporate Government

Xucphra and Zaltin now rule the planetary government, with the Vratix tribes as their workers. Through time, the canirs of the council also became the presidents of either of the two companies.

Adventure Idea

A strange plea for medical aid comes to the Rebel Alliance from a distant planet in the Outer Rim Territories. The characters are sent on a light freighter with a medical squad. The plea actually comes from an alien military group that is trying to gain more bacta and medical supplies to support its troops in a campaign against innocent colonists in the system. The characters must defend the Alliance medical squad and escape with the bacta.



The canirs are still elected every two years, but each dictates what is done in the government and their own company. Each canir strives to oppose the other canir's desires and legislation, to acquire and accommodate more power for themselves and their company. The government now drives society to harvest more bacta, to raise the revenue of the companies.

From tradition, each tribe chooses a delegate from within its ranks. Since each tribe is employed by one of the two major bacta corporations, the delegates represent the tribe at the corporate level. Delegates are selected to promote the tribe's best interests in the council and in the company. The workers are not slaves; if they wish to leave the tribe and its harvesting work, they can. If the company interferes with tribal concerns, then the tribe allies itself with the other company in the next election, and becomes employ-

Adventure Idea

It is time for the Vratix to elect two different canirs. A candidate for Zaltin's canir secretly sympathizes with the Rebellion. The characters must influence the Vratix people and delegates to elect this candidate, all the while dodging the competition's angry supporters and Imperial troops.

Adventure Idea

The characters are free-traders asked by a cloaked man to steal bacta from an Imperial distribution center and smuggle it to Celanon. When the characters deliver the bacta, their buyer, a Rebel agent, discovers that the bacta is contaminated. The characters must avoid being captured for questioning by the Rebels while eluding Imperial troops.

ees of that company.

Despite all this competition and economic gain, nothing really gets done for the Vratix people. The democratic procedure for choosing companies, and the contentious competition between them can create strife and meaningless rivalry between two tribes that were once on good terms with one another. The council is usually split almost half and half between Xucphra and Zaltin, and laws get shelved and rejected because of company gridlock and competition.

All this has fostered disunity for the Vratix people. Consequently, many Vratix think the government and the companies have betrayed them. They completely despise the total incorporation of the bacta industry into Vratix culture. Insurgent groups have appeared, some desiring minor reforms, others desiring a huge political upheaval. Zaltin and Xucphra view these groups as major threats and obstructions to their control of bacta. Several groups even use terrorist methods, from kidnapping and killing company agents to poisoning the companies' precious merchandise.

Bacta Contamination

The Ashern (Vratix for "Black Claw") are the most prominent terrorist circle in Vratix society, fighting for the downfall of the companies and a better nationalistic government. They paint themselves black and sharpen their angular spikes to symbolize the pains and frustrations of the average Vratix bacta laborer.

■ Ashern "Black Claw" Terrorist

Type: Vratix Terrorist

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 3D+2, grenade 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Intimidation 3D, streetwise: Vratix underground 4D

MECHANICAL 2D+1

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 6D+2, con 4D+1, hide 5D, persuasion 4D+1, sneak 4D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Climbing/Jumping 5D

TECHNICAL 3D+2

Demolition 5D+1

Character Points: Varies, typically 0-3

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D damage), comlink

The Ashern are also responsible for bacta contaminations — and one that even affected Coruscant. They used stolen corporate funds to bribe a sympathetic Imperial Moff, Kyl Ransen, to allow Ashern terrorists access to a shipment of bacta, ready to be transported to Coruscant. They tainted the bacta with an unusually resistant virus strain that would make a person allergic to bacta. The ploy worked, and almost two million soldiers and citizens were infected before the bacta was withdrawn. The Empire was outraged, but it could do little than require the bacta companies to tighten their regulations and protect bacta shipments. Ransen went into hiding and is regarded by many Vratix nationalists as a great hero.

■ Moff Kyl Ransen

Type: Imperial Moff

DEXTERITY 2D+2

Blaster: hold-out blaster 3D, dodge 3D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species: Vratix 6D+2, streetwise: Vratix underground 5D+2

MECHANICAL 3D

Capital ship piloting 4D+1

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Command 6D

STRENGTH 2D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 4

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D+1 damage)

Capsule: Kyl Ransen is now in hiding and is an acting leader for the Ashern. He is good man with many charismatic qualities. As a young boy he witnessed the sufferings of the Vratix people while overseeing alazhi cultivation for Zaltin. He pledged to aid the Vratix when he was older. He is regarded as a hero by many Vratix by allowing the bacta contaminations to continue. Ransen did not know the contamination was going to be so deadly, and regrets the deaths of citizens he indirectly caused. Yet he tries to look at the bigger picture and how it is helping the Vratix achieve a step toward unity and freedom.

Since the Coruscant bacta incident, security with bacta has been tightened. The companies have stamped out suspicious contracted businesses, trying to remain on safe terms with the Empire. Yet, many smaller-scale contaminations by the Ashern and other groups still continue to plague the Empire and the companies.

Adventure Idea

The Alliance has seized information that an Imperial supply fleet carrying bacta will be stopping at the Jurzan space port for refueling. The characters are sent to steal the bacta to supply Rebels in this sector. At Jurzan, they discover that the Ashern are attempting to poison this batch of bacta. While trying to defeat the Ashern terrorists before they poison the bacta, the terrorists flee and the characters are caught red-handed with the poisons by the Imperials. The characters must use their wit and intelligence to snatch the bacta and escape.

The demand for the miracle of bacta still increases every year, even with the occasional problems. Zaltin and Xucphra keep a good track of their bacta shipments, so militant rebel groups, such as the Alliance, must seek and purchase their supplies from smugglers or corrupt businessmen. Bacta is an item that helps the whole galaxy. Though it may have caused discord and hardship for the Vratix, it has also improved the quality of medical care throughout the galaxy.

WHEN THE DOMINO FALLS



By Patricia A. Jackson

Illustrations by Mike Vilardi

"Kaine!" Karl Ancher's voice boomed over the shrill whine of a defective exhaust rocket. Anticipating trouble, technicians and tourists paused to watch, snarling the flow of traffic through Omman's hectic starport.

Beside him, Drake Paulsen flinched, startled by the harsh quality of the Corellian's voice. Embarrassed by the sudden focus of attention, the 15-year-old Socorran groaned, covering his face with the wide, black collar of his desert duster. Ahead of them, he recognized his father's lean figure, framed by the battered hull of their freighter, *Miss Chance*. The outdated YT-1300 sat alone on a private mooring dock, shadowed by the mammoth starport generators.

Shirtless except for a hand-tooled leather vest, Kaine Paulsen's lean, muscular frame glistened with sweat. A repulsorlift cargo bed full of unmarked crates sat beneath the freighter's hull where he had left them. "How are you, Lom?" he asked playfully, using Drake's Coynite name.

"Ancher's on the war path," Drake whispered. "What's going on?" Troubled by the haunted rings beneath his son's eyes, Kaine whispered, "Don't worry," affectionately caressing Drake's neck and shoulders. Then he coolly met the Corellian's ruthless gaze. "Ancher. I've been expecting you. Thanks for bringing Drake along."

Cold recognition fluttered in the old smuggler's eyes. "Damn right you've been expecting me! If you thought I was going to stand by and watch you make the biggest, dumbest mistake of your life, then you don't think very much of me, Kaine Paulsen!" Gathering his wits and his breath, Ancher snapped his fingers in Kaine's face. "I didn't waste my time and learning to see you go soft on refugees trying to homestead on some miserable, forgotten rock! *Lofahchu ets pyroni vyorn viske!*" he grumbled, slipping into a dialect of Old Corellian.

Kaine laughed suddenly. "Loyalty is a smuggler's worst vice?" Ancher's face exploded with violence. "The worst! And don't you forget it!" Silver-white hair crowned Ancher's handsome face, which was well weathered by a lifetime of scars and wrinkles. Dark eyebrows arched above his eyes, mature, green eyes, clouded by mild regret. Piqued, he crossed his arms over his chest, as if shielding himself from a blow to the heart. His foot tapped querulously against the metal docking plates, an irrefutable sign of the smuggler's agitation. Despite the furor of incoming and outgoing spacecraft about them, Drake could hear the distinctive drone of Ancher's cybernetic leg, synchronizing with the Corellian's foot.

By sharp contrast, Kaine's handsome face, so deeply tanned by the Socorran sun, was smooth and flawless, radiating good charm. Unruffled by the Corellian's temper, he whispered, "Ancher, those people on the Thrugii outpost need food, medical supplies, and anything else I can think of to help them ..."

"Those people need a serious psych-eval!" Ancher spat. "Any-

body who thinks they could make a living on that forsaken rock is crazy! And any fool smuggler who would deliver goods, encouraging them to stay, is even crazier! How much are they paying you?"

"Nothing right now," Kaine whispered, chided by his mentor and friend. Cautiously, he added, "But when the mine gets started, they offered ..."

"When the mine gets started? Kaine, that rock's already killed seven generations of miners! Do you really think ..."

"Damn it, Anch! I'm not some kid you picked up on one of your smuggling adventures. I'm a man, a father," he brushed a reckless brown curl from Drake's face, "And a damn good pilot."

"If those claim jumpers would make peace with the sector authorities, they could get their own pilot and leave you out this mess!"

"You know that would never happen," Kaine said quietly. A trio of Imperial stormtroopers walked past, briefly observing them. "The sector authority has that planet locked down tighter than a Coynite chastity belt!" he whispered, cautiously observing the stormtroopers. "That's why they need a smuggler and a good one." Kaine recognized the explosion escalating in the old man's eyes. "Ancher, I don't need your permission to make this run!"

"You don't need my permission?" Ancher's face flushed several shades of crimson. "What about those money-hungry sector officials? The ones who claim the rights to Thrugii, the asteroid belt, and even the open spaces in between. What about them, Kaine?" The Corellian propped his hands on his hip, visibly shaken by the Socorran pirate's tenacity. "Even Abdi-Badawzi ..."

"Let's leave Abdi out of this, shall we?" Kaine frowned with mention of his arch-rival, the Twi'lek crimelord who ran Socorro's illicit underground. "Besides, he's too busy filling his own pockets to bother with exploiting a humanitarian cause."

"Listen to me, Kaine!" Ancher snapped. "You're ruffling the wrong tail feathers this time. Those private owners have money, political leverage, mercenaries; they might even have Imperial connections. You don't want this one, boy." Suddenly, his face softened as he attempted to change his approach. "You've got a good heart, Kaine. You're a better man than me to even think about this run. But you better think long and hard about the folks you're crossing and what you stand to lose." Gently, he ran his fingers through Drake's hair, clucking the anxious boy beneath the chin. "Swallow your pride. Loyalty is the worst vice a smuggler can fall into."

Cradling Drake against him, Kaine whispered evenly, "Maybe Corellians think that way, but Socorran integrity goes too deep for

Kaine Paulsen



Type: Socorran Pirate
DEXTERITY 3D+2
 Blaster 6D, dodge 5D+1
KNOWLEDGE 2D
 Languages 6D, planetary systems 8D
MECHANICAL 3D+2
 Astrogation 7D, space transports 9D+2
PERCEPTION 3D
 Persuasion 7D
STRENGTH 2D+2
 Brawling 6D
TECHNICAL 3D
 Space transport repair 6D+2
This character is Force-sensitive.
Force Points: 3
Character Points: 11
Move: 10

Capsule: Before meeting Karl Ancher, Kaine Paulsen was an excellent pirate; since then, he has become one of the greatest smugglers in Socorran

history. Known as Chu'la, Coynite for the "the mighty, little fox who will not be caught," Kaine has an equally legendary reputation as an "honest" smuggler and a gentleman.

Kaine has run everything, from spice off Nal Hutta to guns for Abdi-Badawzi, Socorro's own formidable criminal overlord. Shirk-ing rivals and sector authorities as easily as shaking sandflies, he lives by his reputation as a shrewd businessman and pilot. Reportedly he is an excellent astrogator and keeps extensive star charts, most of which are unmapped by even the most experienced astrogators. Many suspect his journal is a treasure chest of galactic shortcuts and byways.

Kaine never remarried after the untimely death of his wife and managed to raise his only son, Drake, in the proud tradition of Socorran pirates, hoping to pass the legacy, as well as his irrefutable conscience, to his equally talented son.

that garbage. I wouldn't expect you to understand." He hesitated, stumbling over the insult. "It's just an excuse for not getting involved, and why? Because there's no money in it!"

"Drake, scratch a little gravel," Ancher growled, his eyes intent on Kaine's face.

Wanting nothing more than to stay between them, Drake hesitated. His father smiled, soothing reassurance into his rigid shoulders. "How's your Wookiee?" he asked.

Startled by the question, Drake stammered, "My Wookiee?"

"There's a problem over by the guard house. Go see if you can

Karl Ancher



Type: Old Smuggler

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 8D, dodge 6D, melee combat 5D, running 5D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Alien species 5D+2, languages 6D, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 6D, value 6D

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 8D, sensors 6D, space transports 7D+2, starship shields 6D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargaining 6D, con 8D, forgery 9D, gambling 5D+1, persuasion 6D, search 6D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 7D, stamina 4D+1

TECHNICAL 2D+2

First aid 5D, space transport repair 6D

Special Abilities:

Reputation: Karl Ancher's reputation often precedes him wherever he roams. While this is cause for problems (being recognized by bounty hunters and such),

he is often welcomed and sheltered by other smugglers and crimelords who owe him favors.

Force Points: 3

Character Points: 22

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D)

Capsule: Karl Ancher is one of the grandfathers of modern smuggling. As one of the last pinnacles of "honest" business, he is highly sought as a mastermind and a mentor for up-and-coming smugglers. Weary from a life on the run, Karl retired to Socorro, a hotbed of smuggling and illegal activity. Never content with quiet living, he still organizes and runs smuggling operations from his bar, the Black Dust Tavern.

Often the Corellian's business beliefs and methods conflict with the more traditional Socorran pirates. Known to keep a small stable of highly skilled pilots, Karl Ancher has a finger in every illegal run in the Socorran system and several other systems. The greatest pilot to emerge from his wings was Kaine Paulsen. Some believe that Kaine's son Drake is the next prodigy to be produced under Karl Ancher's charge.

help them out," he whispered, pushing Drake away. "Ask for Seth."

As he moved away, Drake glared at Ancher holding the Corellian solely responsible for the tension threatening to divide his loyalties.

"Go on," Kaine persisted.

Reluctant to leave either of them, even the cantankerous Ancher, Drake walked toward the port entrance. "Are you so eager to make

your fortune?" he heard Ancher hiss with venom. "What about the boy?"

"Drake understands," Kaine retorted, "just like his mother."

"That little girl twisted you up good, didn't she?" Ancher barked. "She didn't make her final jump soon enough to please me!"

"You don't mean that."

"Damn right I mean it!"

"Watch your mouth, old man!" Kaine sputtered, fists balled against violence. "If you hadn't tampered with the hyperdrive ..."

"I told you that drive was unreliable! How was I supposed to know she'd birth the boy right there on the deck plates! I didn't tell her to get on that ship with you. She knew the risks and the consequences!"

From a distance, Drake watched them arguing. Since early childhood, he had lived aboard ship with his father, flying the trade routes and learning the dangerous thrill of smuggling. When not accompanying his father, the young Socorran had spent his free time in strategic mental games with Ancher, plotting Kessel runs and cheating smalltime ganglords. He knew each man intimately, familiar with their moods and eccentricities.

There had been other explosive quarrels between his father and the overly protective Corellian that were tantamount to similar arguments between Kaine and Drake. But none had ever gone so far as to merit insult. Frustrated, Drake thrust his hands into his pockets, powerless to stand between them and their dominant personalities. Not even the familiar silhouette of the *Miss Chance*, docked beyond them, could comfort the immeasurable sense of foreboding that threatened to consume the anxious boy.

Sullen, Drake moved out of the hangar arena, stepping up to the port entrance where the guard house was situated. Barely large enough to contain a full complement of staff, the small, one-room structure offered a quiet place for the port guards to rest between shifts. Drake approached the group of armed men gathered outside. "I'm looking for Seth," he whispered.

"That'll be me," huffed a portly, Human man. He stared into Drake's face with focal intensity. "Aren't you Kaine Paulsen's boy?" The security director grinned astutely, sweeping his gaze from side to side. "Do I need to ask? You look just like him. Do you understand Wookiee?"

Drake shrugged absently, catching a quick glimpse of his father and Ancher still arguing by the *Miss Chance*. Though the dock was barely 10 meters away, the continual echo of blast rockets and welding equipment drowned out their voices.

"Come on in and whatever you do, don't spook," Seth cautioned, moving his stout body through the narrow bulkhead that framed the blast door. "Stay calm and move slow."

Before Drake could question the peculiar directives, he felt a blast of hot air escaping from the small compound. With horror, he realized that it was not a breeze, but a voice, booming from the back of the room. Dodging several projectiles, the young Socorran backtracked, falling into Seth's waiting arms. "Now steady on there!" Seth scolded, shielding the boy against the wall.

Perplexed, Drake realized that Seth was not speaking to him directly, but to the figure standing only meters away from the blast door. A formidable 2.4 meters tall, muscles twitching beneath a deep layer of black fur, the territorial Wookiee dropped to one knee. As the muzzle leveled off at chest level, Drake could see that the bowcaster was set and fully charged.

"Tell him to put the gun down!" Drake cried.

"He's a she, young Paulsen," Seth laughed. "And besides, you're the expert. You tell her to put the gun down."

Drake straightened his coat, moving away from the guardsman's support. "She should understand Basic," he whispered nervously. "Don't you?"

The Wookiee bawled insufferably. It was a sound that Drake could only translate as intense loneliness and abandonment. "She's scared." The reaction to his translation was immediate; relieved to be understood by someone, she propped the bowcaster against the chair, openly explaining her desperate situation. "And she's hungry."

Seth scoffed, "What does one feed a Wookiee?"

Drake approached her cautiously, reaching into his pocket for his last protein bar. "Easy," he soothed, offering it to her. "It's not much; but we can get you more."

Her face brightened, silver highlights showing at her brow and nobly set cheekbones. Framed by a mixture of black and silver fur, her opaque blue eyes were cloudy with exhaustion and sorrow. She took the bar, gingerly sniffing at the contents. Drake delighted in the momentarily contact, feeling the smooth warmth of her shaggy mane against his hand. Bawling in a sedate voice, the Wookiee moaned and returned the dehydrated bar.

"No, you can have it," he assured her, nervously taking that moment to ruffle the fine, black fur beneath his inquisitive fingers. Intrigued, the boy stared up at her, admiring the silver accents that swept through her neck and arms, down across her broad shoulders

and over her back. "Where'd she come from?"

"Space tramp dropped her off here," Seth replied, settling his heavy frame into a chair by the door. "Tells me to find transport for her. He emphasized safe transport and hauls 24 cases of Corellian ale into my office to make sure the job gets done."

Drake whistled, impressed by the payment. "Why the trouble?"

"Evidently the old man's hyperdrive was ready to implode, sending him, her, and most of his crew into the final jump with a bang!" He clapped his hands together. "According to him, the Wook held the drive together with nothing but a few pins, a little Jawa snot, and an emperor's ransom of good luck. Old man claims his hyperdrive hasn't run that well in over 20 years."

"So you're a tech, huh?" Drake teased the Wookiee.

She shrugged, gingerly biting into the ration bar. Almost immediately, her nose wrinkled with the bitter taste. As hunger won out over reluctant appetite, Drake watched in fascination.

"Why's she offworld?"

"Her folks smuggled her out," Drake replied, listening to her strained voice, "shortly after the Empire took over Kashyyyk. She's been on the run ever since."

"I guess so," Seth chuckled deeply, "what with the bounty being offered for free Wookiees."

With mention of a bounty, the Wookiee bellowed fiercely, snatching her bowcaster and anything else she could grasp as ammunition. Dodging an assault barrage of tin cups, storage containers, and power packs, Seth flipped over, shattering the chair beneath his substantial bulk.

"Nikaede!" Drake scolded gently, prying a smoke grenade from her large hands. "He was kidding." Scowling at the security official, he demanded, "You were kidding, weren't you?"

"Honest Wook!" Seth grinned, remaining under the table. "No love

Adventure Idea

The characters are forced to land at a remote starport in dire need of technical assistance to repair their hyperdrive system. The starport technicians are unable to perform such a delicate job. However, the characters hear about a Wookiee with a talent for rewiring sensitive hyperdrives. Unfortunately, this Wookiee is locked up in an Imperial cell, awaiting execution at dawn unless the characters rescue her.



for the Empire here."

Successfully retrieving the grenade, Drake asked, "What have you arranged?"

"Transport to Tatooine."

"Mos Eisley?"

"It's an agreeable atmosphere," Seth grunted, struggling to his feet. "And if she's really a good tech, I can set her up working modified ships out of port."

"Tatooine's a good place to hide," Drake whispered. "No Imperial paperwork. And if you're handling ship modifications for smugglers, no one will bother, not even tracers." Then, reminded of the seclusion that often plagued him, he selfishly added, "But I know an even better place. You could come back to Socorro with me." The Wookiee yowled inquisitively. "My dad's the best pilot in the business, but an average technician. He could use a good mechanic."

Nikaede howled immediate appreciation, sweeping the young Socorran into her massive arms. Feeling his rib cage bending beneath the Wookiee's might, Drake croaked, "Sure Nik, we just need to figure a way to get you offworld."

"Leave that to me," Seth almost sang with great ceremony.

"Boss!" crackled a voice over Seth's comlink. "Boss!" Briefly, the sound of blaster fire echoed outside the door.

"Stormtroopers!" Drake cried, recognizing the distinctive pulse of Imperial-issue weaponry. Quickly taking the bowcaster from the chair, he stowed it beneath a pile of discarded flight suits. "Stay calm," he whispered to Nikaede, pinning the Wookiee between himself and the wall.

Rattling like predatory teeth against the metal, white-armored fingers forced their way through the blast door. Visibly stunned, two starport guards slumped to the floor. "I'm in command here," Seth's operatic voice boomed. "By whose authority ..."

Outflanking each other, the stormtroopers hurried into the room. Their squad leader marched through the blast door, violently thrusting his rifle into Seth's sternum. "This station falls under the jurisdiction of ..." his voice trailed off, shocked into silence by the Wookiee and the boy standing in the back of the compound. Two other stormtroopers stepped into the room, flanking the walls. "Cease your fire!" the ranking soldier screeched, as they leveled their weapons at the Wookiee. "You might hit the boy."

"Yes, you might indeed hit the boy," Seth grumbled. "And cause an incident that would take millions of credits to hide. Not to mention embarrass your superiors ..."

"Quiet!" The stormtrooper moved away suddenly, then returned, thrusting his rifle butt into the security official's chest. Drake was helpless to act as Seth collapsed to the floor. "You!" the stormtrooper pointed to Drake. "Where's the permit for that animal?"

"Permit?" Drake piped, his voice raising an octave higher than he expected.

Breathless, Seth groaned, "The boy hasn't got a permit. What do you expect? His uncle only purchased the creature a few moments ago." He pointed to the stacked cases of Corellian ale in the corner. "I was acquainting the child with commands and important hygiene instructions. There's no crime in that." The security man hesitated, staring at the stormtrooper. "Or is there?"

"What's going on here!" demanded a gruff voice.

"Uncle Ancher!" Drake whined. Mustering all his energy for a childhood tantrum, the boy cried, "Uncle Ancher, tell the soldiers. You bought the *chumani* for me! They want to take her away." Silently imploring Ancher to play along with the ruse, he added, "You won't let them, will you? After you paid for her. Twenty-four cases of Corellian ale is a lot, isn't it, Uncle Ancher? That's what you told me. You said nothing was worth 24 cases of your Corellian ale, not even an Imperial bribe ..."

"*Koccic sulng!*" Ancher spat to silence the insipid prattle. Despite the rough indignity of a blaster rifle wedged against his spine, he turned on the stormtroopers, feigning a disgruntled Imperial citizen. "Since when did the Emperor allow his forces to traumatize children and helpless animals!"

"This creature belongs to you?" the squad leader demanded.

"I bought her for the boy, his *chumani*." He hesitated, staring into the soldier's unreadable face. "*Chumani*, gentlemen, is Old Corellian for *companion*; or so I've been told." Ancher leaned toward the stormtrooper, whispering, "Come, come man, have a little compassion. The boy just lost his mother day before last." Pulling a chit of credits from his pocket, he straightened, saying, "I understand there is a question of tariffs to pay, permits ..."

"All licensing takes place at the Bureau of Customs. You will accompany us there immediately."

Ancher hesitated. "I see," he sniffed, glaring at Drake. "Lead on my good man."

Though the presence of stormtroopers was a common phenomenon on Omman, a culturally diverse planet, the presence of a Wookiee, a boy, and an older man being herded between a squad of Imperial soldiers proved to be something of a spectacle. During the

brief walk across the starport intersection, the stormtroopers pressed through throngs of curious tourists who stumbled across their path. Never breaking formation, they led the prisoners through the narrow streets and into the Bureau of Custom's antiseptically clean front station.

An Imperial clerk was sitting behind a spacious desk as they were brought into the building. "Hold please," he snarled, never bothering to glance up. Drawn into a long frown, his gnarled, haggard face wore the unpleasant expression of overwork and general dislike for the public.

Safely eclipsed by Nikaede's shadow, Drake leaned against Ancher, whispering, "Did my dad get off the dock?"

Cautiously, Ancher hummed impatiently, nodding positively to acknowledge his request, while effectively getting the Imperial clerk's attention.

"What can I do for you?" the agent asked in a low nasal tone.

"These people need to register an exotic animal," the stormtrooper replied, shoving Ancher toward the desk.

"Type of animal?"

"A Wookiee," Ancher growled.

"How will the animal be used?" the clerk continued, punching the necessary codes into the datapad. "Concubine. Laborer. House servant. Hunting. Breeding stock."

"*Chumani*," Drake replied.

The Imperial agent looked up, managing to glare down his protruded, irregular nose. "A *chumani*?"

Ancher curbed his temper and whispered, "A companion." Then glaring at Drake, he added, "A child's companion."

The clerk rolled his eyes, exasperated, then scanned the datapad before him. "That will be 1,000 credits for a temporary offworld permit. Vaccinations, physical examinations, and temperament adjustments are extras. Do you wish to ..."

"No."

"Then that will be an additional 500 credits."

"But I don't want the vaccinations or ..."

"The fee is not for any of those services. It's a calamity insurance surcharge." The adjutant began formatting the temporary registration, officially notarizing the documents with the Imperial seal. "If the animal should get loose and injure someone, you'll be partially covered."

"If the animal gets loose, you won't have to worry about injury!" Ancher snapped. "You'll be dead, along with anybody else fool

Nikaede Celso

Type: Wookiee First Officer

DEXTERITY 2D+2

Bowcaster 5D, brawling parry 4D, dodge 3D+1, melee combat 3D, melee parry 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Alien species 3D, intimidation 3D, planetary systems 4D+1

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 3D+2, beast riding 5D, sensors 3D+1, space transports 5D, starship shields 4D, starship gunnery 3D+1

PERCEPTION 2D+1

Search 3D+2

STRENGTH 5D

Brawling 6D, lifting 6D, stamina 6D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Blaster repair 4D+1, droid programming 4D, droid repair 4D, first aid 3D+2, space transports repair 6D

Special Abilities:

Berserker Rage: An enraged Wookiee gets a +2D bonus to *Strength* for causing damage while *brawling*, and suffers a -2D penalty to all non-*Strength* rolls.

Climbing Claws: Wookiees' claws give them a +2D bonus to their *climbing* skill.

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 2

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 13

Move: 13

Equipment: Bowcaster (4D), leather satchel, miscellaneous repair tools

Capsule: A formidable 2.4 meters tall, large even by Wookiee definitions, Nikaede Celso is a giant among her species. Despite her size, however, the Wookiee is an extremely clever and talented technician, working easily with numerous drive systems and small engine components. Her diligence and patience make her a primary candidate as first mate aboard any starship — however, when pressed, the young Wookiee female has a tendency to whine and bemoan each crisis.

Born of a noble family on Kashyyyk, Nikaede was smuggled from her homeworld through the selfless sacrifice of her parents. An exile, she knows nothing of what happened to her family and friends on her homeworld. As a result, she has a tendency to bond with down-on-their-luck types. Usually cool and reserved, the sensitive Wookiee angers easily and shows little tolerance to those foolish enough to provoke her rage.

enough to get in a Wookiee's way."

"Ancher," Drake cautioned him.

The Corellian relented, retrieving the credit chit from his pocket.

"Thumb imprint here, please," the clerk directed, handing the datapad to the irascible tourist.

Drake stifled a protest, recognizing the personal identification unit. Designed to tap into a galactic reservoir of information, the mechanism granted access to background data, criminal records, or military status. Though Ancher's reputation among peers was a topic of envy, worthy of emulation by would-be smugglers, his record as a galactic felon was, without exception, on the verge of legendary proportions. The young Socorran felt faint with the realization that one imprint would lead authorities and bounty hunters right to the Corellian.

Casually reaching up to scratch his ear, Ancher pressed his thumb against the sensor pad, throwing Drake a mischievous grin. Almost immediately, the machine beeped in protest, unable to register the print. "That's the third time today!" the clerk hissed, snatching the datapad from the civilian. "We'll have to do it manually! Get their names," he snapped at the nearest office aide.

"No need," another officer cooed in an even baritone. Approaching from the rear, an Imperial official entered the front room, followed by an entourage of stormtroopers. Obedient to the snapping of his fingers, all the stormtroopers raised their rifles, targeting the subjects at the desk.

"Colonel Veese!" the clerk gushed, finding himself in the line of fire.

"Talk about being put on a hurt vector," Ancher hissed through a half smile.

The Imperial straightened, his tall, thin figure framed by broad shoulders. Sparse insignia, pinned with meticulous regard, betrayed an insidious nature. "His name? Karl Mathieu Ancher. Homeworld? Corellia. Age? Oh, I'd say 57 years. Occupation? Illegal trafficking of controlled commodities." Thoughtfully, Veese slapped a leather thong against the polished sheen of his boots. "The data from his criminal record could disable or destroy the processing systems of a Victory-class Star Destroyer."

"Colonel Weasel!" Ancher grinned, purposely mispronouncing the name. "After all these years, you still remember me. Boy, meet an old friend of mine, Colonel Weasel." He winked, "By the way, Weasel, how's that pretty wife of yours?"

Still indignant with the Corellian's illicit affair with his then newlywed bride, Veese balled his fist, striking the smuggler in the mouth. Stunned by the officer's sudden violence, the stormtroopers were slow to react, closing to restrain Drake and the Wookiee.

Temper in check, Ancher recovered, rubbing his bruised jaw. "Well," he spat blood on the polished floors, "still meaner than a rancor with a bad tooth."

"Lt. Criss," Veesele addressed the clerk, "every purebred hound has fleas. I want you to meet one of mine." Arrogantly, he took the identification pad from the agent's slack hands and rubbed the sensor face against Ancher's coat. "Watch very carefully Lieutenant," he warned. "You're about to learn a very important lesson; a critical lesson every successful smuggler inherits from his mentor." Veesele snapped his fingers, waving his hand toward the Corellian. Two of his stormtroopers shouldered their weapons and grasped Ancher's arms, restraining the smuggler between them. "When processing any type of background information, never take your eye off the suspect. Never let them touch their eyes," he wiped at his narrow eyes, "their ears," he scratched inside his ears, "or behind their ears. Don't even let them touch their mouths or noses." Rubbing the thin layer of ear wax and grease across the surface of his thumb, he pressed it against the sensor pad. Immediately, the machine beeped inconclusive results. "Any type of oil or waxy residue will disable the scanner and without knowing it, you could give important documents to a known galactic felon."

"I had no idea," Criss groveled, fearing repercussions.

"I wouldn't expect you to," Veesele replied snidely, wiping the grease from the disabled scanner. He pressed Ancher's thumb against the clean surface. "I spent the whole of my junior grade tracking down this and other scoundrels, learning the tricks they employed." Gloating, the haughty officer whispered, "There's a terrible price to be paid by the hunter who, in order to be successful, becomes very much like his prey."

The ID sensor blinked erratically, correlating the processed information. Criss examined the garbled muddle of codes and the returning message. "This could take some time," he whispered. "We've been experiencing some interference with the signal. If there's any information, it should arrive by morning."

Veesele's face darkened. "Until then," he hissed, "I want him held."

"And the boy?"

"I'm staying with you, Ancher," Drake whispered, glaring at the Imperial officer. "Nikaede?"

The Wookiee bawled, delivering a scathing insult to the stormtroopers as they cautiously moved toward her.

"If only a third of the Emperor's citizens would show the loyalty found among these criminals, the Rebellion would have been crushed

years ago. Take them to the holding cells," Veesele directed. "I'll return in the morning for Karl Ancher. As for the boy and the Wookiee, you may deal with them in any way you wish."

Veesele and his armed entourage retreated into an adjacent section of the Bureau. Wary, the Bureau security guards herded Drake, Ancher, and Nikaede into a separate passage, leveling their weapons primarily at the Wookiee. "Well ain't that a heinous thing to say to me?" Ancher grumbled. Avoiding the low bulkhead, he walked into the darkened cell. "I've been called many things in my time, but never a flea."

A glow rod ignited in the cell. "That's 'cause everyone knows, it's the old fleas that make you scratch the worst." There was laughter from the dark rim beyond the light.

Ancher spun slowly, shielding Drake behind him. "I know that cocky snicker." Throwing a restraining hand against the defensive Wookiee, he whispered, "Tait? Tait Ransom?"

"None other," the smuggler said slowly, offering his hand to the Corellian. "Bad to see you, Ancher. Never figured you to do time in an Imperial lockup."

"Drake, come over here," Ancher beamed, moving into the light. "This here is the best damned smuggler I've ever had the chance to cheat." The aging Corellian winked playfully, elbowing the boy in the chest. "The only man with guts enough to even rival your pop."

Drake shook the stranger's hand, marvelling at the raven black hair that flowed in thick waves around the handsome face. Dark skin framed even darker eyes, casting an odd, swarthy aura over a lean, powerful figure. He was older than Drake, perhaps a bit younger than his father, surrounded by the ageless atmosphere of a man used to living on the edge. "This is Nikaede," he introduced the Wookiee.

"What are you doing here?" Ancher demanded.

"I just got nominated to a hard-time academy. The blackheads caught me lifting some there special gear. Armor. Weapons. The expensive stuff." Ransom shrugged nervously. "They're shipping me off to Vizcarra."

"The Imperial prison planet?"

"Yep," Ransom whispered. "And here I sit, picking my nose hairs, with half of my crew docked across the street, waiting for me. By dawn, my co-pilot will figure I got snuffed on the job and will jump planet."

"Tait," Ancher scolded, "ain't like you to be caught without a plan. What happened?"

"This happened," Ransom replied. He threw a cylindrical object

Tait Ransom



Type: Smuggler
DEXTERITY 3D+1
 Blaster 7D, dodge 6D+1, grenade 5D, melee combat 5D+1, running 5D
KNOWLEDGE 2D+1
 Alien species 5D, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 6D, value 5D+2
MECHANICAL 3D+2
 Astrogation 5D+2, sensors 5D, space transports 6D, starship gunnery 6D+1, starship shields 5D+1, swoop operation 5D
PERCEPTION 3D
 Bargain 5D, con 4D+1, forgery 3D+1, gambling 4D, persuasion 3D+2, search 3D+1, sneak 3D+1
STRENGTH 3D
 Brawling 3D+2, stamina 3D+1
TECHNICAL 2D+2
 Blaster repair 3D, first aid 3D+1, space transports repair 4D
Force Points: 2
Character Points: 11

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D), personal transponder, vibro-shiv (STR+1D+2)

Capsule: Though Corellia is his birth planet, Tait Ransom claims no loyalty to any world. A man of rare integrity, Ransom brings a sense of honor to his occupation as a smuggler. What he lacks in piloting skills he makes up with a reckless and daring style that leaves no room for mistakes and offers a rare glimpse into a strategic genius.

Much like his mentor, Karl Ancher, Tait likes to keep a complement of highly skilled pilots nearby. This assures him a large measure of success and takes the pressure off his own piloting skills. Though the competition between Tait and Kaine Paulsen was fierce, there was a mutual respect between them. While his own life lacked a strong male figure, Tait is not above being a fatherly figure for Drake Paulsen, Kaine's only son.

toward him. "Or rather it didn't happen." Ancher deftly caught the personal transponder in his hand. "When the Imperial armory alarms went off, that transponder was supposed to alert my back-up team." Frustrated, he whispered, "Somehow it got busted in the shakedown and without the signal, the Boys in White tracked us down faster than old Jabba could lay claim to a debt. No backup, no chance, no way out."

"Where are they?" Drake asked timidly, staring around at the

empty cells. "The other half of your crew?"

Ransom pursed his thick lips together, handsome, even the midst of a frown. "Permanently retired, kid. Since I was the leader, they kept me alive to make an example."

"Can't you fix it?" Ancher questioned, examining the unit.

"If it were a ship's transponder, I could fix it, change it, make it sing the Republic anthem." Ransom shook his head, as a few dark strands fell into his eyes. "That thing? I haven't got a clue."

"Can I see that transponder?" Drake took the unit from Ancher, handing it to the Wookiee. "Can you fix it?"

"Hold on now," Ransom protested.

Drake silenced him with a dismissive gesture. Holding the glow rod over a nearby cot, he watched Nikaede pull the delicate leads through the top section. Yowling to herself, the Wookiee began to inspect each wire, sniffing out the defective cord. She carefully disconnected a stray cable, making a rough assessment of the damage, then promptly set about wrapping the wire around the lead heads, continuing to peel the housing apart. "Tait," the Socorran boy whispered, "you better help her. I don't know much about transponder codes. She's afraid she might alter the signal."

Moving beside Ancher, Drake leaned against the scuffed plastic shield enclosure. The cell wall was constructed of a clear plastic fiber, reinforced with antiquated steel bars that had been welded against the structure. The old smuggler's eyes were distant and stony, seeing nothing beyond the darkness. "Whatcha thinking, Ancher?"

The Corellian sniffed, a smile playing across his lips. "I was just thinking of all the stupid stunts I've pulled in my lifetime. All the suicidal runs, the friends I made ... and enemies," he growled, frowning suddenly. Then the characteristic smirk returned. "And of course the ladies," Ancher sighed nostalgically. "You know, when that report comes in tomorrow, there could be enough warrants against me to total 300,000 credits." He hesitated. "I used to think that was a mark of distinction."

"What changed your mind?"

"The value of life, Drake. The value of *my* life." He ruffled the boy's hair. "And the few people I care about."

"Is that why you and my dad argued today? You're worried about him?"

"Drake, I don't agree with what your father is doing. He's asking for too much trouble, bad trouble." He averted his gaze. "The same kind of trouble that started this bad blood between me and that

Imperial stiff. Somebody tried to warn me, telling me it wasn't worth it, not for one night with a pretty gal." He shrugged, eyes clouding with the memory. "But at the time," he whispered, conjuring a mental image of the young woman, "it certainly seemed worth it."

"He only wants to help those people, Ancher."

"What will he prove? What will he have when it's over, if he survives."

"He won't know that until it's done." Drake hesitated, hearing his father's bitter tone in his own voice. "Ancher, you've been living on Socorro all these years and you still don't understand. Maybe a Corellian smuggler could look the other way, but a Socorran smuggler can't. It goes against our nature."

"That's what your father said!"

"Because there's a difference, Ancher. You call it pride. I call it honor." Drake took a shuddering breath. "Why do you think bounty hunters avoid Socorro? Because you and others like you are protected by Socorran tradition, a tradition that kneels to no government, no authority, no law."

Subdued, the Corellian moved away, shielding the pride behind his eyes. "Damned if you're not just like him."

Grinning, Drake replied, "Why should that surprise you?" Behind them, he heard Nikaede's low voice, miserably yowling defeat.

"You did your best, Wook," Ransom consoled, needing no translation to define her surrender. "Damn it!" he spat, roughly brushing his hands through thick, black hair. "There's got to be another way!"

"Ancher," Drake whispered. He leaned his head against the smuggler's chest. "We can't stay here."

"We're not, Drake," Ancher soothed, cradling the boy against him. "Tait, we don't need that damned thing. Risking a few lumps, we could ditch this place and get to the starport."

"We'll take more than a few lumps," Ransom chuckled. "They keep at least six armed security men and two stormtroopers overnight."

Staring up at the Wookiee, Ancher grinned. "The odds sound right about even." Challenging Nikaede, he whispered, "Why don't you go over there to them bunks and show us how you feel about the Imperials taking over your homeworld."

Nikaede humphed inquisitively, inclining her head to one side.

"We need a distraction, Nikaede," Drake explained. "Go on, show them how you feel about being locked up in here."

Howling a maniacal war cry, Nikaede threw a side kick, high and wide, smashing the exterior window and bending the bars beyond the building. Retractable climbing claws sprang forward, slicing

walls and ripping through bedding. Demolishing the small cell, she snatched at the bunks, easily ripping the bottom tier from the wall. For a moment, Drake thought the Wookiee had really berserked, watching pensively as she swung the cot over her head.

Ancher grabbed the young Socorran, pulling him into a safe corner. "Help!" he started shouting. "Somebody help!"

"The shag's gone bloody!" Tait screamed, slapping his hands against the cell wall. "You plastic heads get me out of here!" He flinched visibly as Nikaede grasped the top bunk tier and yanked, shattering plaster and cement as she ripped the bolts from the floor. Summoned by the alarmed voices, four guards and a stormtrooper burst into the cellblock, brandishing weapons.

"She's berserk," Ancher said calmly. "It happens when they get penned up like this."

"You idiots put her in here!" Ransom screamed. "Get her out before she comes after me next!"

"10-33, Code Blue," the stormtrooper reported over the comlink. "Get them out!" he snapped to the security team.

Accessing the keypad, the sentry opened the door, pulling Drake and Ancher out of the cell. As the other stormtrooper and the remaining sentries rushed to the scene, another guard grabbed Ransom by the sleeve, forcing the smuggler behind the security team and out of danger. Storming the deranged Wookiee, the first stormtrooper secured his rifle and fired a quick burst.

"No!" Drake screamed and lunged at the guard beside him. Swinging his fists in wide, controlled arcs, he managed to dislodge the rifle. The result was a wild ricochet that bounced off the corner wall before striking the Wookiee. Nikaede howled in pain as the bolt struck her shoulder and arm.

Dodging the stormtrooper, Ancher reached for the blaster rifle. But before he could accomplish his goal, the raging Wookiee snatched the rifle from the stormtrooper's frantic hands, breaking the weapon over his head. Shrugging off the singed burns, Nikaede roared, charging the door with the wrecked rifle locked in her grip.

Ransom leaped against the plasti-shield wall, unexpectedly rebounding onto the astonished guards. Beneath his flailing fists and elbows, two men fell to the floor unconscious. "Drake!" Negotiating a spinning back kick, he knocked the second stormtrooper into the wall. Unfortunately, as the stormtrooper fell, he took three of the other guards and Drake to the floor with him. Wrestling through a tangle of legs and arms, Ransom quickly grasped the stormtrooper by the head and twisted sharply, effectively breaking the Imperial's



neck and removing the combat helmet.

Alarmed by the sight of Drake being held and beaten by the remaining guards, Ancher grabbed one of them from the floor, slamming his fist into the man's jaw and smashing his knee against another sentry's mouth. Nikaede swarmed through the guards with unmitigated violence, fracturing skulls beneath her fingers.

"I'm okay," Drake whispered, as she pulled him from the carnage.

"Rusty!" Ransom screamed into the commandeered comlink. He manipulated the signal transmitter. "Rusty?"

"Tait, we heard you got snuffed!" came the startled reply. "Where are you?"

"In the Imperial playpen across the street." Ransom chuckled. "Look, Rusty, I got a little Imperial hot foot."

"What's their ETA?"

Ransom stared at the alarm that tripped when the stormtrooper fired his blast rifle. "About 10 minutes for them to get here," he replied. "Five to figure out what happened and another five to start closing down the port."

"Acknowledged, I'll have Seth clear a path for us."

"Don't worry, my boys'll handle it," Ransom urged, ushering Drake and the Wookiee to the door. "Just run!"

They followed the outside walls of the Bureau jail, staying in the shadows. The streets were quiet except for a herd of distracted Ithorian tourists, who were examining a series of carbonite plaques displayed against the starport wall. Darting across the street, they slipped into the port entrance, using the Ithorians to dodge a squad of stormtroopers running toward the exit signs, which led to the outside street.

Inside the hangar arena, Ransom recognized the portly security executive. Standing beside a security sealed dock that was reserved for port authority ships, Seth quickly motioned to one of his guards. He acknowledged the all clear sign from the Elomin and nodded, waving the fugitives into the massive shadow of the starport generators. Leading them into the inner recesses of the port docks, he scolded, "Tait Ransom, somehow you always seem to stir up trouble when you're around."

"I had a good teacher," Ransom replied, throwing an accusing look at Ancher.

Guiding Drake by the shoulder, Seth led them to Omman's government controlled dock. "I've relayed our emergency coordinates to your co-pilot. Here," he surrendered the bowcaster to the Wookiee. "Hopefully, you won't need this before you get off the planet."

"How is the traffic?" Ransom asked breathlessly, scanning the starport floor for stormtroopers.

"Clear," Seth reported. "So don't bother to declare your departure. The tower is aware of the problem."

"I owe you, Seth. We all owe you a big one."

"I'll expect a few cases of Socorran raava to arrive within the next 24 hours."

"Agreed," Ancher snapped, ushering Drake and the Wookiee onto the dock. "Even if I have to fly it here myself!"

The rotund security director bowed deeply, "Clear skies, gentlemen and lady." His shadow played against an adjoining corridor wall, then vanished in the darkness beyond the access tunnel.

"Come on!" Ransom hollered. An ominous Corellian gunship sat moored at the dock, locked tight and sealed for departure, except for the cargo bay. Sprinting up the ramp, Drake tripped and slid across the polished floor as the pressurized seal began to close.

"Go, go!" Ransom screamed as the boy recovered. Bracing themselves across the interior hull wall, the fugitives struggled against the turbulence of the gunship's sudden liftoff.

"Where to, Boss?" Rusty's voice echoed in the empty cavern of the cargo bay.

"Socorro!" Ransom screamed over the wail of modified ion drives. The cargo deck plates rumbled violently beneath him as the gunship shifted to the side. "Rusty, what's the update on traffic?"

"Seth arranged for a small diversion on the other side of the planet." The co-pilot's disembodied voice snorted mirthfully over the comm. "We have a free ride."

Exhausted, Ransom slid to the floor, holding his head between his arms and knees. "Yhew!" he exclaimed. "This ought to put a hefty price on all our heads." Turning to Drake, he ruffled the boy's hair. "Congratulations, kid, you just made the billboards."



Beneath the shrewd, cloudless skies of his beloved Socorro, curled beneath his favorite woolen blanket, Drake shivered in the cold air blasting from the circulation vents. A drowsy smile curled over his lips as he lay against the pillows, reliving those exciting moments in the cluttered confines of his mind. Exhausted, he stretched beneath the warmth of his comforters, savoring the grainy sensation of Socorran sand between his toes. Nearby, he heard Nikaede's gentle snores and he sighed, wondering what new adventures tomorrow would bring for him and the overly sensitive Wookiee.

Momentarily startled, the young Socorran was fully awakened by Tait Ransom's charismatic voice, echoing from the main sitting area beyond his bedroom. Fumbling through the darkness, he stumbled over the sleeping Wookiee. Nikaede yawned, exposing a mouthful of glistening fangs. Rolling to her side, she embraced the bowcaster protectively against her chest and fell back to sleep. Relieved, Drake tiptoed to the wall, easing into the shadows. As his consciousness sharpened, he focused on the whispered voices and heard his name, his father, and something about the *Miss Chance*.

"Are you sure, Tait?" Ancher groaned.

"I'm telling you, Ancher, as soon as we broke from hyperspace, we picked up his signal and followed it into the asteroid belt." Ransom growled irritably, forcing the words from his throat. "We kept getting closer and closer, until finally we were sitting right on top of the signal."

"He was hiding then," the old guard argued. "Some of those asteroids are enormous. You might have been sitting right on top of him."

"We were sitting on top of him, Ancher." Ransom slumped into a nearby chair, cradling his head beneath his knees. "On top and right

in the middle. There wasn't much left." Distracted, he sat up, unable to shake the images of the gutted freighter, drifting through the erratic course of the asteroid belt.

Ancher closed his eyes, guarded against tears. "I told him not to go. Warned him there'd be trouble."

"What about the boy, Ancher?" Tait whispered.

"Drake?" Ancher gasped. Firmly shaking his head, he blurted, "I can't tell him. I ... I wouldn't know what to say."

Drake felt his heart clench, his chest tightening beneath his hands. "You don't have to say anything, Ancher," the young Socorran whispered. Forcing a breath into his lungs, he walked into the main room.

"Drake," Ancher cried, "I don't know ... sorry isn't enough, boy."

Numb, Drake moved into the inner antechamber, avoiding Ransom's intense gaze.

"Drake," he heard the Corellian whisper, a note of command in his voice. Before Ransom could stop and reason with him, he snatched his boots from the outer wall and sprinted into the cold dawn. Socorro's ever intruding sands sucked at his feet, weighing him down as he raced up the face of the dune to the empty landing field beyond the compound. There were no signs of the *Miss Chance*. Exaggerated by the ascending sun, the desert swells formed false mountain ranges against the stony surface of the planet.

Breathless, Drake sank to his knees, beating his fists into the sand. Raised on a gentle zephyr, a spray of sand sifted into his eyes, summoning immediate tears. "I won't let you go!" Drake screamed to the sun. "I won't let you go," he cried, surrendering to the embrace of the black sands.

It was eventide before Drake stirred. Stretched out on the sweltering sand, he lay face down with no shelter or shirt to protect his shoulders and back. His skin burned with intensity, inflamed by

Adventure Idea

While resting up from their latest venture, the characters are recruited to deliver medical supplies and foodstuffs to a neighboring system. The job has only a few minor complications, enough to boost their confidence so that they agree to finish the last leg of the job and deliver the goods to a nearby mining colony. Only when they arrive in the system do they discover that there is a small-scale trade war going on between the planet's inhabitants and the sector authorities.

Socorro's unrelenting sun. Gritting his teeth, he endured this self-induced punishment, a purification meant to burn the guilt from his heart, if not from his mind. Dazed by the extreme heat, the boy sat up, startled to find Nikaede sitting nearby on the dune.

Perched on the ridge, she seemed no more out of place than the sand, her black pelt blending into the Socorran landscape. Drake rose to his feet, wincing as the burns across his back pulled and twinged with every motion. Walking with deliberate slowness, he moved up the crest, momentarily staring into the Wookiee's eyes. Close to tears, injured both physically and emotionally, he sat down on the dune beside her.

Nikaede tipped her head back against her shoulders, howling in a low, mournful voice that echoed within her throat. Growing steadily louder, it was not an unpleasant sound and seemed to linger, reverberating against the dunes and the clear sky.

"Is that how Wookiees mourn their dead?" Drake asked, intrigued by the bizarre act. He listened intently as Nikaede explained how her people gathered by honor families, howling, wailing, even challenging death, to bring solidarity to the survivors. The grieving boy shrugged against the tightening burns across his shoulders. In silence, he listened to the names of Wookiee uncles and cousins, grandparents and playmates, marking them all in memory, as was the tradition. A little smile forced its way to his lips when the Wookiee howled an odd melody that vaguely resembled his father's name.

"Drake!" Ancher called. The Corellian appeared just over the dune crest. Behind him, Tait Ransom stiffly navigated the unsteady ridge of sand, leaving his landspeeder humming nearby on the desert floor. Sullen, the rogue smuggler paused self-consciously, staring into the young Socorran's face. Abruptly, he took Drake's hand, pressing a 1,000 credit chit into the boy's palm. "Before my old man took off for the other side of the galaxy, he put 1,000 credits in my hand and told me to go burn in rancor pit." He shifted uneasily in the sand. "There was no love lost between us — but that's the way it usually goes with those of us who run the shadows."

Shaking his reckless black mane, Ransom stared into the setting sun, as if gathering his courage. "I learned the runner's trade from Ancher. Right here on Socorro. I left to make a name for myself, outside the shadow of Kaine Paulsen. Don't much matter what the untold histories will write about yesterday, today, or tomorrow." He thrust his hands into his pockets. "I'll always be second best to him ... and you." Ransom chuckled, clucking the boy on the chin. "I don't

have it in my genes to be the greatest pirate in Socorran history." He cleared his throat of tears. "They'll be watching you, Drake. Jabba, Abdi-Badawzi, from Nal Hutta to Tatooine, they'll have their eyes on you 'cause they want what you've got ... what your father had. Take that 1,000, it's a rough start, but that's the one thing we all have in common."

Staring at Ancher, Ransom forced a breath through his wide nostrils. "You were right to put ole Ancher in his place. There is something different about Socorrans, something that separates them from the rest. If it's heart, then go where your heart takes you, kid." The smuggler retreated, starting back down the dune to his vehicle. "Don't never regret what you've done or what you will do. And don't never look back." Ransom hesitated as he climbed into the landspeeder. "Clear skies, kid." Revving the engine a few times, he sped into the badlands, leaving a billowed, black cloud in his wake.

"He's a good man," Ancher whispered, moved by Ransom's gesture. "Not much of a pilot, but one feisty fighter." Cradling Drake against him, he asked, "How are you feeling?"

"I don't feel anymore, Ancher. There just doesn't seem to be any reason," he replied incredulously. "No cause."

"The only good cause is a dead cause, I'm afraid. It's the only kind that brings people together."

Staring across the darkening horizon, Drake asked, "Will I know my cause?"

"When the domino falls, it's every man for himself," Ancher replied. "When the time comes, you'll know it, boy."

Drake sank weakly to his knees. "But what if I make a mistake? What if I don't listen when I should? Take on a job that's too big?"

"Drake," the old guard smuggler chuckled softly, "making choices is all about making mistakes. Everybody's guaranteed to make a few. That's why they call it living." The smuggler shuffled away, leaving Drake and Nikaede alone with the coming night wind.

Staring into the expansive badlands, Drake contemplated Socorran traditions, whose intricate ties with the tragically short lives of pirates and smugglers left no room for dramatic ceremony. There would be no savage wild fires or elaborate rituals to celebrate the death of Kaine Paulsen. No moment of silence, not even a scream in the night, to commemorate the spirit of a dead pirate. There would just be memories, offworld memories, and hushed whispers of fallen glory.

Abruptly, the wind was still. For one tranquil moment, no grain of sand shifted. The ever-changing face of Socorro remained unchanged.

Then, as abruptly as it had ceased, the breeze swept in from the badlands, carrying a chill. "Nikaede, I need your help," Drake whispered. "I have to do something," he hesitated, "and I can't do it alone."

Nikaede pounded a fist against her broad chest, bellowing a staunch oath of fealty to the young pirate. As if daring the waning glory of Socorro's sun to challenge the integrity of her honor, she

The Steadfast

Craft: Ghtroc Industries class 720 freighter

Type: Modified light freighter

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 35 meters

Skill: Space transports: Ghtroc freighter

Crew: 1 or 2 (can coordinate)

Passengers: 10

Cargo Capacity: 135 metric tons

Consumables: 6 months

Cost: Not available for sale

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x1

Hyperdrive Backup: x14

Nav computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 1D+2

Space: 4

Atmosphere: 280; 800 kmh

Hull: 4D+1

Shields: 2D

Sensors:

Passive: 15/0D

Scan: 30/1D

Search: 50/3D

Focus: 2/4D

Weapons:

Two Laser Cannons

Fire Arc: Turret

Crew: 1

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 2D+1

Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

Damage: 4D

Capsule: The purchase of the *Steadfast* is shrouded in mystery. Not even Drake is certain how his father managed to acquire the freighter, though there is often a brief mention of ship-napping. The Ghtroc freighter is relatively new, definitely customized, and will undergo more customization under the ownership of her young captain. Relatively unknown as a smuggling ship, the freighter has never really been put to the test. But it is certain to perform well under the guidance of an experienced pilot and crew.

raised her bowcaster and uttered a tremendous war cry to the dimming skies. Intrigued, Drake grinned, whispering, "Was that a life debt?" His smile widened and a deep sense of completion began to swell within him. Shaking the sand from his leggings, the young Socorran stood up. "Come on," he whispered and started walking into the ominous stretches of the Doaba Badlands.

It was nearly dawn when they reached the hidden entrance to the dormant volcano. Filtered sunlight illuminated the volcanic crown, sifting down through the darkness. In the basement hollow, the delicate rays faintly sketched the silhouette of a Ghtroc freighter. Moored on a modified set of strut supports, the radiant visage of the *Steadfast* stirred Drake's memories of late-night flight schedules with his father, prepping the ship for her first smuggling runs.

Intrigued by the customized renovations, Nikaede examined the quiet, exterior lines of the freighter, impressed with the power boosters jutting from the tail section. "You can play with the engines another time," Drake chuckled, guiding the mesmerized Wookiee toward the bridge. In the narrow corridor, he shivered as the cooler air aboard the ship blew over his bare skin. Pulling his father's flight jacket from the console, he shrugged the rough fabric over his inflamed shoulders and slowly sat on the edge of the pilot's chair. In the familiar interior of the *Steadfast's* flight cabin, he thought he could hear his father's voice, echoing starchart calculations and instructions.

"Go ahead," he chuckled, offering the co-pilot's chair to the anxious Wookiee. Leaning into the plush leather chair, Drake suddenly sat upright, feeling a discomforting bulge against the small of his back. Reaching behind him, he felt the warm heel of a heavy blaster against his palm. "By all the moons of Nal Hutta!" Drake gasped, echoing one of Anchor's preferred expressions. Raising the blaster from its holster, he recognized it as Anchor's most prized possession, the only weapon to survive 30 years of the Corellian's dangerous lifestyle. Brought out for only the most auspicious ventures, the modified blaster was formidable, even without its power pack. "How did he know where ..." Drake grinned mischievously, knowing that the tenacious smuggler had ways of knowing everything that transpired above or beneath the sands of Socorro.

Beneath the blaster, inside the customized holster, Drake found an antiquated, personal datapad. Before the days of keypads and data-punch boards, the obsolete instrument used a magnetic stylus to imprint information directly onto the dim screen. Perusing through the entries, Drake was astounded by the neat calculations and

Drake Paulsen



Type: Young Pirate

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 4D, dodge 3D+2, melee combat 3D+2, pick pocket 4D, running 4D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Alien species 3D, languages 4D+2, planetary systems 3D, streetwise 2D+2, survival 3D, survival: desert 3D+2

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 4D, beast riding 4D, sensors 4D, space transports 4D, space transports: Ghtroc freighter 5D, starship shields 4D+1, swoop operations 5D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 3D+1, con 3D+1, forgery 3D+1, search 3D+1, sneak 3D+1

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D, stamina 3D+1

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Blaster repair 3D, first aid 3D, space transport repair 3D+2, starship weapon repair 3D

Special Abilities:

Languages: Drake gets +1D to understand and interpret unfamiliar alien dialects

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 4

Character Points: 15

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, sporting blaster (3D+1)

Capsule: Drake Paulsen is a 15-year-old, exotically handsome boy. His skin is deeply tanned, framing haunted blue eyes. Having an innate talent for language acquisition, Drake has been smuggling with his father, Kaine "Chu'la" Paulsen, since the tender age of five. Despite a childhood groomed in illegal trafficking, he is still a boy with much maturing to do.

Shortly after the death of his father, Drake left Socorro to pursue his own reputation and career. Considering his father's success, the eyes of the criminal underworld will be watching, eager to bridle the young pilot's potential and draw him into their organizations with the promise of profit and gain.

astrogation maps scrolling before him. Every route that Kaine Paulsen had ever explored and used for smuggling, from the most bizarre entries to the routine, were recorded there.

"These were the short cuts," Drake whispered. The last entry was a detailed schematic of the Thrugii asteroid belt. "Nikaede, what's on the cargo manifest?" he asked, staring blankly through the ship's viewscreen. "Not the main cargo bay, ship's stores." Distracted, the

Socorran stood up, strapping the blaster around his waist. "Six months of consumables? Emergency rations." Grinning roguishly, he ordered, "Realign the relays and set the proximity alarms to maximum. We'll need a constant-active sweep to avoid the sector authority sensor tags."

The astute Wookiee recognized variations in the codes, modifications radically opposed to the normal coordinate planes of space. Shrugging, she input the peculiar heading and barked to her captain, adding a sharp yowl to punctuate her inquiry.

"Yep, we're going to the Thrugii outpost," he replied.

Listening to the gentle whistle of the *Steadfast's* engines, Drake toggled the lift controls, guiding the freighter through the narrow crown of the volcano. Socorro's sun met them at the rim, throwing an acute glare across the unsullied hull, as the starship sped across the dark shadow of the Doaba Badlands. "Bring up the running lights," he ordered, "all of the them, including the search beacons."

Profiled by her exterior running lights, the *Steadfast* banked sharply below the skyline, speeding over the uneven mounds of the Doaba Badlands. Brilliantly illuminated search beacons crisscrossed the land of Kaine Paulsen's birth in a silent tribute, heralded only by the thunder of the freighter's engines. As the *Steadfast* sped over the external flight pad outside of Ancher's home, Drake caught a glimpse of the old Corellian waving a glow rod in the darkness, signaling the traditional wish for clear skies.

Nearly imperceptible against the first glances of dawn, the *Steadfast's* shadow faded quickly as the freighter abruptly ascended into the red and yellowed atmosphere above the planet. Drake Paulsen kept his eyes on the open space before him, harboring no regrets as the shadowy face of Socorro dissipated beneath him. Finger poised over the hyperdrive cue, he activated the system, instinctively, without thinking and without looking back.

The Pentastar Alignment



Somewhere in Space ...

It was far too late before the merchant freighter finally realized that the approaching container ship was more than what it seemed. A Corellian gunship suddenly emerged from the immense container ship's loading bow, ravaging the merchant freighter with ion cannon fire before it could summon even a whimper of distress. With well-timed efficiency, the pirates quickly attached a docking claw to the disabled merchant and ejected the crew bodily in the ship's escape pods. The merchant ship was now theirs to examine at their leisure.

"That's the whole lot of it," Tara tossed the datapad to her captain, who was reclining thoughtfully in the merchant ship's command chair. "Five metric tons of consumables, plus 30 casks of Ippellrilla firewater. Enough to keep the crew drunk and happy for a very long time, I figure."

Roark Slader fingered the datapad, correcting her. "Enough to keep a sleaze like Begas Tok drunk and happy for a long time, for a slob of his proportions. He'll pay us well for the firewater. Maybe enough to get us another Corellian cruiser from the wasteyards near Jaemus."

"Be nice if it was another gunship," she gestured with a nod at *Slader's Raider II*, sitting off protectively some distance away. Perhaps there was some good to this New Republic after all, pushing the Empire out of the local systems and giving opportunists like themselves a free hand to dip into the barrel of helpless interstellar cargo traders. Business had been so good lately, perhaps there was enough room for another pirate in this sector, Tara smiled to herself. Perhaps.

By Anthony P. Russo

Illustrations by Chris Gossett



Slader merely grunted something non-committal when his comlink went off. Tara immediately recognized Mac's voice aboard the *Raider II*. He was shouting excitedly about a large mass that had just arrived in their local space. Slader was about to order the man to calm down and explain when a volley of heavy turbolasers struck the gunship from the stern. Tara saw what had fired, an all-too-familiar wedge shape was bearing down quickly upon them.

"It's one of those new Enforcer cruisers! No. Two of them!" she pointed. Slader cursed in five languages as he jumped out of the command chair. Both warships were close enough to see the unique five-star pattern painted on their hulls. "Damn Pentastar Alignment again. Lose one empire, gain another, I suppose. Well so much for suppositions," Slader barked quickly into the comlink. "Mac, back *Raider II* around and take the long way out of the system. Draw their fire until Tara and I get out on *Raider I*." He then thumbed the comlink's general call button using a secure frequency. "Slader to all hands, we are departing — post-haste!" He cut the channel and they both started out of the disabled merchant ship's bridge.

"But what about the firewater and the stores?" Tara ran after him. "What about Begas Tok's deal?"

"You're more than welcome to take it to Tok." Slader whipped around just long enough to disengage *Raider I*'s landing claw from its prey. "Other than that, all bets are off!"

With a flurry of explosive bolts, *Slader's Raider I* turned away from the merchant ship as its smaller sister led the pair of Enforcer picket cruisers along another route. From the control bridge of the modified *Raider I*, Tara watched as their prize slipped slowly away in the distance. She then turned her gaze upon the dreadful shapes of the Alignment ships, wincing inwardly for every cannon hit that struck *Raider II* as it struggled along its desperate escape trajectory.

Perhaps business was not so good after all, she thought.

In the Wake of Endor

Despite the Rebel victory over the Emperor at Endor and the birth of The New Republic, the relinquishing of systems and worlds still within the grip of the Empire has been a slow and difficult task. Many Imperial leaders have refused to step down from power, while battle groups from loyal Imperial forces continue to harass the New Republic and its allies. Meanwhile, numerous pretenders to the Emperor's throne are jockeying for position, while the power-hungry from the Imperial regime and corporate bureaucracy con-

tinue to consolidate their power.

In the distant Outer Rim Territories, a new threat to the New Republic and peace for the galaxy has emerged from these power seekers — the Pentastar Alignment. The following report contains profiles on Pentastar Alignment leaders and its organizations, information on certain trade zones and worlds under the Alignment's control, and stories about the profiteers and pirates who slip through the gaps in the Pentastar Alignment and the New Republic.

After the triumphant Battle of Endor, with the Imperial Fleet withdrawing from many regions of space it once firmly controlled, the New Republic continues to fight the remnants of the Empire's forces, trying to reunite the fragmented and fear-stricken systems of the galaxy.

But in the vast region known as the Outer Rim Territories, the downfall of Emperor Palpatine has left numerous Imperial leaders squabbling among themselves. Ships and forces loyal to one are often sent to overthrow another, leaving many secure trade routes and space lanes in chaos as nests of pirates are left to plunder as they please. Anarchy is rampant on some worlds, while armed rebellion and civil unrest plague others.

In addition, corporations and private entities once loyal to the Empire now face extinction as the Imperial machine that once protected them flees. The New Republic wishes to hold many of these private companies — the so-called Imperial *corporates* — accountable for their ruthless business practices, such as the enslavement of alien species, damage to planetary environments, and corruption of the social integrity of many systems.

However, the New Republic is an unwanted and distrusted presence in the Outer Rim. Squadrons of New Republic ships are few and far between out here, and their personnel, while excellently trained, have little authority but to protect themselves and their vessels from attack.

Founding the Alignment

Some time after the Emperor's death aboard the second Death Star battle station, at a carefully arranged meeting, high officials of the Empire and representatives from two large Imperial corporates held an unprecedented discussion aboard the personal flagship of Grand Moff Tarkin's replacement, Arduus Kaine. Because their number was five at the time, Kaine ceremoniously dubbed their meeting the Pentastar Talks.

Suspicion and even outright accusation filled those long days as the five argued amongst themselves. But Grand Moff Kaine was known to be a hard man who succeeded where others had failed. Like Tarkin before him, Kaine believed in the principles of the New Order, and earnestly knew that Palpatine's writings and methods could help reforge the chain that bound the Empire. Eventually the Grand Moff hammered out the details and allegiances necessary for the others to sign the Pentastar Alignment Treaty.

Notes from Conciliatory Meeting aboard flagship *Reaper*:

7^-7373h-8^GHS

In attendance: Imperial Governor Ib Dekeet, Commerce Master Commissioner Gregor Raquoran, Dynamic Automata Corporate Head Elta Besk, Galentro Heavy Works Representative Wyrn Otro, Grand Moff Arduus Kaine.

Continued from 7^-7340a-2^WED

Governor Dekeet: I still do not understand why all vessels and vehicles, even troops, under my authority have to display this ridiculous-looking star badge.

Grand Moff Kaine: Consider it instant recognition, Governor. And reputation as well. The next time some pirate or criminal tries to make off with one of your merchant ships, who will respond? Not just Imperial forces under Governor Dekeet, but the combined might of the Pentastar Alignment. Those who defy us will soon remember us. And as for the symbol of the Pentastar as a badge, I must commend you for your excellent choice of words, Governor. A badge, after all, represents authority and organization. Our authority. Not those usurpers in this poorly misguided New Republic. Systems will soon respect us. They will *have* to respect us.

CMC Gregor Raquoran: But tell me Kaine, what about this alliance of forces? Combined military forces are quite understandable, considering the times. But what good is political unity? The Velcar Free Commerce Zone is quite stable, I can assure you.

Kaine: Ah, but for how long, Gregor? How long before the New Republic sends its representatives all the way to Entralla, or even your home world of Capza? The New Republic is still merely the Rebellion, thinly disguised as an official entity. They

The Pentastar Alignment

The Pentastar Alignment Treaty quickly led to the dread and deceit that would be known simply as the Pentastar Alignment. With hundreds of capital ships and several legions of loyal Imperial Army soldiers and stormtroopers at their command, and more forces joining all the time, the Alignment has swallowed whole systems in its path while installing planetary overseers to its will and desires. And with the forces of the Alignment, so travel the Imperial

are outlaws, and they will continue to think and do as such. In the Pentastar Alignment, there will be no tolerance for any Rebel insurrection.

Elta Besk: Don't forget, Raquoran, this New Republic has some queer ideas about alien rights. They believe the Velcar Free Commerce Zone exists only to exploit defenseless aliens. I'll wager they can't wait to hatch some liberation plot for the Entymals that work the gas mines around Bextar. Gas mines that my Amber Sun Industries run — and are supposedly under your protection.

Raquoran: Where they shall remain, good woman.

Besk: ... Until they fall back into alien hands.

Kaine: Enough, both of you. Remember. The New Order has never fallen. Only the Emperor. If no one will accept the responsibility of enforcing Imperial laws and doctrine, then we shall. The Emperor may be dead, but the Empire lives on!

Wyrn Otro: We must all stand together, or be swept aside.

Kaine: Exactly, sir.

Otro: And what about you, Grand Moff Kaine?

Kaine: In what respect?

Otro: Come come now. I've read this treaty of yours. Is this an alignment of power, or just another excuse to declare yourself Emperor Kaine? I have known, long before Palpatine's death, of your wish to be transferred to the Imperial City and serve the Emperor by his side. Now can it be assumed that you wish not to serve beside the Emperor, but in his place?

Kaine: I have no desire for such a title, nor the position. An Emperor rules alone, and he is gone. But even an Emperor cannot do what our combined strength and resources can, and that is *rebuild* the Empire ...

Preamble from The Pentastar Alignment Treaty

"... In accordance with the rules and regulations concerning emergencies which directly affect the ability to maintain order, we at this gathering swear to uphold the practices of the New Order, to defend the territorial claims of the Galactic Empire, to remove unrest and usurpers, to contest all acts of treason and deliberate disobedience against the New Order, and to summarily return all worlds and systems which are the undisputed territory of the Galactic Empire.

"We at this gathering swear allegiance for the duration of this emergency to the Pentastar Alignment of Powers, to jointly remove all corruption of the New Order from the Galactic Empire, to support the rights of its citizens and the law of the New Order, and to defend this Alignment at all costs ..."

corporates and their dark enterprises. Alien species and their right to exist peacefully continue to be swept aside in a wave of exploitation, while the profits of trade and industry flow into the Alignment's coffers.

Organization

During the extent of the "emergency" Kaine has declared, the Pentastar Alignment and the regions under its control maintain much of the Empire's infrastructure, although several changes have been made in the organization of its legislative and enforcement bodies. For its purposes, the Alignment has adopted a unique blending of various Imperial organizations with its own, although many of the Alignment's organizational policies and procedures are attributed to the writings of Grand Moff Kaine.

The Pentastar Alignment's legislative arm consists of two major factions: Order and Enforcement. Order combines many responsibilities of the old Imperial Select Committee, the Imperial Ubiquitorate, and sections formerly maintained by COMPNOR. (Refer to the *Imperial Sourcebook* for the operations of those respective offices.) In addition, several new posts were created at the suggestion of Grand Moff Kaine — Politorate, Insurrection, Judgment, and Protectorate.

Pentastar's Enforcement division maintains public allegiance, enforces civil codes and regulations, and disciplines offenders through its widespread Pentastar Patrol. Not surprisingly, the

Pentastar Patrol has achieved a notoriety all its own where its methods of maintaining civil order are concerned.

In keeping with Grand Moff Kaine's intention to restore the glory of the Empire, the Alignment military remains relatively independent of the legislative government. In fact, with the exception of a few cosmetic changes (for example, applying Pentastar symbols to uniforms and vehicles), and the addition of new pieces of mission-specific equipment, the forces of the Pentastar Alignment remain dreadfully similar to their Imperial counterparts.

Order

The Chamber of Order

The highest commanding body within the Pentastar Alignment is the Chamber of Order. Its membership is increasing constantly as more Imperial and corporate officials recognize Kaine and join the Alignment. The Chamber of Order never holds public audience, considering the potential for disaster if certain organizations, such as the New Republic, were to discover the location of such a meeting. For this reason, full Chamber meetings occur at randomly spaced intervals and only at highly secure sites.

The Chamber of Order typically concerns itself with deliberate or profound threats to the Alignment, or new policies or regulations. Each member, including the corporates among the assembly, is free to call upon the Alignment to supply military units for assistance, as long as it does not interfere with another Alignment sphere of influence. Any Chamber member must consult with the entire Chamber of Order before requesting any military action. The Chamber of Order is responsible for the suggestion and installation of planetary and sector overseers, the Alignment's version of governors, on those worlds or systems that are considered "troublesome" or of particular interest or value to the Alignment. Chamber members may also point out developments in their own regions, with recommendations for action given to a general vote by the Chamber. The only deciding vote belongs to Grand Moff Kaine. Kaine can veto the Chamber's actions if necessary, except when faced with a complete majority overthrow vote. Rarely has anyone questioned Kaine's veto, however, as few would actually confront him.

The Chamber of Order deliberately distinguishes between the titles of overseer and Imperial Governor so that it is not possible for an appointed overseer to claim a seat within the Chamber. Thus the

Chamber restricts membership to only the highest (and not to mention original) Imperial and corporate officials.

New Branches of Order

At the insistence of Grand Moff Kaine, the Pentastar Alignment Treaty dictated that the various offices that comprised COMPNOR and the Ubiquitorate were to be combined, with redundancies eliminated and moved to supplement other offices. Naturally there was some resistance to this union, since COMPNOR's Imperial Security Bureau absolutely despised having anything to do with its counterparts within Imperial Intelligence's own Bureau of Operations, and vice versa.

The sudden arrival of the new branches of Order soon changed their minds when certain troublemakers within the ISB and the Bureau of Ops began to vanish without warning, complete with rumors concerning re-education camps on ice planets and steamy jungle worlds. Eventually, ISB and Imperial Intelligence declared an uneasy truce, if only for their own occupational survival.

Politorate

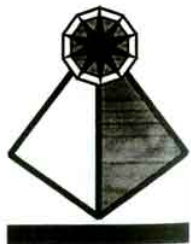
"Politorates: the last to know what's going on, and the first to get ejected out the airlock ..."

— anonymous Alignment Admiral

The regulatory body known as COMPNOR is, in effect, nonexistent in the Pentastar Alignment and is not specifically named in the Treaty. Grand Moff Kaine personally considered the constant feuding between Imperial Intelligence and COMPNOR a ridiculous waste of time and effort, and admitted that COMPNOR itself had gained a considerable amount of distrust among even its own agents and officials.

Since all actions of the Pentastar Alignment were considered essential to the preservation of the New Order, a new office was required to ensure that the principles of the New Order were enforced among Alignment personnel. This responsibility has been delegated to the Politorate Branch — each Alignment office, vessel, garrison, and political body has its own Politorate officer or Pol, for short.

Pols make certain all actions by personnel are in strict accordance with the demands of the Alignment and the New Order. Pols can order accountings of computer records, search personnel files



Emblem by Anthony P. Russo

— no matter how secure — and conduct investigations wherever loyalty to the Alignment is concerned. Politorate officers have the authority to remove ground and ship commanders from their posts, on the spot, for breaches in discipline.

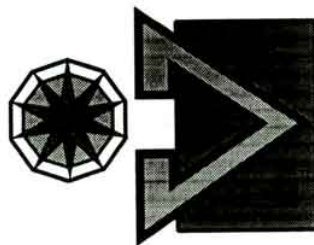
To suggest that Politorate Branch is little more than a spy organization for the Chamber of Order is grounds for immediate dismissal and transferal to a re-education center on one of the harsher worlds within the Alignment. Most Alignment personnel have learned to work around the prying eyes of their Politorate officers, often by restricting certain scandocs and destroying personal records, while Naval and Army units consider their Politorate officers nuisances who usually do more harm to their troops' morale than good.

Pentastar Politorate Officer. All stats are 2D except: *Knowledge 3D, bureaucracy 4D, intimidation 6D, willpower: loyalty to Alignment 6D, Technical 3D, security: computer systems 4D+2.* Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D).

Insurrection

The Order branch known as Insurrection grew from a secret investigation by the Chamber of Order into the reasons systems fled the Empire and joined the New Republic. The investigators theorized that the fragmented Empire has become much too concerned with confronting the New Republic militarily and keeping its remaining regions under tighter controls and restrictions. This, they believed, provided the means for the New Republic to persuade perfectly upstanding and peace-loving citizens of the Empire into rebellion for "improved lifestyles" and "overstated freedoms." The investigation recommended the devotion of resources and personnel to attack the New Republic and its allies on a variety of political and other more subtle fronts.

Insurrection agents are responsible for using deception and misinformation to prevent more systems from falling into the hands of the New Republic. Insurrection has a nasty arsenal of equipment and tricks at its disposal, including surveillance droids which spread rumors of defeat and poor cooperation among the ranks of the New



Republic military, false New Republic couriers sent to government leaders to reveal their traitorous ways, protest rallies staged against the New Republic, and attacks on diplomats who favor the New Republic. All efforts are designed to cause maximum political damage and internal turmoil within the New Republic.

Insurrection's newest strategy is to target worlds and systems that have already turned over to the New Republic, carefully sowing seeds of intolerance and hatred about aliens, planting political fraud into a system's fledgling government structure, and even prying into the New Republic Council. Their latest plot apparently centers on undermining the Mon Calamari and other core New Republic members.

Insurrection Agent. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 4D+2, grenade 3D+2, Knowledge 2D+2, bureaucracy 3D, Mechanical 2D+2, communications 3D+2, space transports 3D+2, Technical 4D, computer programming/repair 4D+2, demolitions 5D, droid programming 4D+2, security 5D+2.* Move: 10. False identity card, hold-out blaster (3D), secure comlink, security bypass tools.

Judgment

"If justice is blind, then Judgment must surely be deaf—considering all the pain and suffering they've caused ..."

— Angry New Republic official

Grand Moff Arduus Kaine became concerned with the lack of a visible organization to uphold the mandates of the New Order. While the Empire had been devoted to the control of information, Kaine believed there was little the Empire did to promote adherence to the New Order, with the exception of COMPNOR's Coalition for Progress.

Kaine was particularly interested in the old Justice branch of the Coalition, and how it tried to mesh the policies of the New Order with the legal system. He then determined that the Alignment should become a symbol of the New Order — and created Judgment.

The sinister appearance of Judgment and its various representatives is not accidental — the Empire established that fear by image and deed is far more powerful than fear alone. The Great InQuestors of Judgment, threatening men who wear long black cloaks and hide their faces beneath oversized black hoods, serve as the principal



Adventure Idea

One of the characters discovers that his home world is under the scrutiny of a Great InQuestor. Fearing for the lives of friends or relatives who may be loyal to the cause of the New Republic there, the character must attempt to smuggle them off the planet and to safety.

tool of maintaining the decree of the Pentastar Alignment. The InQuestors are accompanied by their own personal cadre of Protectorate troops who not only seek out miscreants and lawbreakers for the InQuestors to cross examine, but also act as the InQuestors' personal bodyguards.

The arrival of a Great InQuestor to an outlying world or system sends a chill to nearly all beings in the vicinity. All hyperspace travel in or out of the system is forbidden (by Interdictor cruiser) while the InQuestor conducts his investigations to root out deception, crime, and acts of treachery against the New Order. InQuestors can seize property and persons without writ or warrant, conducting their sessions aboard ancient Imperial dungeon ships. Their practices are sometimes compared to ancient witch hunts and mass trials as they use fear and confession to gain access to traitors. Tales have been circulating the star lanes about public punishments, even executions. Such actions have been subject to strong protests by the New Republic.

Judgment InQuestor. All stats are 2D except: *Knowledge 4D, alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 5D, intimidation 6D+2, law enforcement 5D+2, planetary systems 4D+2, Perception 4D, persuasion 5D+2.* Move: 10. Comlink.

Protectorate

"Not the most brilliant bunch of plant-heads in the galaxy, but certainly the most trigger-happy. Saw a whole squad of them take out a speeder taxi once because they thought it moved suspiciously ..."

— Roark Slader, independent businessman

The new Protectorate Branch replaces the Internal Security Branch (IntSec) of the Ubiquitorate and the Imperial Guard Corps, and is charged with



protecting Pentastar Alignment personnel and equipment. Grand Moff Kaine and his staff noted that performance ratings for the former Imperial offices were far less than satisfactory, and an increase in the quality of security and protection of vital personnel and equipment was an absolute must. To ensure their loyalty to the Alignment, recruits for Protectorate usually come from former fanatical CompForce troops rather than from regular Imperial Army or Navy personnel.

Protectorate prefers to keep knowledge of its training practices and operational procedures to itself, even from other Alignment offices, which only magnifies the cloak of secrecy that veils its agents and personnel. A key scheme identifies the grade of a particular protector, from "10" for most general troops to "1" for the elite guardians, protectors of members of the Chamber of Order. The "0" designation is usually reserved for Protectorate Branch command officers. Many Protectorate agents prefer all references about them be based on their agent grade. To heighten the confusion, agents with identical grades identify themselves by their subclass rating from their divisional offices — such as 1A, 2C, and 3G.

As if that was not enough, Protectorate has also devised an elaborate color-coding scheme to indicate the threat level of any possible situation and the necessary application of defense and force necessary to achieve success. The color is followed by a number used to indicate the danger of the situation. For example: a Yellow-1 threat could mean an attack by a mad lone gunman, while a Red-100 alert can indicate the arrival of the entire New Republic fleet! Threats in the Blue and Black spectrums are considered threats to be captured — the Protectorate agent should attempt to capture the assailant alive for questioning by Interrogation. Conversely, Yellow and Red threats are "destroy first, explain later" situations, warranting immediate action by the Protectorate agent.

Protectorate Agent, Levels 2 to 10. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D+2, dodge 3D+2, grenade 4D, melee combat 4D+2, Strength 3D, brawling 4D+2.* Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D), secure comlink.

Guardian Protectorate Agent, Level 1. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 4D, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 5D+2, brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 4D+2, grenade 5D, melee combat 5D+1, melee parry 4D+2, vehicle blasters 4D+2, Mechanical 3D, communications 3D+2, repulsorlift operations 4D, sensors 3D+2, space transports 4D+1, Strength*

3D, brawling 4D, Technical 3D, security 5D+2. Move: 10. Heavy blaster pistol (5D), secure comlink.

Enforcement

One of the initial problems encountered by the Pentastar Alignment has been the application of its limited military forces. With other, non-aligned Imperial forces still at large and the New Republic probing deeper into the Empire, the defense of the Alignment has been crucial to its survival.

Military tacticians and commanders have long complained that one of the many unnecessary burdens heaped upon the Navy and Army has been local law enforcement. Local planetary constabularies and militias are only as organized and effective as the systems they patrol. There has been an ever-increasing need for a centralized enforcement arm that can uphold the code of the Alignment as well as local laws.

Kaine created a new Enforcement faction for this purpose. While it combines much of the same duties as the Justice and Enforcement branches of the Galactic Empire, it has new sweeping powers, specialized equipment and facilities, and personnel. The many branches under Enforcement cover the known limits of crime throughout the galaxy, with new suboffices being created almost as quickly as personnel and computer storage space can be found for them. Criminal science laboratories are constantly working on breaking data transmission code schemes and data slicing techniques. Analysis and identification specialists attempt to trace the path of crime through the star lanes. Many investigative offices serve certain regions in the Alignment, like the Velcar Free Commerce Zone. Other suboffices specialize in certain types of crime: smuggling, forgery, credit counterfeiting, starship theft, homicide, piracy, and criminal organizations.

Despite the long chain of offices and suboffices, there is one symbol that best represents the Alignment's new Enforcement arm. Hailed as friend of the innocent citizen and foe to the common crook, they are considered the embodiment of justice, fairness, and the galactic way — the Pentastar Patrol.

The Pentastar Patrol

"Collectively, the Patrol's about as bright as banthas armed with blasters, and just as subtle. I get the shivers just thinking about them."

— Roark Slader, independent businessman

The Pentastar Patrol constitutes Enforcement's largest body of personnel and equipment, and has become perhaps the most successful symbol of the Pentastar Alignment and its authority. The Patrol has replaced a large number of Imperial Army garrisons and Naval orbit operations, allowing those forces to participate in the continuing conflict between the Alignment and those who oppose it.

The Pentastar Patrol is unique in that it permits some aliens to join its ranks. While this decision has enabled the Patrol to gain wide acceptance among citizens, the idea has not settled too well within the Chamber of Order or other Alignment branches, which always try to follow Imperial decrees to the letter.

After a precursory physical and psychological examination, each applicant to the Pentastar Patrol Academy receives an intense, three month-long training program to promote physical endurance and develop early combat skills. As each course level is passed, the cadet is tested on how he or she will best serve the Patrol. Less than 40 percent of all applicants succeed in the final training levels, and even fewer make starting rank of "patrol officer first class." Those who pass the training program but fail to make patrol officer qualification are usually assigned to desk and record-keeping duties, but are still entitled to the full Patrol compensation and benefit package.

The standard Pentastar Patrol officer is equipped with a blue and black service uniform tunic with matching gloves and boots, protective blast vest, full utility belt, stun baton, mag-lock binders, and standard blaster pistol. The most distinguishing feature of all Patrol officers is their helmets, resulting in the unfavorable nickname of "cueball" by some criminal types. A rounded white affair with a molded black half-visor, the helmet has a built-in secure comlink that provides direct communication with other Patrol officers, their Patrol precinct or Patrol cruiser in close orbit. Officers can access Enforcement's entire body of information about a particular subject, citizen, or starship as long as that information is within Enforcement's databases (and if that citizen or ship does business within the Alignment, chances are that the information is). The helmet also provides voice amplification speakers for crowd control and has a target-enhancement and tracking system transposed



over the inside of the helmet's visor. The enhancement system can increase the heat signatures of targets in darkness or modify spectral signatures in case of obscuring smoke or fog.

Pentastar Patrol duties are deliberately far-ranging, enabling them to participate with other Enforcement branches and the military in a support role. Besides their normal law enforcement duties, they may be called upon to provide staff support or to flood regions with security sweeps. Even so, the most common sights on a commercially upscale trade world or bustling spaceport in the Pentastar Alignment are Pentastar Patrol officers doing what they do best — going on patrol. Traveling on foot, flitter, or by ground-effect vehicle, the Patrol makes its presence felt by sheer numbers. On rougher, more backwater worlds, the Patrol appears less often but still as potent, cruising systems in their readily identifiable Pentastar Patrol cutters.

Knowing they represent the Alignment and the principles of the New Order, the Pentastar Patrol is constantly releasing bulletins of their latest deeds of public courtesy, heroism, and long lists of arrests and feats of crime-busting for the galactic media's scrutiny. The news links' attitude toward the Patrol has always been somewhat suspect, although reporters never seem to hesitate to take an opportunity to record some officer reciting the Patrol's famous code — "justice, fairness, and the galactic way." Even children on some worlds have been swept up in all the admiration, purchasing toy replicas of Patrol officer helmets and acting out their own imagined capture of some dangerous crime lord.

Pentastar Patrol Officer. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D+1, melee combat: stun baton 4D+2, Strength 3D, brawling 4D.* Move: 10. Blaster pistol (4D), blast vest (+1D to torso for physical attacks, +1 for energy attacks), helmet (+1D to front and back for physical attacks, +1 to front and back for energy attacks), stun baton

Adventure Idea

The galactic media conglomerate, Galaxy 9, hires the characters to investigate corruption in the Pentastar Patrol Academy. To do so, they must attempt to join the Patrol by applying as cadets and passing their rigorous training tests. The situation can be made more humorous by appointing a drill sergeant to the character-cadets, who watches their every move and makes life miserable for them.



(STR+2D+2 damage using energy shock, STR+1D without using shock).

Personalities of The Pentastar Alignment

With its unique government structure and a background firmly rooted in trade and conquest, the Pentastar Alignment contains many interesting characters and worlds. Here are a few of these personalities for those characters seeking fortune and fame in the Pentastar Alignment.

Grand Moff Ardur Kaine

During meetings of the Chamber of Order, it is not too difficult to see that Grand Moff Ardur Kaine is the center of all attention and debate. A gifted orator, Ardur Kaine was among Palpatine's earliest converts to the principles of the New Order and one of his most ardent supporters during his rise to power. Kaine supervised attempts to obtain support of the military for Palpatine and helped found COMPNOR when there was some concern over the rapid reorganization of Imperial Intelligence. For his fervent loyalty, Palpatine granted Kaine governorship of several worlds, later followed by his appointment as Moff. When Grand Moff Tarkin per-

ished aboard the first Death Star battle station, Palpatine made Ardur Kaine Grand Moff of the Outer Rim Territories.

But Kaine felt betrayed by the Emperor. Instead of drawing him closer so that he might aid him in important matters, Palpatine had sent him to repair the damage caused by Tarkin's passing and the Rebel's most important victory to date. Grand Moff Kaine took personal charge of the Scourge Squadron, an elite force of Star Destroyers assigned to seek out and crush Rebel activity in the Outer Rim Territories. He was aboard the squadron's flagship, the Super Star Destroyer *Reaper*, when news of the Emperor's death finally reached him.

The news did not shake him, but only tempered the resolve within him. He believed in the New Order, and knew that if put properly to use, the principles laid out by Palpatine would work to help restore the Empire.

The Grand Moff's physical and electronic perimeter is always monitored by a force of Guardians, select agents from Protectorate Branch. The Guardians are often seen chauffeuring Kaine about, checking his food, and interrogating servants and droids at random. See the Protectorate Branch above for Guardian stats.

Grand Moff Ardur Kaine is a hard, cold, and extremely calculating man. A brilliant theorist and tactician, he has put great emphasis on success through total domination, an applied principle of the New Order. He views himself as one day taking the position of Emperor, not of the Imperial Galactic Empire, but of the *New* Galactic Empire.

Grand Moff Ardur Kaine

Type: Imperial Grand Moff

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 3D+2, dodge 5D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Bureaucracy: Chamber of Order 10D, bureaucracy: Velcar Free Commerce Zone 8D, intimidation 8D, languages 6D, law enforcement 7D, planetary systems 8D, value 6D, willpower 6D

MECHANICAL 3D

Communications 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 3D+2, space transports: Imperial shuttles 5D+2

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 7D+1, command 10D, investigation 5D, persuasion 7D+2

STRENGTH 2D+2

TECHNICAL 3D+1

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 2

Character Points: 11

Move: 10



Commerce Master Commissioner Gregor Raquoran

Gregor Raquoran is an always-suspicious, obese man with an incurable glandular condition that makes him sweat constantly. He is unique among Imperial officials, since he rose to his position not as an initial supporter of Emperor Palpatine or even as a loyal devotee of COMPNOR, but as a former corporate head and profitable businessman. Raquoran obtained his post as Commerce Master Commissioner for the Velcar Free Commerce Zone by carefully spreading favors among the Imperial officials responsible for the Zone until his nomination was ensured.

Unlike the Grand Moff, Raquoran is neither interested nor has the slightest concern for political theory. He signed the Pentastar Treaty because he is a shrewd businessman and he secretly knew (but publicly dismissed the notion) that the Velcar Sector would be a prime target for the New Republic. He also knew Kaine's fervent following would bring military units to his cause, and indeed, loyal Imperial units arrived in droves. Now Raquoran can obtain as many Alignment Naval and Army units as his sector needs.

Master Commissioner Gregor Raquoran is a brusque man who hides underneath the mantle of his Imperial uniform. He often negotiates deals in the Velcar Zone for his own personal profit, and does not mince words where his loyalties are concerned. Raquoran purportedly lives in the lap of luxury on Capza, a lush tropical world ringed with high escarpments, where he employs the local natives as his personal servitors. Rather than leave the fate of his physical well-being in the hands of Protectorate Branch, Commissioner Raquoran keeps guards selected from various species in the Velcar Free Commerce Zone at his disposal.

Raquoran firmly believes the Pentastar Alignment should protect and defend the Velcar Free Commerce Zone to the last, despite what Grand Moff Kaine might have to say. It has been suggested that Kaine tolerates Raquoran only because of the importance of the Velcar Sector and his plan to rebuild the Empire.

Commerce Master Commissioner Gregor Raquoran

Type: Imperial Commerce Commissioner

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 3D+2, dodge 3D

KNOWLEDGE 4D+2

Bureaucracy: Velcar Free Commerce Zone 10D, intimidation 7D+2, languages 7D, planetary systems 8D+1, value 7D

MECHANICAL 2D+1

Communications 4D, repulsoflight operation 3D+2, space transports 3D+1

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D+2, command 8D, hide 5D, persuasion 7D+2

STRENGTH 2D+2

TECHNICAL 3D+1

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 9

Move: 10

Elta Besk, Dynamic Automata Conglomerate

Elta Besk represents one of the most powerful of corporate families enmeshed in the political structure of the Empire and the Alignment. Elta is the only daughter of Metron Besk, founder of the Besk family company, Dynamic Automata.

The elder Besk built Dynamic Automata from a single firm that supplied logic enhancement circuits to third-degree droids.

Later on, Besk established Dynamic Automata as a major provider of technology to the Imperial war machine. Much of the advanced droid circuitry aboard Sector Plexus droid vessels and Imperial



probe droids originated from Dynamic Automata, although the company has long since turned over production to other manufacturers within its structure.

Metron Besk was always a suspicious man who eventually grew tired of the bickering and backstabbing among his company's partners. When he died, the bulk of controlling interest in Dynamic Automata was carefully divided so that none of his partners would have the final say in the firm — all would have to defer to his daughter, Elta.

Elta Besk is an attractive, calm beauty who has survived the rigors of her high position in the company. Her father had personally trained her in the subtle arts of corporate and armed warfare.

Her charm hides a certain ruthlessness as she works to make her own place in the Chamber of Order — it was her idea that Dynamic Automata would be among the first of the corporates to join the Alignment to protect company interests within the Entralla Route. She continually sides with Grand Moff Kaine on most political fronts and, in turn, he seeks out her advice, a partnership that has led to a great deal of grumbling among the other corporate members of the Chamber of Order.

Despite its long-standing commercial success, public image is Dynamic Automata's only real product these days, as the other entities within it wreak havoc on unsuspecting systems. Dynamic Automata has paid careful attention to insure that certain "unglamorous" company activities or actions would never be seen by public eyes. To the many citizens under the heel of the Pentastar Alignment and the remnants of the Empire, Dynamic Automata appears as a benevolent and caring corporation, as its music-filled holos and other publicity data transmissions declare, "We Care, So You Don't Have To."

Elta oversees Dynamic Automata's various interests throughout the Pentastar Alignment. She travels in her personal starship, a

brand new Corellian Buccaneer, yet another modification of Corellian Engineering's famous blockade runner series of corvettes.

Solar Dynamica. Capital, *astrogation* 4D+2, *capital ship gunnery* 4D, *capital ship piloting* 4D+2, *capital ship shields* 4D, *maneuverability* 2D+2, *space* 7, *atmosphere* 350, *hull* 4D, *shields* 3D+2. Weapons: 10 double turbolasers (fire control 3D, damage 5D).

Elta Besk

Type: Corporate Leader

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+2, dodge 5D, brawling parry 5D, melee combat 5D+1, missile weapons 4D, vehicle blasters 4D

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Bureaucracy 8D+2, cultures 7D, intimidation 7D, languages 6D, planetary systems 8D, streetwise 5D, survival 5D, value 8D+1, willpower 5D+2

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D, capital ship piloting: Corellian Buccaneer transport 4D+2, capital ship gunnery 4D, capital ship shields 4D, communications 4D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, sensors 4D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D+2, command 6D+1, con 5D+1, hide 5D, persuasion 6D+2, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 4D+2, swimming 4D

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Computer programming/repair 10D, droid programming: probe droids 9D, droid repair 6D, security 3D+2

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 10

Move: 10

Wyrn Otro, Galentro Heavy Works

The Galentro family of companies began many years ago as a hastily organized alliance of commercial exporters. They initially banded together to protect their trade routes from other competition and piracy. Since then, the terribly quiet Galentro Board has slowly increased the corporation's sphere of influence to include asteroid and gas mining, manufacturing, and other heavy industries. Their corporate crest and slogan, "Galentro Works For All," can readily be seen on sites across the Velcar Free Commeree Zone.

Wyrn Otro is the chief representative of Galentro Heavy Works in the Chamber of Order. Like most elite members of the corporation, Otro was raised in a Galentro family enclave in the Core Worlds. During that



time, he was tutored rigorously to believe that Galentro and its survival is critical, even before that of the Alignment and the Empire. An unspoken word exists for such unblinking devotion — *corporata*, the belief that the corporate family is the only family one ever needs. Otro knows that without the Alignment or the Empire, the corporates would slowly fall to predators. So for the time being, an uneasy state of cooperation exists between the corporate and the political state. However, Otro and his superiors know that the only thing that lasts forever in the galaxy is time itself.

Wyrn Otro is unmistakably loyal to Galentro. While he plots and plans with the best of the Chamber of Order corporates, all of his efforts are for Galentro. He considers Elta Besk and Dynamic Automata little more than fortunate freebooters, a somewhat successful corporate who scaled the ladder to the elite from the outside. Like any good devotee to Galentro, he ignores the propaganda generated by the usurpers who call themselves the New Republic and their claims that Galentro uses slave labor in its mines and uproots entire alien populations in its quest for raw materials and exportable resources.

For his personal safety, Otro can call upon Galentro's Rangers, a seldom-seen detachment of elite security that protects Galentro personnel and equipment. The Rangers often travel in unmarked ships with forged identity documents, making their origin difficult to trace. The Rangers sometimes guard critical Galentro sites and mining regions.

Wyrn Otro

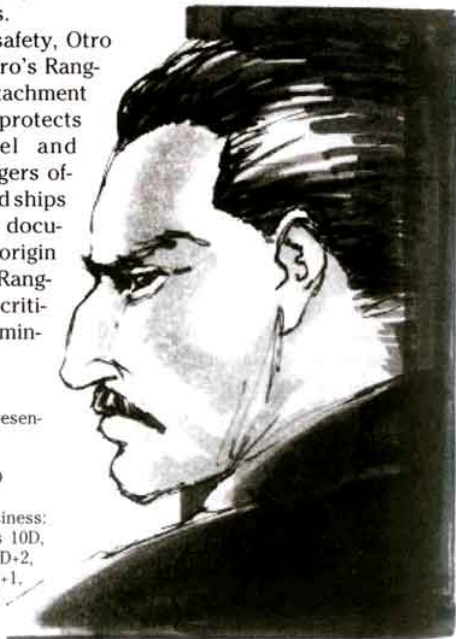
Type: Corporate Representative

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 3D+2, dodge 4D

KNOWLEDGE 4D+2

Bureaucracy 9D+2, business: Galentro Heavy Works 10D, cultures 5D, languages 6D+2, planetary systems 8D+1, value 8D, willpower 5D



MECHANICAL 2D+1

Astrostation 5D, communications 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 4D, sensors 4D+1, space transports 4D+1

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 6D+2, command 6D, con 5D+1, hide 6D, persuasion 7D+2, sneak 6D

STRENGTH 3D

TECHNICAL 2D

Security 4D+2

Character Points: 6

Move: 10

Freebooters

Pirates!

That word alone is enough to raise the hackles on even the most grizzled of star travelers and independent spacers. Pirate raiders are a constant problem in the neutral space between the New Republic and the Pentastar Alignment, and any unarmed merchant is considered fair game for their guns.

Freebooters prefer to hide among the cracks of the iron-handed justice of the Pentastar Alignment and its corporates. Independent by nature and ever-suspicious of any attention or gesture made toward them, freebooters and buccaneers ply the star lanes, looking for booty in the form of slow, fat merchant cruisers and traders.

Most freebooters get their start as honest freighter captains and scouts. Only when they run into the stone wall of corruption within the Alignment and the powerful corporations do they realize that the only profitable route to take is the one of the pirate.

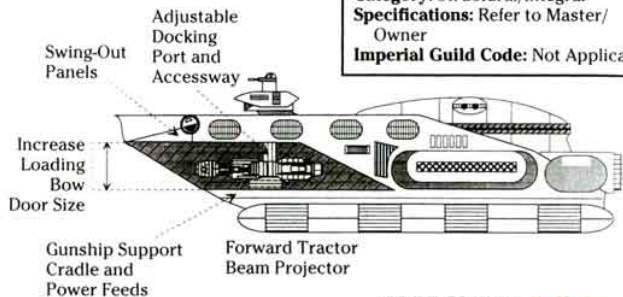
Roark Slader is a rare example of a freebooter who manages to survive in this dangerous profession. Running with his innocent-enough looking container ship, *Slader's Raider I*, he and his crew

Adventure Idea

The characters are hired to transport a nagging, simple-minded corporate official back to his company's headquarters somewhere in the Pentastar Alignment. Along the way, numerous bounty hunters, corporate security mercenaries and other armed thugs attempt to prevent the characters from completing their task. Eventually they discover that the official has accidentally revealed the corporation's business dealings with slavers to agents from the New Republic, and the corporation wants its former employee out of the way. The characters must now risk getting the official and themselves back to the safety of the distant New Republic.

Slader's Raider I and II Shipwright's Specs

Vessel's Name: Slader's Raider I
Vessel Type: Vee-Kir 4 Bulk
Transport
Master/Owner: Roark Slader
Work Type: Internal Modification
Category: Structural/Integral
Specifications: Refer to Master/
Owner
Imperial Guild Code: Not Applicable



APPROVED: R. Slader

Anthony P. Russo

frequent the less-traveled star lanes. Their course is never random though. Slader keeps contacts with the dockmasters of several major shipping ports, waiting for word of a particularly enticing target that has recently debarked.

When its prey is in sight, usually just before they reach one of their hyperspace jump points, *Raider I* opens its loading bow to reveal the feisty Corellian gunship, *Slader's Raider II*, secreted inside. *Raider II* quickly renders the merchant ship powerless with its ion cannons. After quickly ejecting the merchant's crew aboard the ship's life pods, Slader stuffs *Raider I* with whatever booty he desires and either leaves the ship adrift or scuttles it completely.

Roark Slader keeps a bloodless operation, and would prefer not to injure anybody during his activities if he can help it. While some might claim he is weak, Slader just calls it good business sense.

■ Roark Slader

Type: Pirate

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 5D+2, dodge 5D, brawling parry 5D, vehicle blasters 5D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 5D+1, business: Velcar Free Commerce Zone 6D, languages 6D+2, planetary systems 8D, value 8D+1

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 5D, capital ship gunnery 5D, capital ship piloting 5D+2, capital ship

shields 4D, communications 5D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, sensors 4D, space transports 5D, starfighter piloting 5D

PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 6D+1, command 4D, con 6D+2, hide 6D, persuasion 6D, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Blaster repair 5D, capital ship repair 5D+2, capital ship weapon repair 5D, computer programming/repair 6D, droid repair 4D, security 5D+1, starship repair 5D

Character Points: 10

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, datapad, modified blaster pistol (4D+2), modified container ship and Corellian gunship.

Capsule: Roark Slader is a loner who has no open desire to talk about his past, even though there is the off-chance someone might recognize him as a former military commander for the Entralla Militia. When the Emperor died at Endor, the citizens of Entralla surged into a major civil rebellion of its own in an attempt to join the Rebel Alliance. Many officers of the militia, including Commander Slader, were waiting for just an opportunity to overthrow the Imperial governor.

Instead there came a huge crackdown on the population (some say with the assistance of the Guild of Interstellar Merchants that resides on Entralla), and many members of Entralla's resistance fled. The citizens of Entralla now find themselves citizens of the Empire yet again, this time under the Pentastar Alignment.

Ports-of-Call

The Pentastar Alignment encompasses hundreds of worlds. Several areas are paramount to the survival of the Alignment. Other worlds hold known and unknown secrets the Alignment wishes to protect. Here are just a few areas of interest within the Pentastar Alignment.

Velcar Free Commerce Zone

"Free commerce? Sure ... for a price. The FCZ exists solely for the Imperial corporates, not for the puny little independent spacers and free-traders out there, and the corporates take an extreme disliking to anyone who messes around with their little free enterprise racket. Fair warning: if you want to play here, better bring your own cards."

— Roark Slader, independent businessman

Little more than a strip of systems and interstellar dust from wayward nebulae, the Velcar Free Commerce Zone is many a merchant's fantasy turned real. The worlds in this region provide the raw materials needed for advanced technology — mantium ore and plexite for starship hulls, heavy gases for engines and energy weapons. The

Pentastar Alignment relies upon private corporates to develop and exploit this plentiful region for its own demands, and has set up special rules and regulations in the Free Commerce Zone that allow powerful corporates to bypass most of the required world settlement and development permits and planetary claims procedures.

Under the direct authority of Commerce Sector Commissioner Gregor Raquoran, scouts are constantly on the lookout for new sources of materials and exportable goods. Worlds with commercial potential are then contracted out to ravager corporates, whose practices can include anything from direct core mining to atmosphere tapping.

Unfortunately, the worlds within the Velcar Free Commerce Zone are home to mostly primitive native species. They are easily displaced by the corporates to serve other, useless worlds, or put to work in dangerous mines and harvesters for low wages. Worlds that refuse development are efficiently and ruthlessly pacified.

Bextar

Deep within the Velcar Free Commerce Zone, the Bextar system consists of four gas giants that slowly circle a listless pale yellow sun. Few of the planetoids or their numerous tiny moons are hospitable to most lifeforms, but a thriving corporate mining colony exists there nonetheless. Here the Amber Sun Mining Corporate, a subsidiary of Dynamic Automata, mines for engine and heavy energy weapon gases.

Based on several of the craggy moonlets that circle Bextar's gaseous planets, the colony mines the planets with scoop ships and satellite stations. Scoop ships descend in dangerous close orbit and extend huge funnels, gathering atmospheric gases into their storage tanks. Refiners and distillers isolate the gases and expel the rest. Satellite stations directly descend into the dense atmosphere and extend huge tap pipes to collect gases. Like most corporate colonies, Bextar utilizes cheap alien labor provided from other worlds. Since Bextar's dangerous mining techniques require excellent pilots, much of the labor force consists of alien Entymals.

The Entymals are but one example of the fate of numerous alien species throughout the Free Commerce Zone. Most Entymals are easily recognizable by their hardened, lanky exoskeletons of jade green and jewel-like eyes on top of their pronounced heads. Much of the Entymal worker population is female, with queen Entymals producing offspring after an elaborate mating ritual with a rare male drone.

Entymals have a thin, chitinous membrane that extends from each wrist joint to the side of the abdomen. When extended, this membrane unfolds into a parawing, permitting gliding for short distances like some species of flying mammals. Entymals have unprecedented reputations as excellent pilots and navigators wherever they travel.



The Entymals, however, cannot enjoy such preoccupations. Removed from their ancestral hive home, they have been put to work piloting scoop ships and satellite miners in the gas mines of Bextar. A courageous few have escaped the mines and fled to the New Republic and other regions, hoping to return one day and liberate their fellow Entymals.

■ Entymals

Attribute Dice: 12D

DEXTERITY 2D/4D

KNOWLEDGE 1D/2D

MECHANICAL 1D/3D

PERCEPTION 1D/4D

STRENGTH 2D/4D

TECHNICAL 1D/3D

Special Abilities:

Gliding: Under normal gravity conditions, Entymals can glide down approximately 60 to 100 feet, depending on wind conditions and available landing places. An Entymal needs at least 20 feet of flat surface to come to a running stop after a full glide.

Armor: The natural toughness of the Entymals' chitinous exoskeleton makes them resistant to the effects of *brawling* attacks; add +2 to *Strength* when figuring resistance to a brawling attack.

Story Factors:

Rituals: The only Entymals that "mate" are the male drones and female queens during the mating ritual — which also happens to be a death ritual for the male Entymal. Any Entymal will find most displays of affection by other races, especially among Humans, confusing. Most male Entymals in general will find the entire pursuit of Human love most disagreeable: "Really now! This constant fixation with the continuation of your species ... disgusting!"

Move: 10/14

Size: 1.2 to 2 meters tall

Entralla and The Guild of Interstellar Merchants

"I wouldn't join GIM if my life depended on it. And for what, to have your name displayed prominently on some open data facility for any Alignment official to nose through? No thanks."

— Roark Slader, independent businessman

The shining spaceports of Entralla serve as the home seat of the Guild of Interstellar Merchants, one of the first and perhaps best known organizations of all spacers and star pilots in the Pentastar Alignment. Referred to simply as GIM, the Guild is responsible for setting transaction fees and transport schedules between its members and Guild-sponsored worlds. When tempers flare between shippers and spacers concerning damaged goods or property seized during hostile actions, GIM sends a mediator to settle the dispute. Many systems within the Velcar Free Commerce Zone are Guild-sponsored, often whether they desire sponsorship or not.

Many independent spacers join GIM for access to its Authorized Shipper List, a lengthy compilation of merchants and exporters who have already agreed to pay Guild-set prices for transport of goods and services. But joining GIM is pricey for the free-trader — up to 20,000 credits a year or a percentage of the gross value of the tonnage transported by the spacer. Joining the Guild and paying of dues can only be accomplished in person at the Guild's headquarters on Entralla, although any other related activity (like consulting the Authorized Shipper List) can be done at any Guild-authorized databank location.

GIM is an extremely powerful political organization — capable of forcing the economies of entire systems to shrivel and dry up for lack of trade or transport. When GIM cannot get its way with representatives of a system, GIM calls for a "rest period" from its collective membership. These stretches of inactivity can drive even the calmest dockmaster to fury as ships and goods get literally stacked up to the docking bay walls.

To ensure its position within the Pentastar Alignment, a representative from GIM is always on hand in the Chamber of Order to protect the interests of innocent merchant traders, and the vast accumulated fortune from dues and member fees that line the Guild's pockets.

Jaemus

The Jaemus system is the site of a major Galentro space vessel construction and repair port, nearly as large as the New Republic's shipyard facility at Sluis Van. Jaemus is also the home of two major contributors to the Imperial Navy — Kuat Drive Yards, builders of the infamous Imperial Star Destroyer, and Sienar Fleet Systems, which maintains an extensive testing range at Jaemus for new starship designs. Both corporations have representatives within the Pentastar Alignment's Chamber of Order.

At Jaemus, Sienar and KDY are currently working under joint contract to develop and build the new *Enforcer*-class picket cruiser for the Alignment Navy. The *Enforcer* uses the hull frame of Sienar's effective Interdictor Cruiser. Despite being half as large as an Imperial Star Destroyer, the *Enforcer* is surprisingly maneuverable and bristles with armament.

The *Enforcer* is another tactical concept inspired by Grand Moff Kaine, who ordered his Naval architects to quickly rebuild the strength of the faltering Imperial Navy under his command. Naval architects discovered the design flexibility of the Interdictor Cruiser hull after

removing a test vessel's gravity well projectors and re-arranging its massive array of power grids. Beefing up the ship's complement of energy weapons, tractor beams, shields, and engine power proved quite successful, resulting in a very potent capital ship.

Enforcers engage in picket operations along the uneasy region of space between the New Republic and the Pentastar Alignment. Because of the ship's reduced cost and crew needed for operation, they can operate in pairs, although formations of four or even six have been sighted as their numbers grow.



■ Enforcer-class Picket Cruiser

Craft: Sienar/KDY Enforcer-class Picket Cruiser

Type: Heavy cruiser

Scale: Capital

Length: 600 meters

Skill: Capital ship piloting

Crew: 3,000, gunners: 60, skeleton: 1000/+10

Crew Skill: Astrogation 4D, capital ship piloting 5D, capital ship shields 4D, capital ship gunnery 4D, sensors 4D

Passengers: 300 (troops)

Cargo Capacity: 10,000 metric tons

Consumables: 2 years

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2

Hyperdrive Backup: x10

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 1D+2

Space: 6

Hull: 5D

Shields: 3D

Sensors:

Passive: 50/1D

Scan: 100/3D

Search: 200/4D

Focus: 6/4D+2

Weapons:

10 Turbolaser Batteries (fire separately)

Fire Arc: 4 front, 3 left, 3 right

Crew: 1 or 2

Skill: Capital ship gunnery

Fire Control: 4D

Space Range: 3-15/36/75

Atmosphere Range: 6-15/72/150 km

Damage: 3D

10 Quad Laser Cannons (fire separately)

Fire Arc: 4 front, 4 left, 4 right, 2 back

Crew: 1 or 2

Skill: Capital ship gunnery

Fire Control: 2D

Space Range: 3-15/36/75

Atmosphere Range: 6-15/72/150 km

Damage: 4D

6 Ion Cannon Batteries (fire separately)

Fire Arc: 2 front, 1 left, 1 right, 2 back

Crew: 1 or 2

Skill: Capital ship gunnery

Fire Control: 3D

Space Range: 1-10/25/50

Atmosphere Range: 2-20/50/100 km

Damage: 3D

4 Tractor Beam Projectors (fire separately)

Fire Arc: 2 front, 1 left, 1 right

Crew: 2

Skill: Capital ship gunnery

Fire Control: 2D+2

Space Range: 1-5/15/30

Atmosphere Range: 2-10/30/60 km

Damage: 4D

Criton's Point

Somewhat off the regular hyperspace routes in the Pentastar Alignment is Criton's Point. The Point is a desolate world of ancient ruins that includes the Library of Xer, a vast storehouse of accumulated knowledge rigorously controlled by the Empire and now the Pentastar Alignment.

Very little information is available on Criton's Point or the library, but many historians are keenly interested with the planet. Rumors suggest that the library may have been erected before even the time

Adventure Idea

Characters who are sensitive to the Force feel an almost uncontrollable desire to journey to Criton's Point, despite the warnings of the Pentastar Alignment. Upon arrival, the characters are drawn to the Library of Xer, where the research team has just opened a container from a vault. Inside the container is a tiny living tree, nourished by unknown means. The tree is very powerful in the Force and has drawn other Force-users to Criton's Point besides the characters — others who have dark intentions for the mysterious tree.



The Near Now...Later today, early tomorrow, sometime next week, the world began to end.

They come from other realities, raiders joined together to steal the awesome energy of Earth's possibilities. They have brought with them their own realities, creating areas where the rules of nature are radically different—turning huge portions of Earth into someplace else.

Earth is not helpless. Standing between these Possibility Raiders™ and total victory are the

Storm Knights, men and women who have weathered the raging storms of change with their own realities intact. The Storm Knights are dedicated to stopping the raiders here, before their unholy hunger consumes Earth—leaving behind a desolate husk.

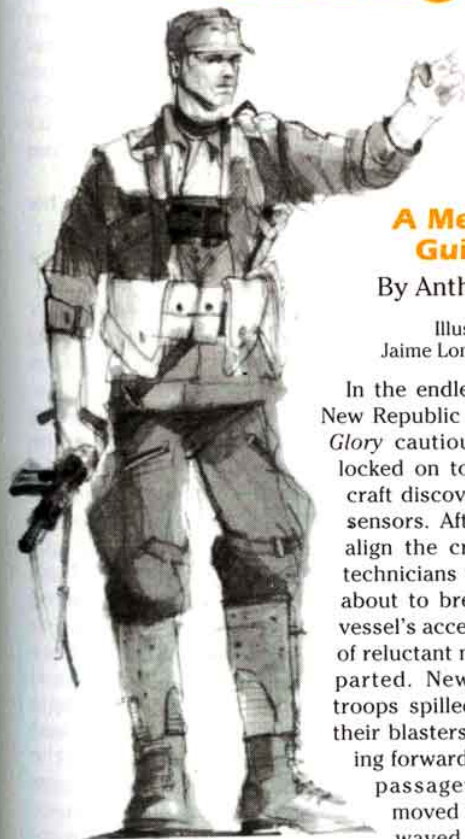
These are the heroes, attempting to do what no one has done before—defeat the raiders and their leader, the self-proclaimed Torg™!



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NEW REPUBLIC
SOURCE FILE

BLASTERS for HIRE



A Mercenary's Guidebook

By Anthony P. Russo

Illustrations by
Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

In the endless void of space, the New Republic patrol cruiser *Yavin's Glory* cautiously approached and locked on to the drifting Imperial craft discovered by its long-range sensors. After a few moments to align the cruiser's docking port, technicians with laser torches set about to break open the Imperial vessel's access hatch. With a groan of reluctant metal, the doors finally parted. New Republic boarding troops spilled into the accessway, their blasters poised to fire. Creeping forward along the eerily quiet passageways, the boarders moved with sensor techs who waved their instruments in

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slow arcs about them. One sensor tech muttered to the leader of the boarding party. "Still not reading any lifeforms except us, sir."

"The instruments could still be wrong." The officer hesitated a moment, then suddenly sneezed. "Pretty dusty in here."

Another soldier chirped up, his hand covering his helmet's comlink. "Second team has reached the bridge. Pulling data from the logs. No crew aboard. All escape pods jettisoned." He stopped to pull his blast visor aside and sneezed.

The officer shook his head. He didn't like it. "So what happened here? No battle damage. No signs of struggle. No evidence of mutiny." They passed the malfunctioning hulk of a standard service droid in the corridor, its innards still faintly sparking from a blown circuit.

A series of bizarre incidents and accidents have taken place in the Outer Rim Territories.

"Funny," commented the sensor tech, rubbing at an itch on his cheek. "Looks like it malfunctioned."

"But from what?" The officer sneezed again, then scratched at a sudden irritation on his nose. So did another trooper. Then another. It was not long before the entire boarding party was suddenly wracked by uncontrollable sneezing, followed by an overwhelming desire to scratch. The officer ordered everyone immediately off the Imperial ship and promptly into decontamination.

Later, the captain of the *Yavin's Glory* located the boarding party officer. He was overseeing the examination of his team in the surgilab by the ship's medical droids. Except for the presence of a few treatable skin rashes and minor throat irritations, he and his men were fine. The captain held out a heavy metal canister, letting it fall into the junior officer's lap.

"We found this and about a dozen more like it in the ship's ventilation and atmosphere recycling systems. They all contained DX-343, an industrial solvent. When exposed to an oxygen-rich environment, it turns into a microfine mist that not only causes electronic circuitry to malfunction, but hyperirritates the nasal passages, lungs, and skin. Whomever planted these rigged up a timing device that let the canisters go off, one at a time, and disarmed the ship's contamination sensors. Must have caught the crew completely off guard, and judging from the severity of your team's reaction to the chemicals, it probably forced them to abandon ship in a hurry. We're using sealed salvage droids to clean it up.

Other than a few blown systems and a lot of useless droids, the ship is in near-perfect shape. Practically gift-wrapped for us to take." The captain scratched his head. "But damned if I know who would deliberately use a hyperirritant just to force a crew to abandon ship."

The officer turned the canister over, revealing a red crescent that had been sprayed there, little drabs of red paint running down the canister's smooth sides. He shook his head and suddenly smiled. "I should have known. The Red Moons."

The captain eyed him strangely. It was obviously not a familiar term to him. "Who or what are the Red Moons?"

"Mercenaries, sir. Former Rebels, from what I've heard. They've been wreaking havoc on the Pentastar Alignment near the Entralla system."

The captain became irate at the thought. "Mercenaries? I simply do not believe the New Republic would go so low as to hire mercenaries to fight its battles."

"We don't, sir." The officer hefted the spent solvent canister back to the captain, smiling grimly as he faintly scratched his ear. "Still, I'm kind of glad they're on our side."

The Mercenary Life

With the advent of the New Republic in the *Star Wars* universe, many players want to know how they and their comrades fit in the scheme of things after the Emperor's fall. Some players might feel restricted if their characters openly join the ranks of the New Republic, especially if they were fond of the quasi-independence of the Rebel Special Operations Groups during Emperor Palpatine's reign. After all, joining the New Republic means sticking to the rules, the last thing some players might want to do.

Even independent scouts, free-traders, pirates, and other rogues (with slight kindness streaks in their hearts) occasionally want to win one for the good guys — without appearing that they are actually helping, naturally. Gamemasters are constantly on the lookout for new adventure ideas for characters with diverse or unrelated backgrounds.

Enter the world of the mercenaries, professional blasters-for-hire, soldiers who fight by their own rules and are responsible to no one but themselves.

The mercenary force known as Stormcaller's Red Moons is one example of characters getting involved in the affairs of the New Republic. The Red Moons are former Rebel Alliance Infiltrators, trained to invade enemy positions with a minimum of fuss and wreak havoc.

They're specialists continuing to fight against injustice on their own terms. Sometimes they have to bend a law or two to accomplish a certain task, which makes their on-again, off-again relationship with the New Republic shaky indeed. New Republic diplomats certainly would not approve of their antics. But as an old Spec-Ops saying used to go, "The less the diplomats know, the better."

A Cry for Help

It was not long after the Battle of Endor when Colonel Andrephan Stormcaller received word from Entralla, his home planet, of a powerful new force rising in the Outer Rim Territories — the Pentastar Alignment. Boasting a large and well-organized battle force of Imperial ships and ground troops, the Alignment suppressed the growing resistance on Entralla by installing a puppet regime and placing the entire Entrallan Senate under house arrest. Colonel Stormcaller, who had not been on his home world since he had first enlisted in military service, immediately requested a force of New Republic ships to help wrest Entralla from the Pentastar Alignment. Regrettably, the New Republic Council denied Colonel Stormcaller's request. Their reason was simple — the Pentastar Alignment was just too powerful to confront at the time.

Realizing how desperate the situation had become in the Outer Rim, Colonel Stormcaller abruptly and unexpectedly tendered his resignation from the New Republic military. A small number from his unit resigned as well, apparently in support of their former commander's decision. But some sources inside New Republic Intelligence believe these soldiers quit not as a statement of support, but to join their former colonel and form a private military unit all their own.

The Red Moons

At about the same time, a series of bizarre incidents and accidents have taken place in the Outer Rim Territories. Imperial ships have been found floating adrift, their crews having mysteriously vanished. Imperial probe droids have appeared randomly at New Republic intelligence points, blathering esoteric Venestrian poetry, their memory banks inexplicably crammed full of vital shipping manifests. Numerous data-convergence points for Imperial forces in the Rim have been likewise sabotaged, broadcasting entertainment holos which show suspected spies within the New Republic caught in the act of stealing information or equipment, their voices sometimes dubbed over with the voices of the late Emperor, Darth Vader



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and other seamy galactic personalities. The identity of those responsible for these acts can sometimes be found as a red crescent tilted crazily over on its side: the symbol of the mercenary force known as the Red Moons.

The Red Moons have struck many critical blows against not only the Pentastar Alignment but several powerful criminal organizations in the region. It is believed that Colonel Andrephan Stormcaller leads this group in a hidden campaign to dislodge the Pentastar Alignment and to liberate his home world. Despite their lofty intentions, the Red Moons are considered illegally sanctioned and are wanted for questioning by New Republic authorities.

Forming Mercenary Units

Mercenary forces are quite different from large, organized factions like the New Republic. A merc force operates mission-by-mission, system-by-system, collecting fees for their work wherever possible. Some units are purely local to a specific system or region, working toward a single goal. Units can range in size from tiny underground cells trying to overthrow a tyrannical regime to a private corporate army trying to extend their company's influence in the galaxy.

Running a mercenary force in the era of the New Republic requires some considerations by players and gamemasters alike. What are the players' goals? Are they fighting for political or personal gain? Are the players the entire force, or do they wish to be

part of a larger organization? Are they fighting for the New Republic (whether the New Republic wants the players' help or not), or do they work for the highest bidder?

Mercenaries provide opportunities to play many specialized types of characters. Mercenary groups, like the Special Operation teams during the Galactic Civil War, need certain specialists to fulfill mission aspects. A typical force might include a pilot or vehicle operator, a slicer (lockpicker, safe cracker, or security breaker), fire support (heavy weapons or combat training), comm-ops (communications and sensors), scout (reconnaissance), and a commander or leader. Several of the Red Moons fulfill the above roles and, in addition, have a deconstructor (a bomb expert), and a procurement specialist, someone who has a knack for stealing things the Red Moons need at the time.

A majority of the original character templates can be modified to reflect mercenary skill specialties and abilities. For example, the brash pilot could have once been a pilot for the Rebel Alliance. After setting out for the pilot's home world, the character finds nearly everything destroyed by a marauding corporation and joins a local underground resistance cell to help. The smuggler, scout, or Sullustan trader could have lost their ships (or friends) to a powerful Imperial governor trying to solidify his power or even to the Corporate Sector Authority. They might join or create a mercenary force to get their ships or friends back. There are many similar possibilities for character creation and development using mercenary forces as backgrounds.

Gamemasters must also consider the players' mercenary force and their aspirations when designing adventures. Are the characters the intergalactic equivalent of Robin Hood, robbing fat-cat

Adventure Idea

The characters are recruited, one-by-one, by the representatives of a peaceful farming colony world to defend them against a large galactic corporation that intends to scourge the planet's surface for rare minerals and ruin the local farming industry. The corporation, aware of the disappearance of Imperial forces from the region, is using everything from subtle extortion to outright terrorism to harass the colonists and force them to leave. The characters, as a mercenary force, must "convince" the corporation to do its business elsewhere.

corporations to feed the poor and liberate the downtrodden? Do they care about breaking Imperial or New Republic laws, and the consequences? What kind of equipment can the players obtain? Who or what kind of contacts are available? Where are they based, or do they simply float from system to system?

Finding Inspiration

Gamemasters looking for adventure ideas for mercenaries can turn to a multitude of television programs, books, and films for inspiration — *The Wild Geese*, *The Professionals*, *The Seven Samurai*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *The A-Team*, and *Have Gun Will Travel* are a few good examples.

Gamemasters should remember that mercenary forces do not typically go after large targets, like Death Stars, whole fleets of Imperial ships, and the like. Even trying to destroy a single Imperial Star Destroyer, either from within or by sheer firepower, would require a large amount of planning and thought. From the gamemaster perspective, getting players to *think* like mercenaries and not like heroes hunting for character points is the most important aspect of running a successful adventure. Smart mercenaries try to use the least amount of resistance possible to reach a goal. Why are they trying to blow up or cripple that Imperial Star Destroyer, and is it really worth the effort and danger? Is it pounding an innocent world into submission? Is it carrying an important Imperial politician or virus bombs?

With the reason determined, planning must begin. How does one go about blowing up an Imperial Star Destroyer? One method might employ starfighter attacks against the shield generators to weaken the ship's defenses and then attack the ship's command bridge. Another strategy might involve sneaking inside the massive vehicle and planting explosives at critical structure points. This would require a knowledge of the physical engineering of an Imperial Star Destroyer, not an easy thing to come by. The explosives would have to pack a tremendous punch, and yet be carried without detection.

In sum, mercenaries must rely upon the resources of their team members to successfully complete a mission. Rarely will all missions consist of only so-called search-and-destroy activity. Some adventures may involve incursions into hostile territory, pilfering

"It was difficult to find the smile of a beautiful woman or a good cigar in the Imperial Academy."

Adventure Idea

A wealthy intergalactic businessman hires the mercenary characters to rescue his daughter, who has been kidnapped by the businessman's rival just before her marriage to a powerful prince. Catching up to the daughter, the characters discover she is in love with the rival and they are both running away from her father, the vengeful prince, and the prince's entourage of trained assassins. The characters must decide between making a few credits or saving the couple's true love by persuading the vengeful prince to give up pursuing the reluctant bride-to-be.

equipment on a procurement run, transporting passengers through dangerous areas, or protecting clients and their property. Members of a mercenary force must be prepared for any possible contingency, including performing emergency evacuations, determining the tactics necessary for a given situation, and protecting the lives of their employers as well as their fellow team members.

The Red Moons: A Team Profile

Dispersal: All New Republic Special Intelligence Op (SIO) Groups

Origin: General Airen Cracken

Subject: Suspected private military force, alias identity: the Red Moons

To All Investigative Station Heads:

Enclosed are the personnel records of the individuals Intelligence believes comprise the core of the Red Moons, a mercenary group that has been involved in several incidents in the Outer Rim Territories recently. I am gravely disappointed to note that nearly all members of this privatized force appear to be former members of the Rebel Alliance and are using their training and experience to interfere in New Republic matters.

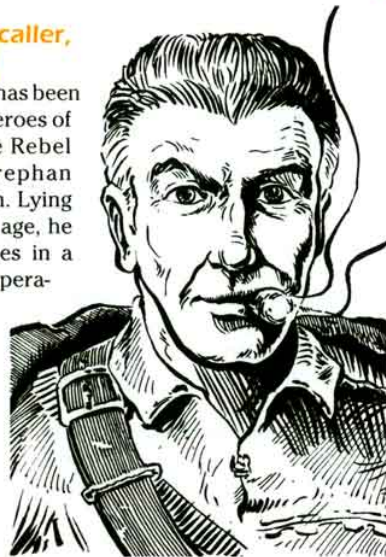
These data records contain psychological evaluations of the personnel at the time of their service to the Alliance, plus my own commentary where applicable. Please take note, I consider this organization to be inherently dangerous to public safety and you should approach any potential encounter with them with the greatest of caution.

Respectfully, General Airen Cracken

Andrephan Stormcaller, Colonel (ret.)

The name of Stormcaller has been almost synonymous with heroes of the Old Republic and the Rebel Alliance. Colonel Andrephan Stormcaller is no exception. Lying to his recruiters about his age, he served with Republic forces in a number of planet-based operations when he was 15 years old and has been involved in some form of military operation or another ever since. After serving with honors in several conflicts, he was commissioned by the Delephran militia to train its commanders and took the lead in the so-called Piracy Scouring in the Vexta Belt that had been plaguing Delephran commerce for several years. When the Imperial war machine absorbed Delephran forces, and all personnel faced mandatory service in Imperial forces, Captain Stormcaller served for three years at the Imperial Academy before deciding to join the Rebel Alliance through a contact agent. His exact reasons for joining the Alliance are not known, although he was quoted as once saying about his time at the Imperial Academy, "[It was] difficult to find the smile of a beautiful woman or a good cigar in that place."

It was both Colonel Stormcaller and Colonel Airen Cracken who helped in the design and mission role of Spec-Force trooper units for the Rebel Alliance. Colonel Stormcaller designed numerous Spec-Force infiltrator units out of what was considered "... a bunch of green recruits and bona fide psychopaths," and commanded several such infiltrator units personally. His intention was that the enthusiasm and raw talent of the first group would balance out the frenetic genius and neurosis of the second group. The stories of Rebel infiltrator forays could and have filled entire datapages. Many Stormcaller-trained infiltrators were successful in destroying key supply posts, ammunition depots, and shipbuilding facilities, while



others gathered information on strategic Imperial Fleet movements and new weapons developments. The stories of failed infiltrator missions also tragically reveal the danger of such missions.

After the Battle of Endor, Colonel Stormcaller abruptly resigned his commission and left the New Republic military after some debate with the New Republic Council over the state of affairs on his home world of Entralla, a world presently under the domain of the Pentastar Alignment. As of this data file, the New Republic has no plans for any major assault on the Alignment until their strategic outlook can be completely examined for weaknesses.

The Colonel has apparently mounted his own military-style campaign against the Pentastar Alignment without the New Republic's consent or assistance. Sensor readings at the site of several mysterious explosions clearly show the Colonel posing incognito, and in some cases, without any disguise at all. In all cases, his actions were purely intended for the destruction of Imperial property and equipment. He has allegedly kidnapped Pentastar officials, invaded data-storehouses, and stolen numerous pieces of Imperial and civilian equipment to suit his purposes. Andrephan Stormcaller should be considered dangerous if cornered or approached. He rarely travels without the company of several other Red Moon members. He is an expert marksman with a variety of weapons, an accomplished pilot, and keeps himself well-versed in the latest in security and detention procedures.

- ADDENDUM/PERSONAL
- CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL ..

Andrephan Stormcaller can be the slickest, meanest thing you might run into, and not to mention the last. On the other hand, he's a brilliant strategist, incredibly loyal, and can charm the armor off a stormtrooper and sell it back to the Empire for a profit. It's with a great deal of pride that I call him my friend, and he still is, despite what he's done.

All idealisms aside, mercenary groups like the Red Moons do more harm than good. The rumors are out that the New Republic secretly supports the Red Moons and their little forays into Pentastar territory — which is simply not true. Other systems have been accusing the New Republic of hiring his marauders for the purposes of assassination and extortion — again, more lies spread by the Alignment to undermine trust and cooperation. The word needs to get out to the colonel and his people, and soon, to put an end to this business before one of them gets hurt or killed.

Colonel Andrephan Stormcaller

Type: Former New Republic Colonel

DEXTERITY 2D+2

Blaster 7D+2, blaster artillery 7D, dodge 6D, brawling parry 5D+1, grenade 7D, melee combat 5D+2, melee parry 5D, missile weapons 7D, running 5D+2, vehicle blasters 7D+1

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Bureaucracy 6D, bureaucracy: Entralla 8D, business 6D, intimidation 6D+2, languages 6D, law enforcement 6D+2, planetary systems 7D, streetwise 6D+1, survival 6D, value 7D, willpower 6D

MECHANICAL 3D+1

Astrogation 5D, beast riding 5D+1, capital ship gunnery 5D, capital ship piloting 4D+1, capital ship shields 4D, communications 6D+1, ground vehicle operation 5D+2, repulsorlift operation 6D+2, sensors 6D+1, space transports 6D, starfighter piloting 6D, starship gunnery 6D+1, starship shields 6D, swoop operation 6D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 7D, command 10D, con 7D+2, hide 5D, investigation 5D, persuasion 6D, search 7D, sneak 7D+1

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 4D+1, stamina 5D, swimming 5D

TECHNICAL 3D

Armor repair 4D+1, blaster repair 5D, capital starship repair 5D, capital starship weapon repair 5D, computer programming/repair 5D+1, droid repair 4D, first aid 6D+2, security 5D, space transports repair 5D, starship weapon repair 5D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 14

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink with scrambler, heavy blaster pistol (5D), medpac, micro blaster (see "Ordinance" below), shento cigars, 2 smoke grenades

Ivey

A tall, lithe woman, Ivey (her only given name in Alliance records) specializes in "procurement," also called the snatch-and-grab. If it beeps or hums, she can hot-wire it. If it's locked or secured, she can bust it open. If it's barred or blocked, she can find another way around. If someone needs it tomorrow, she can get it yesterday.

Most Alliance records concerning Ivey's past are incomplete. She apparently joined the Alliance after the destruction of the first Death Star at Yavin, and was assigned to Rebel procurement divisions in their search for necessary



goods and equipment to support the Alliance. She learned the tricks of the trade quickly, adding a number of wrinkles of her own, and ascended the ranks to code breaker and data slicer.

When she had run out of accomplishments in Alliance procurement, she requested a transfer to the Spec-Trooper forces and was immediately dispatched by Colonel Stormcaller to infiltrator team Red Alpha, his primary insertion team, where she learned not only how to handle a majority of energy weapons but piloting as well.

Ivey speaks little about her past, a subject that pains her deeply. There is no challenge she does not refuse, and considers it a great honor to fulfill a mission requirement.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL ..

Ivey is an admirable, intelligent, and not to mention courageous woman, and the last person I would expect joining Andrephan Stormcaller's mercenary force. Her skills are remarkably varied and she is reportedly a tigress in personal combat.

■ Ivey

Type: Former New Republic Infiltrator

DEXTERITY 2D

Blasters 5D+2, blaster artillery 5D, dodge 5D+1, brawling parry 5D, grenade 4D, melee combat 4D+2, melee parry 4D, missile weapons 5D, pickpocket 5D+2, running 4D, vehicle blasters 4D

KNOWLEDGE 5D

Bureaucracy 9D, business 8D, cultures 7D, languages 9D, law enforcement 9D+1, planetary systems 9D, streetwise 9D+2, survival 7D, value 8D

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 5D, capital ship piloting 4D, capital ship gunnery 4D, capital ship shields 4D, communications 8D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, sensors 8D, space transports 5D+1, starfighter piloting 5D, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 5D

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 7D, command 5D, con 8D+2, forgery 8D, hide 8D, investigation 7D, persuasion 8D

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 4D+2, stamina 4D

TECHNICAL 2D

Capital starship repair 5D, capital starship weapon repair 5D, computer programming/repair 6D+2, droid repair 6D, first aid 6D+1, security 6D+2, space transports repair 5D, starfighter repair 5D, starship weapon repair 5D

Force Points: 1

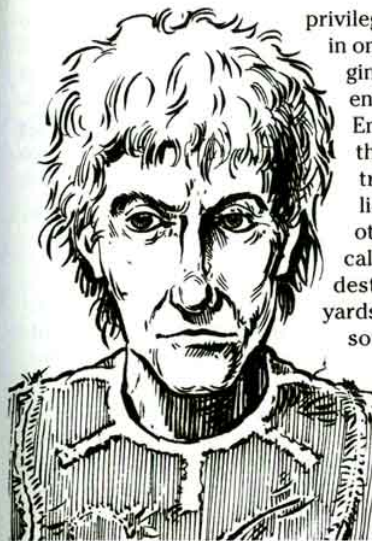
Character Points: 12

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink with scrambler, medpac, portable computer with slicing and data access programs, repair kit

Hugo Cutter

A "deconstructor" is interested in tearing things apart — often with explosives or by other means. Hugo Cutter spent much of his



privileged youth and formal education in one of the prominent Imperial engineering academies. Cutter's parents were corporate nobles in the Empire, and did their best to raise their son in an atmosphere of control. When he joined the Rebellion against the Empire, like many other idealistic youths, he was called to use his vast knowledge in destroying vital things like shipyards, battle cruisers, Imperial garrisons and satellite transmission relays. The more he destroyed, the more he found himself enjoying his work.

An alleged pyromaniac, Hugo Cutter is a destructive, wild-haired guru of cosmic metaphysics, obscure alien religions, and alternative

hyper-dimension theory. He sometimes wears his uniform inside out as part of making some obscure point.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL ..

One of Andrephan Stormcaller's so-called "wild-eyed geniuses" that he matched with rookies in infiltrator squads, Hugo Cutter can be best described as a high-yield bomb looking for a target without a guidance system. He is prone to wild emotional swings and his reaction to certain stressful situations is unpredictable at best, although Andrephan Stormcaller assured me that it was all "part of his act." Acting or not, New Republic agents should always approach Hugo Cutter with extreme caution.

■ Hugo Cutter

Type: Former New Republic Infiltrator

DEXTERITY 2D

Blasters 4D+1, blaster artillery 4D, dodge 4D, grenade 5D, melee combat 4D+2, melee parry 4D, missile weapons 4D, vehicle blasters 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Languages 4D, planetary systems 4D+1

MECHANICAL 5D

Astrogation 5D, communications 6D, powersuit operation 6D, repulsorlift operation 5D+2, sensors 6D, space transports 5D+1, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 6D, walker operation 5D

PERCEPTION 3D

Forgery 6D, hide 6D+2

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 4D+1, climbing/jumping 4D+2, stamina 4D

TECHNICAL 4D

Capital starship repair 7D, capital starship weapon repair 6D, computer programming/repair 8D, demolitions 9D+2, droid repair 7D, security 7D+1, space transport repair 7D+2, starfighter repair 7D, starship weapon repair 7D

Character Points: 10

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), comlink with scrambler, datapad, various grenades and small explosives, timers

Sully Tigereye

Sully Tigereye is a furry, wild-eyed Trunsk. Trunks are squat, square-shoulder beings covered in a brown, matted fur on most of their bodies except their facial regions, the palms of their hands, and the soles of their feet.

Sully Tigereye served with the Rebellion for a considerable length of time, enlisting as a standard ground force trooper. He worked his way slowly through the ranks, gaining the attention of superiors and fellow soldiers as a fearsome warrior prone to exuberant fits of violence. Eventually he caught the eye of Colonel Stormcaller, who had him assigned as fire support coordinator for infiltrator team Red Alpha. Since his assignment, he directly participated in nearly every Red Alpha mission in some capacity.

Tigereye's specialty is assault. Although shorter than a Wookiee, Sully Tigereye has shown he is more than proficient with heavy blaster rifles, repeating blasters, vibro-axes, and other large weapons.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL

A surprisingly gentle fellow in private, I recall Andrephan sending Sully Tigereye on a solo reconnaissance mission to scout an Imperial garrison site scheduled for a Rebel assault. Days passed, and all thought the Trunsk was lost, when

a signal came over the broadbands to land the Rebel force. Tigereye had taken it upon himself to sneak in through the garrison's drainage system and seek out the quarters of the commanding officer. Holding a vibroblade to the officer's throat, he ordered him to surrender the garrison on a bluff that the entire Rebel force was seizing the garrison as he spoke. In the end, we took the whole garrison force without spilling a single drop of blood.

■ Sully Tigereye

Type: Former New Republic Infiltrator

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 7D+2, blaster artillery 7D, dodge 7D, brawling parry 7D, grenade 6D+2, melee combat 7D, melee parry 6D, missile weapons 7D, running 5D, vehicle blasters 5D+2

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Intimidation 8D, streetwise 6D+1, survival 8D+1

MECHANICAL 3D

Beast riding 5D, communications 4D, repulsorlift operation 5D+2, sensors 5D, space transports 4D+1, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D, swoop operation 5D+1

PERCEPTION 2D

Command 7D, hide 7D+2, persuasion 5D, search 7D, sneak 7D+1

STRENGTH 4D

Brawling 8D, climbing/jumping 6D+1, stamina 6D, swimming 6D

TECHNICAL 2D

Demolition 4D, first aid 4D+2, security 4D+1

Character Points: 12

Move: 10

Special Abilities:

Claws: Trunks have long, retractable fighting claws that give them an extra 1D to Strength when figuring damage for a *brawling* attack.

Equipment: Blaster rifle with grenade launcher (5D), comlink with scrambler, 6 grenades (four concussion, two anti-vehicle), line thrower/climber, 3 medpacs, vibro-shiv (STR+1D), weapons harness

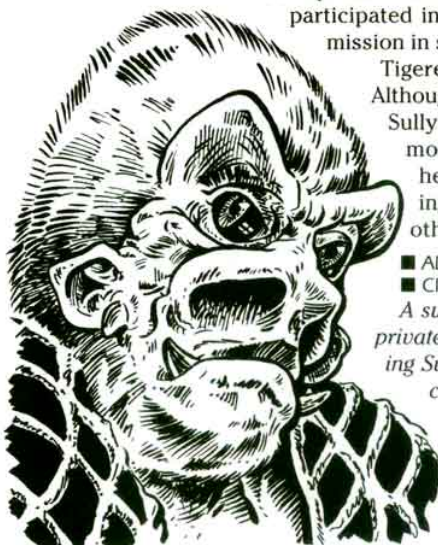
Who's Minding the Imperial Mint?

"I don't believe this." Hugo Cutter gritted his teeth as he and Ivey approached the recessed and thick-doored entranceway to the Pentastar Trust and Safety Assurance Bank on Entralla. Pentastar Patrol officers, their black and blue tunics smartly creased and white helmets polished to an almost luster-like brilliance, saluted smartly as they passed through the entrance. "Come to think of it, I don't believe I'm doing this ..."

"Shh!" Ivey silenced him, making a cutting gesture across her throat. "We're supposed to be natives. So stop acting so nervous."

"Who's nervous? Me? Do I look nervous to you?"

"Hugo!" Ivey threatened again. A series of cubicked passages lay off to the left side of them, while a wall of armored tempersteel faced



them on the right, cashier windows spaced out at even intervals. Exactly as the layout she had pulled from the builder's specs dictated, Ivey mentally counted 13 meters to her left and moved in that direction, pulling Hugo Cutter reluctantly along with her. A surveillance drone hovered briefly over their heads, then moved on to examine another customer.

"Why couldn't Sully do this with you?" he whined. "He's better at this than I am."

"Because he's an alien, and knowing how the Alignment and the Imperials feel about aliens, we don't want to draw any more attention than necessary." She elbowed him in the ribs. "Relax. We're almost there." They arrived at their destination, a desk marked "New Loan Information." A clerk peered up from the boring display coming from his terminal screen, grunted at them briefly, then waved them to sit down.

"How may Pentastar Trust and Safety Assurance help you today?" he smiled with the standard company line. "We're responsible for the financial security of an entire sector ... and you, too."

"How nice. We're interested in making an investment with your bank."

"Well then! We have 16 different and proven ways to double your investment."

Ivey offered her hand to the man, smiling. "Actually, I was interested in a seventeenth way." The man smiled back as he reached to shake it. Doing so, she produced a shining metal bracelet in her other hand.

The clerk eyed the chromed piece of metal strangely, but reacted too slowly when she suddenly slipped the binders around both his wrists and secured him to the desk. Cutter then exchanged the writing stylus in his upper jacket pocket with a similar-shaped object. "Hey! What the ...?"

Ivey made a quieting sound deep in her throat. "Listen very carefully. My deviant friend here has just placed a small, but extremely powerful explosive device in your pocket. Cooperate and he won't set it off. Understand?"

A line of sweat immediately formed across the man's brow, but he said nothing. Ivey then positioned herself next to him, spinning the terminal screen to face her as her hands whisked over the input keys. The man watched, wheezing under his breath. "Just what do you, er, plan on doing?" He laughed to himself. "Rob the bank?"

Cutter laughed, slapping the clerk soundly on his back. The man

choked. "Rob the bank? Get with the cosmic times my friend, we're not robbing the bank. We're making a deposit."

"A what?" The clerk looked more confused now than ever.

Ivey spoke, not looking up from the rapidly changing terminal display as she worked. "A deposit. Pentastar Trust and Safety Assurance gladly takes the people's money, and then some, doesn't it?"

"Well, er, yes. Of course." The clerk tried to look down to see if the cylinder in his pocket was truly a bomb. Ivey depressed two more keys, then twisted the display back to its original position.

"Done. A deposit of one million credits."

"One *million* credits?" The clerk's eyes went all agape. "But why would you go to all the trouble to handcuff me to my desk just to deposit a million credits?"

"Well, we didn't deposit a million real credits, per se." Cutter explained as they both got up. "Just a million *counterfeit* credits. I made 'em myself out of reconstituted exo-protein wafers." He flipped a blue credit chip out and slapped it down on the desk for the clerk to see. "The sweet lady here just blanked the bank's inventory control program so it can't tell the counterfeit credits from the real credits."

"Counterfeit credits!" the man exclaimed, still chained to his desk like the corporate slave he was. Everyone in the bank turned to stare at them. "Don't you realize what you've done? This bank is financially responsible for the entire sector!"

Cutter went on. "We figure your bank will have to shut down operations for a while to clean up the mess. In the meantime, Imperial currency will take a nose-dive in value. Anyone doing business with Imperial credits in the entire sector is going to take what I believe is called 'a bath.' Naturally, folks will blame this entire flap on the Pentastar Alignment ... and your bank."

Ivey smiled as gentle as ever as she pinched the man on the cheek and depressed a stud on the cylinder in the man's pocket. "Thank you again. And we sincerely hope the Red Moons can give you more business in the near future."

"Wait! Stop!" The man, caring not for life or limb at the moment, finally shouted aloud. "Help!" But he soon disappeared inside a choking and fast-spreading cloud of smoke. Other smoke bombs, left in the waste baskets, also went off. By the time the guards realized what had happened, the entire lobby was engulfed and the two "depositors" had long since made their getaway.



Stormcaller Speaks: Understanding Merc Tactics

Now that you've taken the time to read this scandoc, you'll probably understand that I'm a man of my word and I prefer to keep things neat and tidy. You're not reading this to be offended by the acts of "unwarranted privateers," you want to learn merc tactics, and fast. So button up your sensibilities and keep on reading.

There are no cut-and-dried regulations concerning mercenary forces. The Empire and its stooges will hunt you, the New Republic will hate you, and you'll be a blessing and a burden to the local folks out there who really need you. There are no medal ceremonies, no dress uniforms, and no court-martials. The work is dirty and thankless. That's the business. You fight because others cannot.

Mercenary forces have different equipment needs and supply sources than the heady old days of the Rebel Alliance. Where the Rebel Alliance might have supplied a light freighter for a Spec-Op group's needs, a mercenary force has to buy one themselves or use their own ship. If the Alliance supplied weapons, mercenaries can only use what they can lay their hands (or claws) on. The Spec-Op

group could probably count on someone within the Alliance to supply certain information — mercenary groups have to seek out their own contacts. Worst of all, when the going gets rough, the mercenary group has no backup to call upon except its own. It's up to them to escape in one piece.

Mercenary groups do not have the luxury of selecting equipment and weapons that exactly fit mission profiles. On most occasions, whatever is handy will do. Depending on the tactic, though, mercenary groups do favor certain pieces of equipment and weapons over others, mostly for their availability and reliability.

I had my colleague Ivey work on what constitutes a "shopping list" that any mercenary force would not mind having filled. From time to time, Hugo and old Tigereye add an interesting tidbit of their own. Granted, some or even all of these items are not readily available. In fact, nearly everything listed here is severely restricted by the Empire or what remains of it. Only a trained and knowledgeable "procurement specialist" like dear Ivey can readily know where to obtain such goods. Certainly the best know how to get their hands on something when it's needed the most. Read with an open mind, and the best of luck to all of you out there. We need every one of you ...

Data Slicing

"When it comes to slicing, you'll need more than just luck, friend."

— Ivey

For slicing through sophisticated computer data systems, there is no one single device that can penetrate all the layers of security built into these systems. A data slicer typically makes use of programs designed to generate false passwords, bypass security blocks, and reroute suspicious traces. The slicer then uses these programs to break into secure systems, enable data access and retrieval, and to back out without detection. Slicers can also attempt to access control stations to redirect sensor probes, enable false internal alerts, and send security personnel to other areas. A good slicer knows how to protect not only herself, but the team as well.

Slicer Programs

Slicer programs themselves are usually hand-built items and are just about impossible to obtain through normal trade channels. The cost of each program is often determined by the gamemaster and the current circumstances of the game — costs can run into the tens of thousands of credits on the black market.

Many slicers build their own programs out of experience, sometimes using the framework of a legal program to better disguise it. Typical data slicing programs can include:

Password Generators: These programs use encrypted key technology built into a microloop to shuffle through millions of password possibilities in a single pass before the system can try to stop it. Password generators can only work well if the slicer has an idea about the password framework used by a specific system. Too much time spent fiddling with entering a system can typically end up with a security alert from the user station. A password generator program can add from +1 to +2D to a *computer programming* skill roll.

Security Block Bypass: To protect themselves against unlawful entry, most computer systems have a series of security blocks at critical junctures, referred to as gateways or nodes, which are intended to prevent access to secure regions. A block bypass scheme program tricks the block's interface into thinking the slicer is a legitimate user. A block bypass program adds +1 to +2D to a character's *computer programming* skill roll when attempting to override a security block into a secure data region.

Backtrace Evasion: At random times, a computer system performs a backtrace, a search of access requests to ascertain who exactly is on the system. The backtrace typically queries with a personal interface code that a slicer would not normally have. To evade a backtrace, the slicer might release an evasion program, an access request that bounces to other terminals, keeping the computer too busy to query the slicer's actual terminal. Releasing a backtrace evasion program increases the computer's difficulty by one difficulty level when a security program or computer user tries to locate the slicer.

Communications

Communicators mean more than just the personal comlinks carried by characters — a target area or facility may have some kind of sensor protection in place that monitors or jams communication traffic. Multi-wave or *scrambler* comlinks cycle around the various communication bandwidths, using pre-arranged patterns among their users to avoid detection by monitors. These comlinks, while successful against detection, are less so against intentional jamming.

Characters may also need a comlink in a small, undetectable package. Button-phone comlinks can appear as shirt buttons, belt

buckles, lapels, hearing devices, or as other pieces of a character's clothing. These scaled-down comlinks suffer from a reduced range and power efficiency, so use of them should be restricted to small areas.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ IVEY ..

Whatever you do, don't buy comlinks off the black market. Get them straight from the manufacturer, or even better, just plain strip them from some nameless facility. Imperials and corporates like to salt the galactic ether with their own bad bugs through black market contacts, trying to find out where they end up.

Electronic Countermeasures and Shields

More than ever, the Pentastar Alignment, powerful Imperial corporates, and even the New Republic are resorting to various types of electronic countermeasures and shields, referred to collectively as ECM, against surveillance and probes. As technology is passed down from military to civilian platforms, ECM gear is becoming available to clients and consumers who prefer to keep a "low profile" on their activities.

The most frequent kind of ECM is *jamming* of communication or sensor frequencies in the vicinity. More often than not, jamming only tips off seasoned sensor operators that something is definitely not right in a particular region. At the Battle of Endor, Lando Calrissian determined that the Death Star shield was still up because the attacking Alliance Fleet's sensors were being jammed.

The next ECM level is referred to as *masking*, and is quite popular with small forces operating under tighter budgetary restrictions. Masking involves generating naturally occurring radiation levels that create false sensor readings or lead the sensor operator to believe the scanning device is malfunctioning.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ IVEY ..

For example, a spaceship may be emitting an unnaturally high amount of unfocused radiation from its sublight engines, leading enemy scanners to believe the craft's engines need tuning, and thus masking the full load of explosives currently being carried in the craft's holds. We happen to call this ploy "baked Imperial surprise."

The next level of ECM is called *misdirecting*, using spectral or other materials to either absorb or redirect sensor sweeps to delay detection. The New Republic is currently testing the use of certain

hull components on snub fighters and other small attack craft so enemy sensors misidentify their signatures. These materials are restricted only to New Republic vessels and have yielded only slight success during actual combat conditions.

The highest level of ECM is *cloaking*. Cloaking hardware requires an expensive mixture of photonic emitters and spectral diffusers to reduce the physical presence of a vehicle or vessel to an observer. Cloaking devices require huge amounts of power and are prone to mechanical failure because of the elaborate combination of systems required to produce the effect. Thus most cloaking devices are restricted to capital-class ships. Reportedly, the Empire has a working cloaking device available for space vessels — the New Republic is scrambling around the clock to create a counterdevice that can detect a cloaked ship.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ STORMCALLER, ANDREPHAN/COLONEL ..

Still no word yet if the unparrellax transmitter can spot a cloaked ship, but New Republic techs are reportedly working around the clock, or the cloak, so to speak.

ID Processors

Forged identification allows entrance to sealed areas and access to computer data networks, while proper forged documentation will allow a mercenary to pretend he or she is anything from an Imperial customs inspector to the Grand Magnus from Xerton Nine.

Using holo technology, ID processors can create acceptable forged documents and identity badges. The trick to their use, however, is in obtaining an original of the document or ID badge to be copied. The processor scans the item in detail and builds a holographic copy, noting the location of electromagnetic coding strips, processor keys, and coding schemes built into the item. The processor also carefully identifies the materials used to make the item and the quantity. The forger then supplies the materials to the processor, which creates a duplicate. The forger can specify that the badge or document be imprinted with his or her face, fingerprints, retinal pattern or skin pore scheme, or the face or pattern of someone else, and the ID processor makes the adjustments to electromag strips and processor keys as necessary.

The only problem with ID processors, aside from their home-made charlatan-like quality, is that they cannot recreate the highly complex and varied cryptcode schemes used on some high security

access cards. Most ID processors only copy the existing cryptcode scheme from the original badge or document. This can result in an alarm if a security system suddenly detects more than one cryptcode scheme circulating in any given area. Also, badges and documents made with rare or unidentifiable materials also pose a problem, as substitutes for these substances would have to be found. Holo ID processors are very rare and extremely expensive.

ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

IVEY ..

You might think it could not possibly work, until you see the results. When it comes to making pretty badges, holo tech can sure work miracles. With an ID processor, you could probably gain entrance to the Death Star, if the Empire still had one.

Camouflage

Mercenaries prefer as much stealth and secrecy as possible, unless the situation warrants their opponents' undivided attention. As a rule, infiltrating an area using the latest in electronic and sensor countermeasures should also include the latest in physical concealment as well.

Camouflage can be as deceptively simple as the white used for Imperial snowtrooper armor. The underlying concern to the character is cost and availability. Obtaining clothing that matches a certain planetary terrain is relatively simple, but can become costly as the character ends up in different environments. Most organized mercenaries eventually stock up on a few basic terrain schemes — white for ice worlds, blue-gray for oceans, green for forests, tan for deserts, and brown for mountains.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ TIGEREYE, SULLY ..

Never underestimate the value of not being seen by someone you'd rather not be seen by.

Line Throwers and Climbers

Anyone who has ever climbed an Imperial garrison wall wearing a full set of survival gear, armor, and carrying a heavy weapon knows there must be an easier way to scale such oversized obstacles. And any good mercenary knows such a display of strength is worthless — it not only tires the body but also turns the climber into an all-too tempting target.

The Susuax Verti-Go system is a reliable, lightweight personal line

thrower and climber. The entire system can either be stowed in a backpack until needed or mounted under the long barrel of a blaster rifle or similar weapon. The Verti-Go consists of a gas-propelled projectile rod, an assortment of grappler heads, a pulley gear ascent motor, and 150 meters of high-strength thincord.

The climber selects a grappler head, checks that the line is secured to the projectile rod, and fires the thrower. After testing the line against the climber's weight, the climber then activates the gear ascent motor and is pulled up. The motor has two speeds, fast and very fast. Users should also be warned that the ascent motor, when set to the highest speed, is also very loud.

■ **ADDENDUM/PERSONAL**

■ **TIGEREYE, SULLY ..**

The Verti-Go also has an undocumented feature as a back-up weapon. In a pinch, many of the grappler heads, tipped with barbs and hooks, make excellent projectile weapons. Course, you're such a smart merc you probably didn't need to be told that.

■ **Verti-Go Line Thrower**

Model: Susuax Verti-Go Climbing System

Name: Line thrower and climber

Scale: Character

Skill: Missile weapons

Ammo: 1 projectile rod, assorted grappler heads, 150-meter length of line

Cost: 400

Availability: 2

Range: 10 to 150 meters

Damage: 4D+2

Game Notes: The normal rate of ascent for the climbing motor is six meters per second for a normal Human with gear. The secondary switch climbs at 12 meters per second but is three times as noisy (reduce *Perception* difficulty to spot climber by two levels).

Susuax Verti-Go Line Thrower



Anthony P. Russo

Ordnance

The soldier-for-hire always relies on certain weapon types or models. But in addition to the usual assortment of blasters, slug throwers, knives, and good old fists and feet, a few additional weapons have slowly gained a following in the mercenary's arsenal.

Micro Blasters

It is surprising how few are aware of the prevalence of micro blasters across the star lanes. This ignorance is perhaps due more to entertainment holos always showing the mandatory scene with the heroic adventurers whipping out hold-out blasters as a weapon of last resort. But hold-out blasters are, by far, not the smallest energy weapons.

Micro blasters come in all shapes and sizes, yet they are far from toys. The only difference between a tiny, two-shot micro and a full-size blaster pistol is the damage they can cause. Micros have but one purpose — to give the user one very slim chance of escape in a desperate situation.

Useless in a prolonged firefight or at any range longer than 5 meters, micros are for prudent individuals who do not wish to be completely unarmed. Their small size makes them quite hard to find — because of their tiny powerpacks, weapons detectors also have an increased difficulty trying to locate them.

■ **ADDENDUM/PERSONAL**

■ **CUTTER, HUGO ..**

Micro blasters are the pop guns of the universe. I wouldn't be caught dead carrying one, but my furry friend with the claws is entitled to his opinions.

■ **Micro Blaster**

Model: Gee-Tech 12 Defender

Type: Micro blaster

Scale: Character

Ammo: 2

Cost: 200-400

Availability: 2, R, X

Fire Rate: 1

Range: 1-5/no effect at further ranges

Damage: 2D+2

Game Notes: Very Difficult search skill roll required for characters and weapon detectors to find a micro blaster.



Anthony P. Russo

Sniper Blasters

A sniper blaster is more than just a standard blaster rifle fitted with a macroscopic sight, although many a mercenary unit has simply made do by taping a pair of macrobinoculars to the top of a

standard trooper rifle. Many sniper blasters can also serve as anti-vehicle weapons, enabling precision shots against control components, engine outlets, and windscreens. Certain companies now build dedicated sniper blaster weapons as offshoots to their regular models. A few models offer componentability, allowing the weapon to be broken down into the most uninteresting-looking parts which can be carried around in a case or sack until needed for quick assembly.



Anthony P. Russo

■ Sniper Blaster Rifle

Model: SoruSuub X-45 Sniper Rifle

Type: Sniper blaster rifle

Scale: Character

Skill: Blasters: sniper blasters

Ammo: 25

Cost: 750

Availability: 2, R, X

Fire Rate: 1

Range: 1-25/100/250

Damage: 5D

Game Notes: When using rifle's targeting scope, reduce all Long Range or precision shot difficulty levels to Moderate.

Grenades, Explosives & Missiles

Shaped Charges

Shaped charges are cone-shaped devices that concentrate nearly all their damage into a tiny area, making them useful against airlock doors, vehicle components, and critical sections on load-bearing structures. They are predominantly used by rescue teams in order to save lives, although others have found deadlier uses for them.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ CUTTER, HUGO ..

There is perhaps nothing more rewarding than finding the location of that one structure point that will send something as large as a bridge or a building flying down like a house of cards ...



Anthony P. Russo

■ Shaped-Charge Explosive

Model: Mesonics Focalized Explosive

Type: Shaped-charge explosive

Scale: Character or Speeder

Skill: Demolition

Cost: 2500-3000

Availability: 2, R, X

Damage: 10D

Game Notes: When the explosive is set, reduce the *Strength* dice of the target by -1D.

Anti-Vehicle or Armor-Piercing Grenades

Anti-vehicle grenades consist of two or more segmented explosives — the first punches a hole in the craft's outer skin or armor, the second causes internal damage. While they are highly effective against speeders and other armored vehicles, they still lack the ability to seriously damage large armored vehicles like Imperial walkers.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ TIGEREYE, SULLY ..

A-V grenades can save you from the risks of high-speed surgery, which usually involves cutting a hole in some Chariot or other Imperial repulsortank and then inserting a thermal detonator. Ah, the good old days of the Rebel Special Mission Groups.

■ Anti-Vehicle Grenade

Model: Galentro Armaments Anti-Vehicle Explosive

Type: Anti-vehicle/anti-armor grenade

Scale: Character

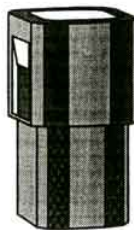
Skill: Grenade

Cost: 750

Availability: R, X

Damage: 7D

Game Notes: When used against Speeder-scale or smaller targets, *do not* use the Scale Comparison Chart to reduce damage.



Anthony P. Russo

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ STORMCALLER, ANDREPHAN/COLONEL ..

Grenades can give a small squad the firepower of a heavy assault platoon when necessary. Newer, specialized grenades are slowly taking the place of jury-rigging by joining blaster powerpacks and other dangerous, Cracken-like, antics ...

E-Mag Mines

These simple mines quietly wait for the presence of repulsorlift fields found on low-flying vehicles such as landspeeders or similar

craft. When a field is detected directly above, the mine immediately fires a vertical salvo of shrapnel into the passing vehicle, damaging it severely.

E-Mag mines are typically found on worlds where prying eyes are not desired. Their sensor arrays can also be modified to detect ground-effect and surface pressure traffic.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ IVEY ..

Mesonics actually sells these things to agri-corporates "... to prevent stock animals from grazing in undesired areas ..." Funny, I didn't think banthas could drive a speeder.

■ **E-Mag Mine**

Model: Mesonics E-Mag Explosive Mine

Type: Anti-repulsorlift mine

Scale: Character

Skill: Demolitions

Cost: 200

Availability: 2, R, X

Damage: 7D

Game Notes: The mine's sensors cannot detect the presence of repulsorlift vehicles higher than 25 meters above the ground. The mines can also be calibrated to detect foot traffic. The mine's sensor units have a *sensors* skill of 6D to detect repulsorlift traffic nearby.



Anthony P. Russo

Finbat Anti-Walker Concussion Missile

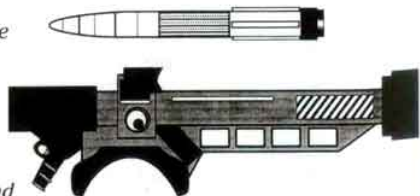
The Kessler J8Q-128 Finbat is a portable concussion missile designed to take out large, slow-moving armor targets like Imperial AT-ST and AT-AT walkers. The Finbat can be prepped, aimed, and fired by one person. After firing, the launch tube section is discarded and exchanged for another unit.

The Finbat warhead consists of not one, but four separate segments to penetrate heavy armor. The final explosive, housed in the missile's main body, is designed to fragment and continue moving throughout the target's body, causing as much internal damage as possible.

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

■ TIGEREYE, SULLY ..

Don't you just love the new merc-based corporate mind these days? Leave it to Kessler to build something to swat a walker, right under the noses of the Alignment and



Anthony P. Russo

the rest of the Empire. The Finbat works — in principle. You have to aim carefully and get a square target in the sight, anything less and the missile will just bounce off the side. And for all you potential walker hunters out there — the Finbat missile is slow. There is a distinct possibility an Imperial gunner can shoot the missile down before it reaches its target.

■ **Finbat Anti-Walker Concussion Missile**

Model: Kessler J8Q-128 Finbat Missile

Type: Anti-walker missile

Scale: Character

Skill: Missile weapons

Ammo: 1 missile per launcher

Cost: 4000

Availability: R, X

Body: 1D

Range: 0-50/250/500

Damage: 12D

Game Notes:

On Target: If the attacker's result, compared to the difficulty number, is less than or equal to 7, then the weapon was not fired accurately and the Finbat's damage result is automatically halved.

Interception: Because the Finbat is slow on takeoff, the missile takes at least two rounds to reach a Long Range target and may be fired upon before it strikes. The difficulty level of shooting down a Finbat under flight is Very Difficult. If struck, compare the attacker's damage with the Finbat's own Body attribute.

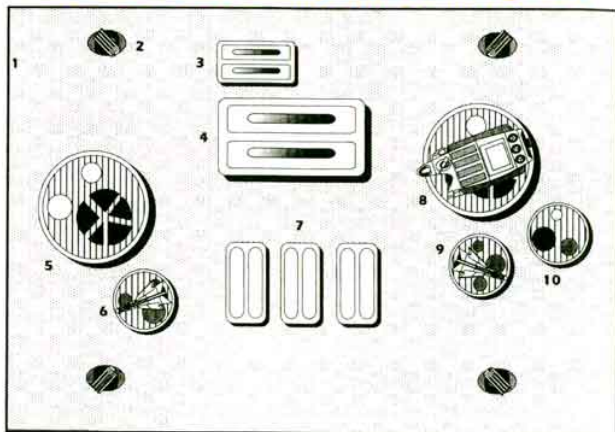
Anti-Flight Unit Weapons

Throughout history, ground-based forces have always been vulnerable to attack from above. To combat this weakness, more and more anti-starfighter and airspeeder weapons are being carried into the field. Most such weapons are matched to extensive tracking and fire control devices which take the guesswork out of manually tracking a speedy target.

The Kurtough Galax Viper is a curtain-effect weapon. It is hardly portable, requiring mounting on a speeder truck or some other mobile platform. Rows of blaster tubes fire volleys of repeating blaster fire in the general proximity of approaching craft. The volley effect is enough to override most deflector shields.

The Golog-Bertum Apex Incisor is a small, one-shot, anti-vehicle weapon. To use, point the Incisor's nose at the target and depress the "record" stud mounted on the weapon's side. The weapon takes a mass spectral record of the target, from its infrared exhaust signature to its shift-shield output. After pressing the "arm" switch, the weapon's internal motor ignites and the missile hunts down the target. After this point, running away is highly recommended in order to avoid the motor's scalding exhaust.

Red Moon Base Camp and Training Post



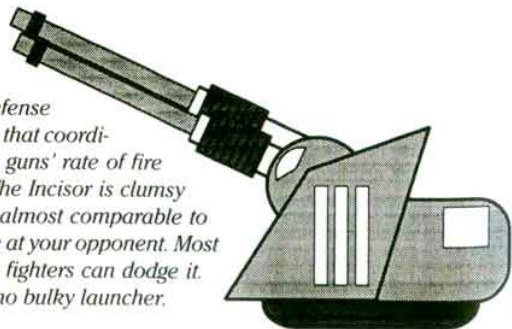
Facilities Key

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Buried electronic sensor perimeter | 6. Z-95 Headhunter on interceptor station |
| 2. Galax Viper defense weapon | 7. Barracks and living quarters |
| 3. Secondary stores and escape bunker | 8. <i>Red Moon Revenge</i> on standby |
| 4. Main hangar/repair facility | 9. Z-95 Headhunter on patrol station |
| 5. Light transport pad | 10. Snubfighter-sized pad |

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL

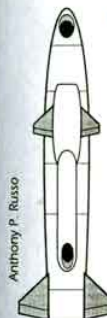
■ TIGEREYE, SULLY ..

Both the *Galax Viper* and the *Incisor* have been used by our little band of miscreants. Our current stronghold maintains four batteries of *Galax Vipers* as anti-strafting weapons. Ivey and I have created a point-defense control program that coordinates the volley guns' rate of fire and direction. The *Incisor* is clumsy and dirt cheap, almost comparable to throwing a stone at your opponent. Most high-speed snub fighters can dodge it. Still, it requires no bulky launcher.



■ Kurtough Galax Viper Ground Defense Weapon

Model: Kurtough Galax Viper Volley Gun
Type: Anti-air vehicle weapon
Scale: Speeder
Skill: Blaster artillery
Crew: 2
Ammo: 80, unlimited with generator power supply
Cost: 2500-4000
Availability: 2, X
Body: 2D+2
Fire Rate: 4
Fire Control: 2D
Range: 0-50/250/1000
Damage: 4D (fire separately)



■ Golog-Bertum Apex Incisor Missile

Model: Golog-Bertum Apex Incisor Missile
Type: Surface-to-air missile
Scale: Character
Skill: Missile weapons
Cost: 1000
Availability: 2, X
Fire Control: 3D
Range: 0-50/250/1000
Damage: 7D
Game Notes: The Incisor is fired by pointing the missile at the intended target and pressing the "record" button for one round. On the next available round, the "arm" button may be pressed on the weapon. The character firing the weapon must run away from the weapon (Easy *dodge* skill roll) or suffer 3D damage from the motor's scalding exhaust.

DATA SEARCH ■ PROG41003 ■ FILEPATH 9406/13P//PER.ADB//SC
FILEFORM .D.PAD/DOWNLOAD ■ SOURCEFILE: WANTED BY CRACKEN ■ READING...

WANTED BY CRACKEN



BLACK JACK

Species: Human Sex: Male

Homeworld: Unknown

Height: 1.75 meters Age: 37

Crimes Against The New Republic: Piracy, theft of New Republic property, sabotage, kidnapping

Reward For Capture: 25,000

Stealing starships has always been Black Jack's trade. Rumors say he was hot-wiring ion drive ignition systems when he was only a boy — his total count of stolen vessels is rumored to be in the hundreds.

Unlike other pirates who take ships by outright force, Black Jack's means of stealing starships are more subtle. His pirates have infiltrated freighter crews and hidden in cargo or maintenance crawlways to steal their prizes. They have sabotaged ship computers with virus programs and injected knockout gas into life-support systems to subdue crew members.

A merciful pirate, Black Jack kills only in self-defense (although some of his co-conspirators seem terribly bloodthirsty). Ship crews who fall victim to these pirates often find themselves floating home in jettisoned escape pods, stripped of any valuables and weapons they were carrying.

What Black Jack does with stolen ships is not known. Some assume he sells them to the highest bidder and lives off the profits. Others say he is quietly building a pirate fleet in some backwater system, hoping to create a criminal empire for himself. Several ships known stolen by Black Jack have been spotted, some crewed by criminals, others by legitimate and naive purchasers. Jack rarely operates from his own ship — if he does use a starship, it's usually one he's recently stolen.

Black Jack's wide girth is bounded by a colorful sash which complements the rest of his garish outfit. Another sash tied over his head hides his baldness. His laugh is a deep, jovial bellow which somehow manages to emerge from the curled hair of his beard and fancily-groomed moustache.

DATA SEARCH ■ PROG41003 ■ FILEPATH 9406/13P//PER.ADB//SC
FILEFORM .D.PAD/DOWNLOAD ■ SOURCEFILE: WANTED BY CRACKEN ■ READING...



Black Jack

Type: Pirate
DEXTERITY 3D+2

Blaster 7D, brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 4D+2, melee combat 5D+2, rēlee parry 5D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Business: starships 6D, intimidation 4D, streetwise 6D+2, value: starships 7D

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Astrogation 5D+2, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, space transports 7D, starship gunnery 6D+1, starship shields 5D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 7D, command 6D+2, con 6D, forgery 5D+1, gambling 6D+1

STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 6D, stamina 4D+1

TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 5D+2, demolition 4D+1, security 7D+2

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 12

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, flashy clothes, heavy blaster pistol (5D), vibroblade (STR-3D)

ADDENDUM/PERSONAL CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

Recently it appears Black Jack and his band have been working for the Empire. More and more ships — especially smaller warships from New Republic system fleets — are disappearing and emerging in the hands of Imperial forces.

New Republic Intelligence is warning ship captains of this new threat. Signs that Black Jack is up to no good include sudden changes in crew rosters, shady characters hanging around docking bays, faulty diagnostic systems on starships, and any unauthorized modification to starship hardware.

Few are certain where Black Jack got his name. Some say it's from the jet-black color of his hair, others say it's because he and his pirates seem nothing more than shadows when they infiltrate ships to steal.

PREVIOUS

DATAPAGE: 190

NEXT



PREVIOUS

DATAPAGE: 191

NEXT



■ DATA SEARCH ■ PROG41003 ■ FILEPATH 9406/13P//PER.ADB/SC
■ FILEFORM..D.PAD/DOWNLOAD ■ SOURCEFILE: WANTED BY CRACKEN ■ READING...

HAPPY GO LUCKY

Species: Human Sex: Female
Homeworld: Unknown
Height: 1.6 meters Age: 24

Crimes Against The New Republic: Piracy, theft and destruction of New Republic property, sabotage, kidnapping, murder of New Republic personnel

Reward For Capture: 20,000

If anyone wonders how Happy got her name, it's probably because she's so trigger-happy. Go Lucky (an alias, as her real name is unknown) is Black Jack's second-in-command, and is in charge of any firepower required when stealing starships. Her blunt manner and her enthusiasm for blasting anyone sometimes makes her more of a liability for Jack's pirate band, but she always proves invaluable in a firefight.

Happy is a walking arsenal. She is rarely seen without a weapon in her hands. Every spare moment is spent making sure her weapons are cleaned and in perfect working condition. Happy even baffles her comrades with her ability to procure ordnance at a moment's notice, and she always has a spare blaster or grenade to lend a fellow pirate in a tight spot.

Although she gets along well enough with Black Jack and the other pirates, Happy holds a grudge against anyone else she meets, especially those unfortunate crew members aboard ships Black Jack takes over. She has blasted some spacers for no reason at all, and has a penchant for cruelties ranging from those delivered from her sharp tongue to those delivered with her boot.

Happy's dirty blonde hair is tied out of her face by a blood-red sash. She dresses in heavy mercenary's boots and black combat fatigues. One knife is kept in a sheath in each boot, and her grenades and extra blasters hang off her gun belt and ammo bandolier.

Typical Pirate from Black Jack's Band. All stats are 2D except: *Dexterity 3D, blaster 4D+2, dodge 4D, streetwise 3D, space transports 3D, hide 4D+2, security 4D, space transports repair 4D.* Move 10. Blaster pistol (4D), comlink.

■ DATA SEARCH ■ PROG41003 ■ FILEPATH 9406/13P//PER.ADB/SC
■ FILEFORM..D.PAD/DOWNLOAD ■ SOURCEFILE: WANTED BY CRACKEN ■ READING...



Happy Go Lucky

Type: Mercenary
DEXTERITY 3D+2
Blaster 7D, blaster rifle 7D+2, bawling parry 6D, dodge 7D, grenade 5D+1, melee combat 6D, melee parry 5D, thrown weapons 5D+2, vehicle blasters 4D+2
KNOWLEDGE 2D+2
Intimidation 6D+1, streetwise 4D+2
MECHANICAL 2D+2
Capital ship gunnery 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D, starship gunnery 5D+2

PERCEPTION 2D+1
Command 5D, gambling 4D+2, hide 4D, search 5D, sneak 6D+1
STRENGTH 3D+2
Brawling 6D+2, climbing/jumping 5D, stamina 5D
TECHNICAL 3D
Blaster repair 5D+2, demolition 6D, repulsorlift repair 4D+1, security 4D+2, starship weapon repair 5D
Force Points: 1
Dark Side Points: 4
Character Points: 8
Move: 10

■ ADDENDUM/PERSONAL ■ CRACKEN, AIREN/GENERAL..

Happy's nasty attitude is a sharp contrast to Black Jack's jovial disposition. I've heard her attitude got her booted out of a mercenary band she worked with. Apparently her intense lust for battle compromised a mission during which several of her fellow mercenaries were killed. And some say they weren't killed by enemy fire ...

Equipment: Ammo bandolier, blaster rifle (5D), blast vest (+1D physical, +1 energy, torso only), 2 fragmentation grenades, heavy blaster pistol (5D), hold-out blaster (3D), 2 knives (STR+1D), sporting blaster (3D+1), thermal detonator

This issue's "Wanted By Cracken" was created by Peter Schweighofer and illustrated by Kathy Burdette.

PREVIOUS

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PREVIOUS

DATAPAGE: 193

NEXT



About the Authors ...

Patricia A. Jackson is an administrative assistant in the York City School District in Pennsylvania, where she enjoys talking to fifth-graders about the worlds of science fiction and fantasy. When not exploring alien galaxies through fiction, she enjoys riding and training show horses. Her current prospect, Niko, gets an *Omeri-*ness stat of 8D, but there is hope.

Michael Kogge has just begun attending the University of Notre Dame. His hobbies include running, writing, and watching college football. He saw *Star Wars* the night his father returned from watching the first space shuttle take off in 1981. Mike has been a big fan ever since.

Dave Marron has been gaming on and off for the last 12 years and has been playing *Star Wars* ever since it came out. He first became involved with West End Games when he asked for a rules upgrade for *Star Warriors*. A year later Dave wound up writing "The Package" for *Twin Stars Of Kira*, making him a minor celebrity at the game store he frequents. A resident of Southern California (just a few miles from Disneyland), Dave spends his spare time singing in a rock band and trying to catch up on some sleep. His interests include music, animation, pinball, and BBSing.

Charlene Newcomb wrote *Whispers in the Dark* for the second *Star Wars Adventure Journal*. The mother of three, she is a graduate student at the University of South Florida in Tampa studying library and information science, and occasionally works part-time on special projects in the Rollins College library.

Ilene Rosenberg is a student at New York University studying for her masters degree in journalism. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and is spending this summer helping to promote *They Might Be Giants*.

This issue marks **Anthony P. Russo's** second appearance in the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*. He is extremely pleased with the *Journal's* overall design and the quality of the writing and the art between the *Journal's* covers. During lulls between gaming sessions, he continues to work on a full-length novel and developing more material for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*.

Chuck Sperati is a graduate of Youngstown State University and hopes to be a professional writer in the future. Among his hobbies

are comic book collecting, anything relating to *Star Wars*, and other roleplaying games.

Paul Sudlow is a native of Floridaan II. He studied cross-cultural communications at the University of Meridiana on Tenna Ce, and received a journeyman's degree in trade economics at the University of Camalar on Esseles. He is currently a Fellow at the Teikoku Institute of Information Exchange on Brentaal, where he studies the continuing evolution of the NewsNets at the Empire's expense.

Philip Tobin has a masters degree in biological sciences from Illinois State University and works as a research technologist for the Veterans Administration at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. Speaking about his Outlaw Battle Armor article in the *Star Wars Adventure Journal* he said, "This is just an opportunity to contribute to something I've been enjoying since the first *Star Wars* movie."

About the Artists ...

Kathy Burdette is a recent graduate of Connecticut College who isn't exactly sure what she's going to do with the rest of her life. Right now she is happy to be immersing one side of her brain in the *Star Wars* universe while the other side is busy worrying about the future.

Chris Gossett is an illustrator who was born in New York City and is currently living on the west coast. He is now working for Dark Horse Comics on their upcoming epic comic series *Dark Lords of the Sith*, a sequel to *Tales of the Jedi*, to which Chris also contributed. Chris has been drawing images of the *Star Wars* galaxy long before he was ever getting paid for it.

Life-long Clevelanders **Jaime Lombardo** and **Ron Hill** share common interests in *Star Wars* (between the two of them they've probably seen the trilogy 700 times), science fiction and mystery fiction, comics and film. Their unique collaborative efforts have produced cartoons and illustrations for many products for West End Games, TSR, ICE and Chaosium. Lombardo works as a pre-press artist, retoucher and designer at a print shop. Hill is a caricaturist, freelance art director and teacher. Together they also produce comic strips, humor books and short stories.

Rocketed to Earth by strange aliens from another planet, illustrator **John Paul Lona** began his freelance career at West End Games.

He has since done work for TSR, FASA, and GDW, and has illustrated a Topps trading card for their second *Star Wars* Galaxy line. At home, John enjoys the company of his wife and son, collecting action figures, and eating chicken.

Doug Shuler has been a freelance artist for seven years and has done work for many prominent game companies, including GDW, Steve Jackson Games, ICE, White Wolf, FASA, and West End Games. His illustrations continue to appear on new cards for *Magic: The Gathering* by Wizards of the Coast. A *Star Wars* fanatic, he lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Jordi, their newborn daughter, Brianna, and five maniac cats.

Mike Vilardi works at a microelectronics plant in Rhode Island and freelances art for the gaming industry in his spare time. "I like the creation of the newer alien species," he said. "*Star Wars* tends to be pretty free and open to allow new aliens to be used in the game." He initially had to get used to drawing *Star Wars* art for West End Games: "It's so strange getting paid for things I used to do in my teens just for fun," he said.

Tell Us What You Think!

What do you think of the *Star Wars Adventure Journal*? What would you like to see? Write a letter to the editor. We might print it in a future Letters to the Editor column! Letters must be signed and should include your name, address and phone number. Letters may be no longer than 200 words.

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Honesdale, PA 18431

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The Adventures of Dannen Lifehold



Changing the Odds

By Dave Marron

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

"Are we there yet?"

Dannen looked at Purr. It was the fortieth time she'd asked him during this two-week trip through hyperspace, and it had been driving him nuts. This time, however, he had an answer for her.

"We should be coming up on Rafft soon," he said.

"Then we meet this ... Rebellion?"

"Sort of. We're going to meet a group of Rebels who work out of this system."

Purr looked at the star lines. "What did you say they did?"

Dannen rolled his eyes. "I said they were guerrillas. They special-

ize in hit-and-run tactics — they run in, blow something up, then leave."

Purr's eyes widened. "We're carrying bombs?"

"No, we're carrying medical supplies. Seems that their bacta tank malfunctioned and exploded, so we have a new one with some fresh bacta."

"The healing jelly?"

"Yeah. That and some other stuff. It's only medical supplies, Purr. We won't get blown up." *At least, I hope not*, he thought.

At that moment, the hyperdrive disengaged. The stars resumed their normal appearance outside the canopy, looking like diamonds surrounding the green sphere that hung in their midst.

Dannen checked his readouts, then nodded towards the planet. "That's it, Purr. That's Raftt."

As the *Lifeline* approached the globe, Purr glanced at Dannen curiously. "What is the Rebellion?"

Dannen grimaced. "It's not something you can describe in a few words. You know what Imperial stormtroopers are?"

"The men in white armor?"

"Yes. Well, they are the law enforcement arm of the galactic government, which is controlled by a man called the Emperor. Well, there are some who believe that the Emperor is evil, and are trying to destroy him."

Purr thought about this. "Is he?"

Dannen looked at her. "Is he what?"

"Evil."

Dannen considered lying, but then chose the truth. "Yes, he is. He wants to control everything and everybody."

"Why don't you want to work for them?"

"What, the Rebellion? Well, it's a losing fight. The Empire is much too powerful for them. And, of course, if they find out that you work for the Rebels, they kill you." Dannen smiled ruefully. "Linkaas is one being who wants me dead. I don't need a whole government after me — er, us."

Purr smiled at her inclusion. "So Krell arranged this for us? He must be a very good friend."

"Yeah, The best." Dannen gazed down on the planet, lost in thought ...

"And that's the story, Krell."

Krell had stared openmouthed at Dannen, then at Purr, then back

Dannen Lifehold



Type: Smuggler
DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 5D+1

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Space transports 5D, starship gunnery 4D+2, starship shields 4D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 4D, con 3D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Security 3D+1

Special Abilities:

Owed A Favor: Hero to the Silikas for stamina. May call upon them for minor assistance (if they're even around)

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Move: 10

Equipment: Modified Stock Light Freighter (*Lifeline*), heavy blaster pistol (5D), com-

link, 3000 credits, 25,000 credit debt to Linkaas

Capsule: Dannen Lifehold is fairly new to the smuggling game. He hasn't had the finer qualities, niceness, politeness, and honesty, forced out of him yet. His electric blue hair is genetic, and dyes won't work on it. It has become a kind of trademark — it's identified him when he was trying to escape from one villain or another. Usually relaxed and easygoing, he is very solid in his beliefs — he has surprised more than one opponent with his steel. When flying, Dannen has a flair for daredevil techniques that will one day probably either save his life or get him killed.

Quote: "I'll have it there — you have my word."

again. "I can believe it. Linkaas never was one for subtlety. So, what are you two doing here on Alderaan?"

"What I've always been doing. Looking for cargo to run. Moving cargo and staying out of his way."

"What about the Rebellion?"

"Rebellion?" Purr said.

"Long story — I'll explain later," Dannen said. "I'm not interested in politics, Krell."

Krell rose to retrieve a fresh bottle from the refrigeration unit in his home's living area. "You have not heard? I have heard murmurings that the Empire is developing a special project," he said, leaning forward, his words becoming hushed. "And any special project the

Empire develops certainly endangers the freedom of peace-loving worlds."

Dannen smirked. "Have you been taking Linkaas' spice? How do you know what the Empire's up to?"

"I have certain reliable friends who would have access to such information ..."

"Look, Krell," Dannen said, "I just need a tip on where I can go to make some credits. I've known you for a long time — you know everything. Give me an idea."

Krell thought, then looked at his longtime buddy. "Are you willing to work for the Rebellion?"

"What, full-time? Nope. You know I feel for them, but I don't usually get involved in politics." He deliberated for a moment. "Tell you what — I'll move some cargo for them, but I'm not getting involved."

"All right, I will set up a meet. When I have something for you, I will leave a message. Are you at the spaceport?"

"Yeah, we can't exactly afford a posh suite," Dannen grinned.

"Of course, of course. Give it a couple of days; I will leave a message with the codeword at the port when I have something."

Dannen rose. "Good. Alderaan's a nice place to visit, but it's too close to the edge for me, you know?"

Krell smiled as he showed them to the door. "Yes, I do know."

And now they'd arrived. Rafft was a heavily forested planet, with several settlements dotting the planetscape. Checking the coordinates provided by Krell, Dannen angled the ship toward one of the smaller townships. He landed at the insignificant port, in a landing pit dug into the ground. A tiny tower stood over the other depressions, as if standing guard.

With a hiss, the ramp lowered and Dannen stepped out. "Stay with the ship, Purr," he called up into the ship. "I'll be back in a little while."

"No, I want to come with you," Purr said.

Dannen looked down into her blue eyes, then relented. "Okay, you can come. Just stay with me."

She wrapped her arms around him, and kissed his cheek. "I will, I promise!" Embarrassed, Dannen disengaged from the embrace, then led her to the landing pit's exit ramp.

They walked into the town, glancing at the small shops and houses as they walked by. Dannen paused, gazing into the window

Purr



Type: Tinnell
DEXTERITY 3D+1
KNOWLEDGE 2D+1
MECHANICAL 2D+1
 Repulsorlift operation 3D+1
PERCEPTION 2D+1
 Search 3D+1, search: tracking 4D+1, sneak 3D+2
STRENGTH 2D+1
 Brawling 3D
TECHNICAL 4D+1
 Repulsorlift repair 5D+1, space transports repair 5D+1
Special Abilities:
Claws: All Tinnell have claws that add +1D+2 to their *Strength* in melee combat. These claws are not quite strong enough to add to their *climbing* skill.
This character is Force-sensitive.
Force Points: 2
Character Points: 5
Move: 12

Equipment: Tool kit, 500 credits

Capsule: Purr was kidnapped from her home planet and forced to do menial work for a minor crime lord. When he found her modifying a swoop to make it faster, he put her to work in his garage. When the crime lord was killed in an ambush (along with everyone in the compound), Purr escaped to ride the spaceways, fixing things as she went, and getting used, abused, and exploited in the process. Now she's joined Dannen, whom she sees as the most noble being she's met (that he's risking his life to keep her alive is a big indicator that she's right). She's going to make the *Lifeline* the best ship in the galaxy ... even if she has to rip it apart and put it back together one part at a time.

Quote: "It was broken. I fix — make it better."

of a vehicle repair bay, then entered, motioning for Purr to follow.

The mechanic looked up, then crawled out from under the landspeeder he was working on. He was a little shorter than Dannen, but he was maybe 20 years older. Stuffing a dirty cloth into his coveralls, he approached the pair.

"May I help you?" he asked.

"Yes, you can. I was told to look for a mechanic named Ashe — he's supposed to be the best on Rafft."

The man smiled. "I'm Ashe, young sir," he replied. "What can I do for you?"

Dannen smiled back. "I was told you can fix a frozen quarkmeter

with a large hydrosponder with one hand tied behind your back."

Purr looked at the man, then at Dannen. "Really?" She looked at Ashe, respect shining in her eyes.

Ashe looked at her for a moment, then his smile disappeared. "Who are you?"

"Name's Dannen Lifehold." Dannen leaned closer. "Krell sent me."

"You have the supplies, then?"

"Yes, I do. Where would you like them?"

Ashe reached under the counter and pulled out a datapad. He typed for a minute, then removed the small mem-stik. "This has the planetary coordinates for the base," he said, extending it to Dannen. "Take the supplies there — you'll get paid on delivery."

Dannen noted the sour tone the last words carried as he took the mem-stik. The man clearly thought he was a mercenary smuggler, only in it for the money.

Dannen wondered if Ashe might be right.

Purr caught the tone in Ashe's voice, and the look that he had given Dannen, but she made no mention of it as they walked back to the *Lifeline*. Dannen's silence spoke volumes to her, however — she had been taught since birth to watch the body language of other beings, and to determine what they might do. Dannen was upset, she knew, but if she spoke, he'd just get angry. And that was the last thing she wanted. No, better to let him work it out for himself, she decided.

Inside, however, she smiled. Of course, if he needs my help, I'll be here.

The memory stick he'd been given directed him to a clearing about 200 kilometers outside the township. The clearing was large enough for the *Lifeline* to land, and still have enough room for the supplies. Telling Purr to stay put, Dannen disembarked, slowly stepping onto the soil. His blaster was in his hand as he gazed into the trees and bushes surrounding the clearing.

Suddenly, he sensed someone behind him. He whirled quickly, just in time to find the barrel of a blaster pointed at his face. The other person wore a uniform camouflaged for the forest, complete with breath mask, and suspicious eyes.

"Who're you?" the stranger asked in a voice distorted by the mask.

Dannen slowly raised his hands. "Name's Dannen Lifehold," he answered. "Ashe sent me."

"Do you have the mem-stik?"

Dannen slowly reached into his breast pocket and withdrew it. The stranger took the stick, examined it, then holstered the blaster.

"Who else is on board?"

"Just my mechanic."

"Do you have the supplies?"

"They're in the hold," Dannen said, lowering his hands.

The stranger produced a comlink from a pocket. "Leaf One to Base: all clear, bring the movers."

"Copy, Leaf One," a voice answered.

Leaf One reached up and removed the breath mask, releasing a mass of auburn hair and smiling blue eyes. She extended a hand to Dannen. "I'm Tawn Porew," she said. "Sorry about the ambush, but you're not our regular supplier."

Dannen shook hands with her as he led her to the ship. "Well, I got the job at the last minute. Wait a second." He raised his voice. "Purr, open the cargo hatch!" The docking ring promptly extended itself from the top of the ship.

Dannen sighed. "No, Purr, the button next to it!" With the customary hiss of hydraulics, the cargo hatch began lowering.

Tawn chuckled. "Your mechanic doesn't know your ship too well, does he?"

"She hasn't been with me too long. It's kind of a long story." He glanced back into the woods. "I hope you brought enough cargo lifters — there's quite a bit of stuff."

"Don't worry, they'll be here." She sized him up. "You'll get your money when we've verified the inventory. You'll have to stay until we do."

"No problem," Dannen said. "Actually, I'd like to stay." He looked into the forest again. "When you've lived in space as long as I have, you appreciate planetfall ..."

■ ■ ■

After the Rebels unloaded the *Lifeline*, Tawn and her commander took them to the base as the others moved the crates. It was fairly small, but cleverly hidden in a cave complex. There was just enough room for a small medical facility, bunks for 12, and an ammo dump.

"You have no ships?"

Tawn looked at Purr, then shook her head. "We just harass the Imperials on the planet we're assigned to, and try to set up Rebel cells."

Dannen blinked. "What would the Imperials want from here? From what I've seen, this isn't exactly the technological high point of the galaxy."

"The Empire is clearing land and building a garrison base," Tawn

Tawn Porew



Type: Rebel Commando

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 4D, dodge 4D, grenade 3D+2

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 4D, survival 4D+1

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 4D

Hide 4D+2, persuasion 4D+1

STRENGTH 2D+1

Brawling 3D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Blaster repair 3D+1, demolition 3D+2, first

aid 3D, security 3D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), breath mask, camouflage suit

Capsule: Tawn Porew is an example of what happens when the Empire goes too far. Her parents were killed

by stormtroopers for not surrendering their farm and property to the local Imperial governor. She swore she would avenge their deaths. She started by blowing up his office. She tried to blow up his home, then worked her way up to his office. She tried to blow up his home, but was caught as she was sneaking out. Fortunately for her, she was freed by the local underground Rebel cell. Impressed by her skill in demolitions, they smuggled her off the planet to the closest Rebel base for training. She was assigned to Commander Peck's unit six months ago as demolitions expert, and was given the chance to do what she enjoyed — harassing the Imperials.

Porew is a lovely lady with shoulder-length brown hair and smiling blue eyes, although she often has a serious look about her.

said. "We've been sabotaging equipment most of the time, and trying to find out why the Empire wants a base on Rafft."

"Wait a minute. With no ships, what happens if you have to evacuate?"

"We can't," Base Commander Peck told him. "The Rebellion doesn't have enough ships to outfit every outpost, so we are forced to go without."

"That's a little cold-blooded, isn't it?"

"That's how we operate. We knew it would be dangerous, but we believe in what we're fighting for." He looked at Dannen with disdain. "We don't do it for money."

"Now wait a minute ..." Dannen bristled.

Peck turned away from him. "Sergeant Porew, unpack the sup-

plies, verify them, then pay this — person — and get him out of here."

"We'd like to take a look around, sir," Dannen said.

The commander looked at him coldly. "If it's all right," Dannen added hastily.

"Very well. Sergeant, show them around, but keep your eyes on them." With that, he strode off.

"Yes, sir," Tawn answered. She faced Dannen. "He's not big on mercenaries," she said.

"Why not?" Purr asked.

"Mercenaries killed the woman he loved."

Purr's eyes watered. "Oh, no."

Tawn put a hand on Purr's shoulder. "It was a while ago. Come on, I'll show you where you can get something to eat."

Dannen shook his head. "I'll help with the unpacking, if I can."

"Me, too," Purr piped up.

Tawn smiled. It was a lovely sight. "We can use the help. This way." She led them to a small area where the crates had been placed. Three Rebels were already unpacking the supplies. They looked up as Tawn showed Dannen inside.

"This is the man who brought the supplies," she said. "And this is his partner. They want to help unpack."

The taller of the trio smiled. "Good, we can use it. Help me uncrate this bacta tank."

Dannen gave an answering smile. "You got it," he said, moving toward the crate. The man, who said his name was Colin, gave Purr a laser cutter, and showed her how to slice the packing material and not the precious cargo it protected. Once the crate was opened, Dannen, Tawn, and Colin muscled it out. Within half an hour the tank was upright and in its new location.

As they worked, Purr turned to Tawn. "Can I ask you something?"

"What?"

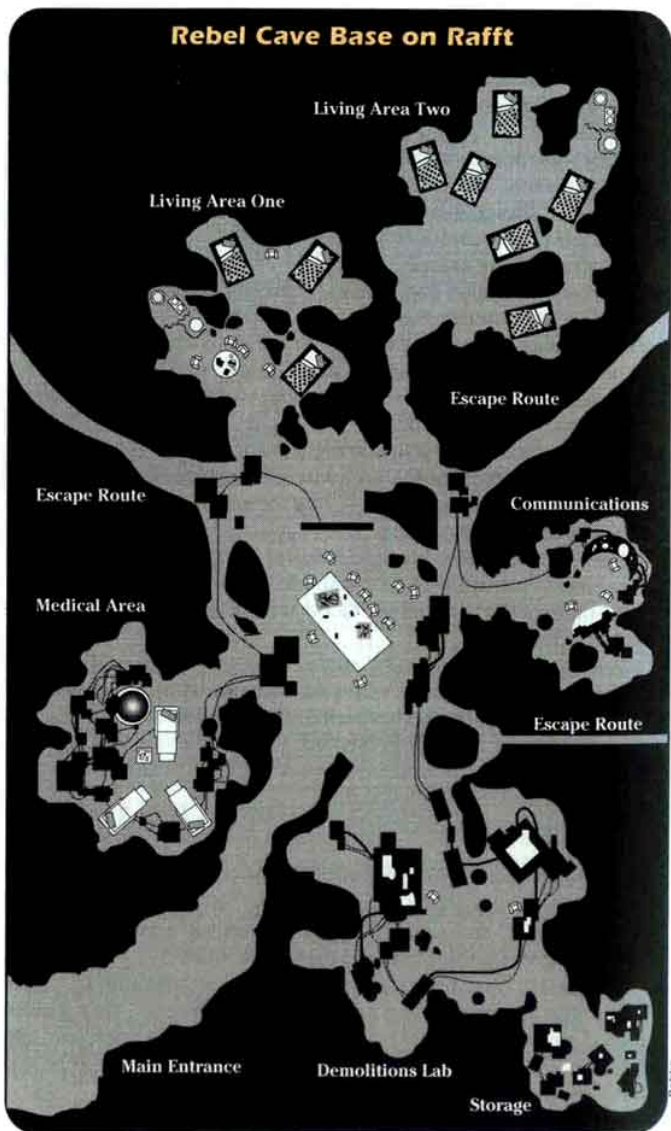
"Why did you join the Rebellion? Why do you fight this Emperor?"

Tawn stopped working to answer Purr. "My parents were killed by the Empire," she said. Her eyes misted for a moment. "They refused to give up their land. So they were killed."

Purr gaped. "And the Emperor said to have them killed?"

"No. The Emperor is the head of the government. He's power-hungry. He wants to control the entire galaxy. He uses fear and terror to keep some planets in line. Others he simply sends in stormtroopers and destroys."

"But why?"



"Well, some planets have resources that the Empire needs, some have strategic value, and some he controls just to keep other planets in line." Tawn grimaced. "One planet, kept under control, will keep other planets — sometimes whole systems — from fighting back. And, since the Jedi are gone, the Rebellion's the best chance the galaxy has."

Purr's brow furrowed. "The Jedi?"

Colin spoke up, his voice full of reverence. "The Jedi Knights were the keepers of the flame of the Old Republic. They knew how to use the Force to fight for justice and truth."

"Yeah, but the Force didn't keep them safe from Vader," Dannen said.

"He betrayed them," Colin answered. "He took their trust and stomped on it."

"That's ancient history, Colin. Believe me, I wish the Jedi were still around, Force or no Force. They would give the Empire a run for its credits." Dannen handed the hydrosponder he was using to Colin, then sighed. "As it stands, though, I think you're fighting a losing battle. The Rebellion doesn't stand much of a chance."

"Is that what you think?" Tawn asked.

"Hey, don't get me wrong. I believe in what you're fighting for. I just want to stay alive."

"By being a smuggler? You have some strange ideas about staying alive, my friend," said Colin.

Colin helped Dannen move the bacta containers to the tank. The Rebel connected a wide hose from the container to the tank's inlet valve, and pressed the white "fill" button on the tank. There was a loud hiss as the valve inside the hose punched its way through the seals, then the gelled fluid began to seep into the holding tank.

Dannen turned to Tawn. "By the way, are you guys really expendable? I thought the Rebellion needed all the people it could get."

"Commander Peck feels we are. He believes in the Rebellion, as we all do, but he's from the old school."

Dannen grinned. "You mean the 'Come on, do you wanna live forever' type?"

"He's a good man," Colin said from behind the tank. "And he leads his people well. We've survived some tough situations without backup or evacuation plans, mostly due to his leadership."

"I'll take your word for it, Colin. But you'll understand if I don't like him too much."

Colin came around from the tank to stand next to Dannen. "That's quite all right — sometimes I don't like him much either." He faced

the tank. "You have no idea how badly we needed this bacta."

"I can guess. You folks have seen a lot of action, huh?"

Tawn answered. "Yes. We disabled a small Imperial shuttle last month." A grin lit her face as she remembered. "Delayed their take-off long enough for us to booby-trap their power cells. They blew up in hyperspace."

"But two men who were preparing the booby-trapped cells died when they exploded prematurely," said a new voice. They all turned to face Commander Peck, who had walked in. "If we'd had this —" he tapped the side of the tank — they would have survived."

Purr's eyes widened. "I'm sorry."

"Why should you be sorry? You're just a delivery service — why should you two care?"

"Look, despite what you may think, we do care," Dannen snarled. "It's just that ..."

Purr, who had been watching the bacta flow into the tank, suddenly tapped Dannen's shoulder. "What's that?" Purr asked, pointing into the bacta.

Colin squinted. "Looks like a piece of equipment." Quickly, he shut off the power, then climbed into the tank. He reached into the jelly and pulled out a fist-sized cube of metal. He hoisted himself out, wiping the gel from the cube.

"What is it?" Dannen asked.

"Don't know. Let's ask our tech expert." Colin tapped his comlink. "Baker to Thinker, do you read?"

"Thinker here, go ahead."

"We've found something in the bacta shipment — want to take a look?"

"On my way," came the reply.

A minute later a short man with brown hair and a sour expression came in. He squinted up at Dannen and Purr for a moment. "You the smugglers?"

Dannen sighed, rolling his eyes. "Yes."

The shorter man smiled. "Thank you for the supplies. We owe you a debt worth far more than what you're being paid."

Dannen, taken aback by this unexpected kindness, simply nodded.

The short man turned to Colin. "Is that it?" he asked, indicating the cube.

Colin surrendered it to his comrade.

Thinker turned the object over in his hands for a few minutes, then looked at his commanding officer. "It's a homing beacon, sir."

Commander Brion Peck



Type: Rebel Commander

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D+2, dodge 4D, firearms 3D+1, melee combat 4D, melee parry 4D+1, missile weapons 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Bureaucracy 5D, languages 4D, streetwise 4D, survival 4D+2, willpower 4D+1

MECHANICAL 2D+1

Repulsorlift operation 3D+1

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Command 5D+1, hide 4D+2, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 3D+1

Brawling 4D+1, stamina 4D

TECHNICAL 2D

Blaster repair 4D+1, demolition 4D+1, first aid 3D, security 4D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 6

Move: 10

Equipment: Heavy blaster pistol (5D), Rebel uniform

Capsule: Peck runs one of the best commando outfits in the Rebellion. Some say that Peck was a commando himself in previous conflicts. Others say he used to be a terrorist on his home planet. Whichever it is, only Peck himself knows for sure, and he doesn't talk about it. Peck's unit has been together for about a year now, and Peck has seen many people pass in and out of it. The most painful loss was that of Beka Lewis, his former second-in-command. He had fallen in love with her, but mercenaries hired by the Empire caught them both when they were on leave. The mercenaries killed her before he could stop them. Since then, he has a strong dislike for those who, in his opinion, are only in it for the money.

Peck is an older man, tall and thin, with graying hair and a stern demeanor.

Quote: "People, I have a job for you."

"What?" Dannen said, incredulous.

Peck's eyes widened as he looked at Thinker. "You mean that this ... man ... has not only brought in medical supplies, he's brought in a blasted *homing beacon*?"

Colin looked dazed. "A homing beacon?"

Peck drew his blaster and whirled to face Dannen. "You scum. And I thought you were helping us. I thought that maybe I had been wrong, and that you have honor after all. How much are they paying you, bounty hunter?"

Dannen paled. "You think I did it?"

Peck glared at Dannen. "You knew we couldn't evacuate. You set us up, didn't you? Thanks to you, the Empire will be here soon!"

"No, I didn't! I swear I didn't know!"

Colin spoke up. "He didn't know, sir. He couldn't have known."

Peck spun to face Colin. "Why not?"

"Because the bacta case still had the original factory triple seals. He couldn't have inserted the homing beacon and kept the seals intact. He's just as much a victim as we are."

Peck considered this, lowering his blaster, then turned to Thinker. "What's the range of this beacon?"

"Short-range, probably in-system," Thinker replied. "We have an hour, maybe two."

Krell must've known, Dannen thought to himself. But why? Why would he set me up?

Another Rebel came running in. "Sir," he said, saluting Peck. "Report from the settlement: the Imperials are here on Rafft. Ashe reports a small squad of scout troopers in the settlement. Communications have already been severed."

"We'll never scatter in time!" Tawn said.

"Well, we can destroy the base, but we're expendable, Sergeant."

Purr touched Dannen's shoulder. He met her gaze, read the question in her eyes. He nodded to her, then looked back at Peck. "No, you're not," he said.

Peck's face reddened. "Now listen here, smuggler ..."

"No, you listen, Commander," Dannen exploded. "You may think you're expendable, but there's always a chance to escape. I think I have a way to get you all out of here ... provided, of course, that ..."

"... That you get paid, of course," Peck interrupted him.

"No," Dannen countered, "provided that you have someplace in mind to go. Is there somewhere?"

"We don't have a ship, though," Colin said.

"No, but I do," Dannen answered. "It'll be a tight fit, and it'll be necessary supplies only, but I can manage if you all move fast, taking only what you need. Within an hour we all can be gone." He turned to Peck. "What do you say, Commander?"

Peck examined Dannen for a moment. "Let's get moving," he ordered.

Dannen turned to his partner. "Purr, get things started; we're leaving in an hour."

Peck caught his arm. "Why are you doing this? You're not getting paid to risk your life for us."

"That's true, Commander, I'm not."

"Then, why?" Thinker asked.

Dannen turned to the smaller man. "Because you have no choice," he said quietly. "And because it's the right thing to do."

• • •

Dannen had been correct. It was a tight fit, trying to squeeze 12 people and their equipment into the *Lifeline*. The cargo hold was stuffed to capacity, and both Dannen and Purr had to share their quarters with two other people each. But they were ready to lift off within an hour, just as Dannen had promised.

Tawn was worried, though. "Can you take off with all these people on board?"

"Sure we can," Dannen reassured her. "This is a YT-1300. The cargo capacity is about a hundred metric tons. If she can handle

Lifeline

Craft: Corellian YT-1300 Transport

Type: Stock light freighter

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 26.7 m

Skill: Space Transports: YT-1300 Transports

Crew: 1 to 2

Crew Skill: see Dannen Lifeline

Passengers: 6

Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons

Consumables: 2 months

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2

Hyperdrive Backup: x12

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 1D

Space: 4

Atmosphere: 480; 800 kmh

Hull: 4D

Shields: 1D

Sensors:

Passive: 10/0D

Scan: 25/1D

Search: 40/2D

Focus: 2/3D

Weapons:

One Laser Cannon

Fire Arc: Turret

Crew: 1

Skill: Starship Gunnery

Scale: Starfighter

Fire Control: 2D

Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300/1.2/2.5 km

Damage: 4D

that, she can handle this."

Peck came up to them. "We are all ready. The coordinates for our new location are on this mem-stik," he said, handing it to Dannen.

"You still don't trust me, do you, Commander?"

"That has nothing to do with it," Peck sniffed. "I simply don't want any mistakes."

"Don't worry, Commander, I'll get you there. You have my word."

Peck snorted. "We'll see," was all he'd say.

Dannen sat down in the pilot's chair and looked over at Purr. "Okay, here we go," he said, powering up the ship. Slowly, the *Lifeline* lifted off and made for the open sky.

Shortly after they cleared atmosphere, Dannen slid the mem-stik into the nav computer. He turned to Peck, who was seated right behind him. "Okay, the computer's reading your coordinates, Commander. As soon as I'm lined up on the correct vector, we're on our way."

Suddenly, cannon fire rocked the ship. The *Lifeline* tilted dangerously to the left, throwing Purr out of her seat.

Dannen slapped the shield activator and checked the sensors. "We have company," he said.

"So it seems," Peck said. "You did set us up, didn't you?"

"No, I didn't," Dannen retorted, "and if you want proof, you'll find they'll kill me just as readily as they'll kill you." Another blast shook the ship, but this time the shields held.

Dannen glanced at Peck. "See what I mean?"

He checked the computer readout, then grabbed the hyperdrive activator levers. "Here we go!" he shouted, the pulled back on the levers sharply. The ship stuttered ... then stalled.

"Damn," Dannen said.

"What's wrong?" Tawn asked. Dannen flipped switches, then peered at a screen. "That first blast must have damaged the hyperdrive."

"I'll fix it," Purr said, running out the door toward the engineering hatch.

Tawn tapped his shoulder. "Can she fix it?"

Dannen paused, then nodded. "If she can't, no one can," he added. "In the meantime, let's give these guys a run for their credits." With that, he barrel rolled to the right, while checking the sensors.

Suddenly, a large shadow passed over the canopy. Tawn looked for the cause and gasped. "An Imperial Star Destroyer," she whispered.

"Yep," Dannen confirmed. "Looks like they want you guys really

bad."

Tawn turned to Peck. "It's the *Engager*, Commander." She chuckled. "I guess Dalton's still unhappy about his face."

"What about his face?" Dannen asked.

"Captain Dalton was caught in one of our traps a while back," Peck answered. "It cut his face up rather badly."

Dannen winced. "Ouch. No wonder he's upset."

"Rumor is he won't get the scar fixed until we're captured and executed. He uses his disfigurement to inspire those under his command."

"Actually, sir, I think it's an improvement," Tawn grinned.

"Perhaps, Sergeant. Can you outrun them, Lifehold?"

"Maybe, maybe not, Commander. But there's one thing this ship can do that theirs can't, and that's a maneuver. Hold tight, everyone," he said, whipping the ship into a sharp bank.

"You see, Commander," Dannen continued as the commander picked himself off the floor, "it doesn't matter if I can outrun her, it's a matter of whether I can evade their tractor beams. To do that, I have to out-fly her long enough for Purr to fix the hyperdrive."

"Which reminds me ..." He reached over and flicked a switch. "Purr, how bad is the damage?"

"Not too bad," came the reply. "I can fix it, but I need parts."

"Do what you have to do, Purr, just do it fast!"

"Don't worry, Dannen, I'll do it fast."

Dannen shut off the comlink. "Now, we wait," he said.

A turbolaser blast exploded just in front of him, and he banked straight up. "And fly," he added.

"I hope this mechanic of yours is good enough, Lifehold," Peck grumbled.

"Relax, Commander, she knows what ..." At that moment, the main cabin lights went out. A split second later, the emergency lights came on, bathing the room in a red glow. "... She's doing," he finished.

"Are you sure?" Peck said sardonically.

Dannen pressed the comlink. "Purr, the ship lights just went out!"

"I know, I needed parts."

"From the lighting system?" Tawn asked incredulously.

"We're dead," Peck commented.

"With all due respect, Commander," Dannen growled, rolling the ship as he did, "shut up."

For the next few minutes, Dannen tried every trick he knew and some new ones to keep the *Lifeline* away from the Star Destroyer. He

was right about one thing: the smaller transport was far more agile than the ponderous cruiser. But it still took all he had to keep their distance.

Tawn checked the sensors and noticed with horror that the Star Destroyer had moved closer. "Dannen, we're running out of time!"

"Yeah, I noticed," he grunted. He slapped the comlink button. "Purr, how much longer?"

"Almost done, Dannen ... almost done ... *done!*" As she spoke, Dannen yanked back on the control levers, and the *Lifeline* shot into hyperspace.

Dannen sank back into his chair with a sigh. "See? I told you she could fix it." He glanced around the cabin. "We'll just have to go without lights for a while."

"But how did she do it so fast?" Tawn asked.

"I don't know — I've given up trying to figure out how she does it." He turned and smiled out the canopy. "I'm just glad she does it."

• • •

The *Lifeline* arrived at the Vondarc system four days later. The group rendezvoused with a Rebel cargo frigate making its regular stop to pick up supplies from Alliance sympathizers in the area.

The Rebels from Rafft quickly transferred their gear and effects to the frigate, which was returning to the Rebel sector command base.

On board the frigate, Tawn and Commander Peck escorted Dannen and Purr to their quarters. The Commander, in gratitude, had ordered the repair of the *Lifeline's* hyperdrive, and Dannen didn't hesitate to accept.

The repairs would take all day, however, and rather than stay on their ship, Dannen and Purr joined the Rebels at mealtime and helped them transfer their gear to the cargo frigate.

Halfway through the day, Purr watched as Dannen paced the length of the rec room. "I still can't believe Krell did this!"

"Set you up?"

"Yes, set us up! He was my oldest friend. We'd been through so much together. I can't believe he'd do it."

"Maybe he didn't."

Dannen paused. "You mean, someone else put the tracking beacon in there?"

Purr grimaced. "I have seen such badness with crime lords. They called it ... umm ... treachery?"

"So you think we were both set up — me and Krell?"

"Maybe. Krell did seem like he was glad to see you."

"Yes, he did, didn't he?" Dannen muttered. "But still —"

His musings were cut short by the arrival of Tawn and Peck. Peck, for once, was smiling. "You'll be pleased to know, Captain, that the repairs to your ship have been completed, and you may leave at any time."

"Thank you, Commander. Again, I'd like to thank you for getting it fixed."

Tawn smiled "It's the least we could do. You risked your lives for us, after all." She came over and stood next to him. "Are you sure you can't come with us? You and Purr would make excellent additions to the Rebellion."

Dannen shook his head. "I told you, I'm not ready to commit myself just yet. Besides, I have to get back to Alderaan and talk to Krell." He gazed out the window at the *Lifeline*. "We've got to be going."

"Well, we'll be sorry to see you go —" The commander was interrupted by Colin, who came up and saluted hastily.

Peck returned the salute. "What is it, soldier?"

"Sir, we've just received a report from sector 246."

"And?" Peck prompted when Colin hesitated.

"Sir, they report that ... well ... Alderaan has been destroyed, sir."

"What?" Dannen burst out.

Purr put her arm around Dannen's shoulder, and he gathered her into a tight embrace. "All those people ... all those lives ..." she murmured.

Peck's jaw almost stretched to the floor. "Destroyed? The whole planet?"

"Yes sir, the whole planet. Alderaan's gone, Commander."

"Krell said he'd heard something about a secret project the Empire was working on," Dannen's heart tightened.

"Rebel high command had one or two top operatives on Alderaan," Peck noted. "It's possible Krell was one of them."

"I'd bet the Empire has something to do with Alderaan," Dannen said.

Adventure Idea

After recently joining the Rebel Alliance, the characters give up their life as free-traders and are temporarily assigned to Commander Peck's unit, giving the unit more transport capability. They must sabotage Imperial operations in this sector while evading Captain Dalton and the Star Destroyer *Engager*.

Peck nodded soberly. "I'm sorry about your friend, Lifehold."
 "Thank you, Commander," Dannen said. He glanced down at Purr, who nodded up at him, then faced Peck again. "The Empire has just changed the rules on you guys. I'd like to help even the odds if I can."

Colin gaped. "But I thought —"

Dannen cut him off. "You thought wrong, Colin. So, what do you say, Commander?"

Peck looked at him. "We can't afford to pay you what you're accustomed to."

Dannen approached Peck until their noses almost touched. "Is that what you think this is all about?" he asked, a dangerous glint in his eye. "Really?"

Tawn tried to take his arm, but Dannen wrenched it free. Peck looked distinctly uncomfortable. "I meant that —"

Dannen didn't let it pass. "Do you really think that I do things only for money? That I'm just a mercenary — a man without principles who only believes in the almighty credit?"

Peck held his gaze. "To be honest, yes, that's what I think."

"Okay, then, I'm going to prove you wrong. Right here, and right now." Dannen drew himself to his full height. "I want to join the Rebellion as a transport pilot."

Tawn gasped slightly. "You don't mean that."

"Yes, I do, Tawn. Purr and I have talked about this before. We're both sure."

Peck regarded the younger man. "May I ask why? Because of your friend?"

"No," Dannen replied. "Because of Alderaan. Because of the innocent people. Because if the Empire could do this to one planet, they'll do it to another." He smiled slightly. "But mostly because it's the right thing to do."

Peck nodded, and smiled also. "Very well. Welcome to the Rebel Alliance, Captain Lifehold."



THE VOID TERROR

by Peter Schweighofer

Illustrations by Chris Gossett

The Void Terror is a solitaire adventure for both longtime and recent *Star Wars* gamers, as well as those who have never played a roleplaying game. There are some short rules on how to do certain tasks with your character (experienced *Star Wars* gamers can skip this and go directly to the section marked "Keller's Void"). There's even a sample character for you to try (or use your own).

Gamemasters can use this quick adventure to introduce the rules to new players. It's designed for beginner-level characters.

Your Character: Lady Selnia

The character provided with this solitaire adventure is Lady Selnia Harbright, a young ex-senator. As a character, Lady Selnia is described by a short capsule background and several attributes and skills. Attributes are things you're born with — innate abilities. There are six attributes — *Dexterity*, *Knowledge*, *Mechanical*, *Perception*, *Strength* and *Technical*. Skills are abilities you learn, and they include things like *blaster*, *dodge* and *brawling*.

Selnia has a die code for every attribute and skill. The die code is the number of six-sided dice you roll when you use the attribute or skill.

Example: Selnia's *Dexterity* is 3D, so if she tries to juggle something, her player rolls three dice and adds the rolls together.

If there is a +1 or a +2 after the "D," add that number to your total. For now don't worry what actions every attribute and skill covers — this adventure tells you when and what to roll.

All skills begin with the same die code as their respective attribute. Some are improved: Selnia has increased skill in *blaster*, *dodge*, *planetary systems*, *starship gunnery*, *command*, *con* and *brawling*. There are many other skills than those Selnia begins with — those listed here are the ones she has improved.

Don't worry about the listings for Force Points, Character Points and Move. These are stats used in the roleplaying game which are not necessary to play this adventure. They are provided here in case you wish to use this character in other *Star Wars* roleplaying adventures.

How Selnia Does Things

The gamemaster (or in this case, the adventure notes) assigns a difficulty number to the task a character is trying to complete — like shooting a blaster at stormtroopers, flying a starship, or fixing the hyperdrive. If your roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty number, you succeed. If it's lower, you fail.

Example: Selnia wants to know if the atmosphere on Axtia is breathable. Her *planetary systems* skill is 5D. The gamemaster says the difficulty number is 15. Selnia's player rolls five dice and gets 18. Selnia remembers that Humans require a breath mask in Axtia's atmosphere.

You now know enough about the rules to start playing. But a roleplaying game is more than rules — roleplaying games are really about roleplaying and storytelling. Playing this solitaire adventure will give you a feel for the game.

■ Lady Selnia Harbright



Type: Young Senatorial
DEXTERITY 3D
 Blaster 4D, dodge 4D
KNOWLEDGE 4D
 Planetary systems 5D
MECHANICAL 2D+2
 Starship gunnery 3D+2
PERCEPTION 3D+1
 Command 4D+1, con 4D+1
STRENGTH 3D
 Brawling 4D
TECHNICAL 2D
 Move: 10

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Equipment: Comlink, hold-out blaster (3D damage), stylish clothing, 1,000 credits

Capsule: For three centuries your family served the Republic. Your family has selflessly sacrificed for the good of the state and society. You have served loyally and well, and because of it, the citizens of your home planet of Salliche are loyal to your house. Since the Empire was established, your family has tried to fend off its evil ways, to hold the Emperor to his promise to promote the public good. Even now, you are reluctant to turn against the galactic government which your family helped establish so many years ago.

Yet you have no choice. The Empire has truly become a tyranny. Your home planet is occupied by stormtroopers. If civilization is to be saved, you must act now. Your family will provide leadership to the Rebellion, as once it did to the Republic.

You are intelligent, confident and energetic. You are more interested in getting things done than in theory. Sometimes others are awed by your lineage, and you are proud of it; yet you do not consider yourself class conscious. Great men and women come from all walks of life, and everyone can contribute to the Rebel Alliance.

Keller's Void

The Rebel Alliance always needs supplies. You were sent to Droecil to help the local Rebel cell divert some medical supplies from an Imperial stock depot. You contracted freighter captain Roark Garnet to haul the cargo to a collection site in the Calus system. Garnet and his co-pilot, Hawk Carrow, own the *Dorian Discus*, an inconspicuous tramp freighter.

You were just loading the last of the medical supplies into Captain Garnet's ship when the stormtroopers burst into the docking bay. So the captain blasted off immediately, with all the cargo and one extra passenger ... you.

It was a pretty quiet trip. Then the captain decided to take a shortcut by jumping through Keller's Void. Everything went fine, until the hyperdrive cut out in the middle of the void ...

"Looks like we pulled out of hyperspace just before we slammed through an asteroid field," Captain Garnet says. "It's not on any of the charts." There's a heavy thunk outside against the hull. "Great. I hate asteroids. Why don't you get yourself up into the topside gun and blast any chunk of rock that comes close enough to hit us. I'm shutting down some of the other main systems so Hawk and I can check out the hyperdrive, make sure nothing's wrong."

Ready?

1

As you head toward the gun turret, you try to recall what you know about Keller's Void. You can do this by rolling your *planetary systems* skill of 5D. Roll five dice and add them up. Recalling this information is a Moderate task with a difficulty of 15.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 7.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 12.

2

Flipping on your tracking computer, you don't see any asteroids from the distant field heading toward the *Dorian Discus*. Everything's all clear. Go to 4.

3

Flipping on your tracking computer, you don't see any asteroids from the distant field heading toward the *Dorian Discus*. But wait ... something's moving near the long range sensor dish! Peering through the viewport, it looks like some black-scaled humanoid. And it's

fiddling with a black box it's attached to the hull near the sensor dish!

- If you tell Captain Garnet of the mysterious figure, go to 5.
- If you want to try to shoot the figure with the ship's blaster cannon, go to 9.

4

You check the weapon's tracking computer: still all clear. You look back out through the viewport ... and see a monstrously ugly face staring back at you from outside! It's got huge fangs, bulbous eyes and a warty snout. You scream, and the face disappears.

- If you call for Captain Garnet, go to 5.
- If you want to see if that "thing" is still out there, go to 8.

5

"Captain Garnet!" you call over the ship's intercom. "There's something out there on the ship's hull! I think it's alive."

"Let me check the sensors ..." Captain Garnet says. After a moment, he replies, "Nope. Nothing on the sensors. Everything's clear around the ship. Maybe you're seein' things. Happens if you're not used to space travel."

You click off the intercom. Go to 8.

6

You climb up into the gun turret and peer out over the hull into space. You're scanning for any asteroids heading toward you, and anything out of the ordinary, so you roll your *Perception* attribute of 3D+1. Roll three dice and add one. To spot anything is an Easy task (with a difficulty of 10).

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 3.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 2.

7

You remember Keller's Void is named for the trader who discovered it as a shortcut between the Wroona and Calus systems. It's a void, so it's not supposed to have an asteroid field running through it. You do recall the nearby uninhabited Udine system has a high concentration of asteroids.

You continue on to the gun mount. Go to 6.

8

You peer out the viewport, trying to find the creature on the hull. You're certain it's out there somewhere. There. The thing is now at an exterior maintenance port. It seems to be clawing at the components inside! The creature rips out a handful of wires, then turns to stare directly at you! It watches you with its bulbous eyes over its warty snout.

- If you warn Captain Garnet of the terrible creature and have written "Sensors Blasted," go to 11.
- If you warn Captain Garnet of the terrible creature, go to 10.
- If you want to try to shoot the figure with the ship's blaster cannon, go to 14.

9

To fire the blaster cannon, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. Since the creature is partially hidden by the long range sensor dish, this is going to be a Difficult shot (with a difficulty number of 17). If you miss, you might blow up the sensor dish. Roll three dice and add two to the total.

- If your roll is 17 or higher, go to 15.
- If your roll is 16 or less, go to 13.
- If you decide the shot is too risky and want to inform Captain Garnet of the intruder on the hull, go to 5.

10

"Look, I'm tellin' you nothin's out there," Captain Garnet replies. "Sensors show nothing. You haven't been dipping into my stash of Wroonian ale, have you?"

- If you want to go down to the cockpit and check out the sensors yourself, go to 17.
- If you want to shut off the intercom and watch the creature through the viewport, go to 16.

11

"Look, I'm tellin' you nothin's out there," Captain Garnet replies. "You haven't been dipping into my stash of Wroonian ale, have you?"

You shut off the intercom and watch the creature through the viewport. Go to 16.

12

You remember Keller's Void is named for the trader who discovered it as a shortcut between the Wroona and Calus systems. Ha, some shortcut.

You continue on to the gun mount. Go to 6.

13

The blaster cannon flashes and blasts the sensor dish into thousands of tiny glowing particles. Oops. You don't see any signs of the creature.

"What was that?" cries Captain Garnet. "Are we under attack?"

You explain you were shooting at a strange creature fiddling with a black box near the sensor dish.

"Nice job," he says. "You've just fried our long range sensors and our short range sensors. The blast shunted power right through the sensor computer. Thanks."

"But I saw something out there!" you plead.

"Maybe you're seein' things. Happens if you're not used to space travel. Look, if something was near the sensor dish when you blasted it, it's probably gone. Not that we can tell ... Look, try shooting the asteroids, not my ship."

Write "Sensors Blasted" and go to 8.

14

To fire the blaster cannon, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. This is a Moderate shot (with a difficulty number of 15). Roll three dice and add two to the total.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 18.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 22.

15

The blaster cannon flashes and blasts the creature from the sensor dish. Nice shot. Whatever it was, it's gone now.

Go to 25.

16

You watch the strange creature move from the exterior maintenance port to the aft airlock. After fiddling with the controls, the hatch opens and it enters the ship!

- If you warn Captain Garnet of the intruder, go to 21.

- If you leave the weapons station and run to the airlock, go to 27.

17

You storm into the cockpit. Captain Garnet is leaning over the nav computer, apparently calculating another hyperspace jump. "Let me see those sensors," you say, pushing your way into the co-pilot's seat. You notice a small red light flashing. "What's that?"

"That's the internal systems monitor for the aft airlock. Looks like it was opened and is cycling. Maybe there is something wrong. Go check it out ... I'm working on astrogation coordinates to get us out of here ..."

You leave the cockpit and run to the airlock. *Go to 27.*

18

The blaster cannon flashes and blasts the creature from the exterior maintenance port. Nice shot. Whatever it was, it's gone now.

Go to 25.

19

You listen carefully. Someone has powered up the ship and engaged the ion drives! You also here someone pacing out in the corridor near the cabin door: a guard!

- If you untie Captain Garnet and Hawk, go to 46.
- If you try to trick the guard into letting you out, go to 51.

20

You fire your blaster at the creature. Since you are much closer, this is a Very Easy shot with a difficulty number of 5. Your *blasters* skill is 4D: roll four dice.

- If your roll is 5 or higher, you hit the creature. It slumps to the ground, stunned. *Go to 30.*
- If your roll is 4 or less, your shot goes wild. The creature's fist comes down on your head and you are knocked unconscious. *Go to 41.*

21

"Look, there's nothing out there to come in," Garnet says. "Wait a minute. I've got an internal systems monitor saying the aft airlock was opened and is cycling. Maybe there is something wrong. Go check it out. I'm working on astrogation coordinates to get us out of here ..."

You leave the weapons station and run to the airlock. *Go to 27.*

22

The blaster cannon flashes and hits the hull near the maintenance port. The creature scurries along the hull ... toward the aft airlock.

"What are you doing?" Captain Garnet cries over the intercom. "Don't shoot the ship, just the asteroids!"

"But I saw something out there!" you plead.

"Maybe you'd better come down here into the cockpit," Captain Garnet suggests, "away from the blaster cannon."

Go to 17.

23

The creature swings a huge fist at you. Rather than get hit, you decide it's best to dodge. The creature's *brawling* skill is 4D. Roll four dice for the creature. Your *dodge* skill is 4D. Roll four dice and compare them with the creature's *brawling* score.

- If your *dodge* roll is the same as or more than the creature's *brawling* roll, you jump out of the way and may fire your blaster. *Go to 20.*
- If your *dodge* roll is lower than the creature's *brawling* roll, you are knocked unconscious. *Go to 41.*

24

You are free of your bindings! Someone tied you up with a striped sash. You listen for a moment. Roll your *Perception* attribute of 3D+1. Roll three dice and add one. This is an Easy task (with a difficulty of 10).

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 19.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 42.

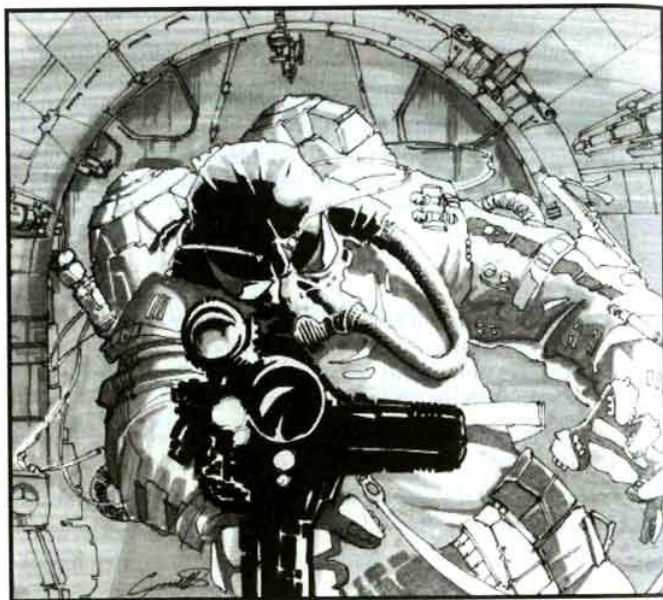
25

"Looks like the hyperdrive is okay," you hear Hawk declare over the intercom.

"Great," Captain Garnet replies. "I'll start calculating hyperspace coordinates."

You continue to scan the area for asteroids. Roll your *Perception* attribute of 3D+1. Roll three dice and add one. To spot anything is an Easy task (with a difficulty of 10).

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 32.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 29.



26

To fire the blaster cannon, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. This is an Easy shot (with a difficulty number of 10). Roll three dice and add two to the total.

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 31.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 28.

27

You remove your blaster from its holster as you head for the aft airlock hatch. You're determined to capture this creature alive, so you set your blaster to stun. When you arrive at the inner hatch, the creature steps out, its blaster rifle raised and ready. It's expecting you! You prepare to fire.

The creature shoots back. The creature's *blaster* skill is 4D. The difficulty for both shots is 10. Roll four dice for the creature. Your blaster skill is 4D. Roll four dice for yourself. Whoever gets the highest roll shoots first.

- If you both roll 9 or less, you both miss. The creature advances and

tries to knock you over. Go to 23.

- If the creature shoots first, and rolls 10 or more, you're hit before you get your shot off. All goes dark as the creature fires its blaster rifle into you. Go to 41.

- If you shoot first, and your roll is 10 or more, you hit the creature. It slumps to the ground, stunned. Go to 30.

28

The blaster cannon flashes and hits the hull near the intruders, but the two figures continue scurrying toward the airlock hatch.

"What are you doing?" Captain Garnet cries over the intercom.

"We've got intruders," you reply. "They're heading for the airlock."

"Right. Let's see what happens when I kick on the ion drive," Captain Garnet says. The ship lurches as the ion drive fires up and propels the *Dorian Discus* away from the asteroid field. The two men spin away from the hull, floating in space. Go to 34.

29

Everything looks clear. Thunk. Thunk. Two more things have hit the hull. Go to 33.

30

You step back and examine the stunned creature lying on the deck. It's no frightening creature at all! The face is a stylized pressure helmet: the eyes are sensor units, the snout and ferocious teeth are part of the breather apparatus. The creature's black skin is a textured space suit! It even has a jet pack strapped to its back!

You unlatch the helmet and yank it off. There's a man underneath. Looks like an unsavory pirate or outlaw.

"There was someone in the airlock," you triumphantly declare to Captain Garnet. "Maybe he was trying to board us to spacejack the ship."

"No matter," Garnet says over the intercom. "We're ready to jump to hyperspace. Hang on to your pants!"

From the engineering compartment you hear the disappointing whine of the hyperdrives failing. "It's not my fault!" Garnet cries. "Hawk, what's the matter."

The intruder must have done something to the hyperdrives while crawling around on the hull. "I think our intruder might have tampered with the hyperdrive from outside," you tell Captain Garnet.

"Possible," he says. "Hawk, can you find the problem and reroute

the hyperdrive command systems?"

"Sure thing, Roark."

You secure the intruder and lock him in one of the cabins.

There are two more loud thunks on the hull.

"Better get back to the gun and see if those are asteroids or more intruders," Captain Garnet suggests. "Just watch where you shoot."

You run back and strap yourself into the gun turret. *Go to 33.*

31

The blaster cannon flashes and blows both men off the hull. Nice shot. *Go to 34.*

32

You notice two small flashes out in space. Soon two figures become visible; men in black space suits maneuvering with jet packs. They are heading straight for the *Dorian Discus*.

- *If you blast them, go to 39.*
- *If you tell Captain Garnet you've got guests, go to 35.*

33

Two more creatures — no, they're actually men in black space suits — have landed on the *Dorian Discus*' hull. They quickly scramble for the aft airlock.

- *If you blast them, go to 26.*
- *If you tell Captain Garnet you've got guests, go to 37.*

34

As the *Dorian Discus* prepares for the hyperspace jump, you see a bulk freighter with a few extra guns pull out of a loose orbit within the asteroid field — possibly a pirate ship!

"I see her," Captain Garnet says. "Say good-bye to our would-be spacejacks." Garnet engages the hyperdrive, the stars stretch, and the pirates are left behind in Keller's Void.

Go to 40

35

"We've got company," you say into the intercom. "Two men in black space suits and jet packs. They're heading for the ship."

"Let's see what happens when I kick on the ion drive," Captain Garnet says. The ship lurches as the ion drive fires up and propels

the *Dorian Discus* away from the asteroid field. The two men ignite their jet packs again, but they can't catch up.

Go to 34.

36

The blaster cannon flashes and one of the men explodes from a direct hit. The other one fires his jet pack and begins to back away from the *Dorian Discus*. *Go to 34.*

37

"We've got company," you say into the intercom. "Two men in black space suits. They're heading for the aft airlock."

"Let's see what happens when I kick on the ion drive," Captain Garnet says. The ship lurches as the ion drive fires up and propels the *Dorian Discus* away from the asteroid field. The two men spin away from the hull, floating in space.

Go to 34.

38

The blaster cannon flashes, but your shot misses. They land on the *Dorian Discus*' hull and quickly scramble for the aft airlock.

- *If you blast them, go to 26.*
- *If you tell Captain Garnet you've got guests, go to 37.*

39

To fire the blaster cannon at the approaching men, you use your *starship gunnery* skill of 3D+2. This is an Easy shot (with a difficulty number of 10). Roll three dice and add two to the total.

- *If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 36.*
- *If your roll is 9 or less, go to 38.*

40

The *Dorian Discus* arrives on Calus and you safely deliver your supplies to the Rebel Alliance. Good work! Despite your "short cut" through Keller's Void, you've managed to get your cargo into Rebel hands in time to save the lives of many brave soldiers.

41

You wake up with your hands tied behind your back. You're locked in a cabin with Captain Garnet and Hawk. You've been space-

jack by pirates! There's a chance you can wriggle your hands free from your binding. This is an Easy *Dexterity* task (the binding was tied hastily) with a difficulty of 10. Roll three dice.

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 24.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 45.

42

You listen carefully. Someone has powered up the ship and engaged the ion drives! You're definitely going somewhere.

- If you untie Captain Garnet and Hawk, go to 46.
- If you try to open the cabin door, go to 53.

43

You dash to the cockpit. Sitting in the pilot's and co-pilot's seats are two more pirates. One turns around and sees you, then begins drawing his blaster pistol! You fire. The pirate's *blaster* skill is 4D. The difficulty for both shots is 10. Roll four dice for the pirate. Your *blaster* skill is 4D. Roll four dice for yourself. Whoever gets the highest roll shoots first.

- If you both roll 9 or less, you both miss. The pirate advances and tries to punch you. Go to 48.
- If the pirate shoots first, and rolls 10 or more, you're hit before you get your shot off. All goes dark as the pirate fires its blaster rifle into you. Go to 58.
- If you shoot first, and your roll is 10 or more, you hit the pirate. He slumps to the ground, stunned. Go to 44.

44

You train your blaster on the other pirate. He puts his hands on his head and surrenders. Captain Garnet and Hawk, who managed to free themselves, rush into the cockpit and regain control of the *Dorian Discus*. "Good work," they say. You've managed to capture the infamous pirate Black Jack! When you turn him in on Calus, the three of you get 2,000 credits each for his capture. Go to 40.

45

You don't manage to slip out of the bindings. Captain Garnet and Hawk are still stunned. Wait! You notice that Captain Garnet has a

knife concealed in a boot sheath. But can you reach it and free yourself? This is another Easy *Dexterity* task with a difficulty of 10. Roll three dice.

- If your roll is 10 or higher, go to 24.
- If your roll is 9 or less, go to 49.

46

Moving quickly, you untie the sashes binding Captain Garnet's and Hawk's wrists. Hawk wakes up while you're untying him. "You won't get anything out of me! I'll take this ship back one way or another ... oh, it's you. Sorry, I thought you were a pirate."

Hawk's cries wake Captain Garnet up. "Ow," he says, rubbing the back of his head. "I hate being stunned."

The cabin door opens and a red-haired woman with a wry smile and a blaster rifle enters. "You'd better get to liking it if you're trying to escape," she says. "But that won't happen while I'm on guard!" She stuns Captain Garnet, Hawk and you with her blaster rifle. Go to 50.

47

Rising and standing near the cabin door, you begin screaming. "Help! Fire! Somebody let us out of here, the cabin's caught fire!"

The cabin door opens and a red-haired woman wearing a flashy tunic and boots enters. She's lowered her blaster rifle. The time to strike is now! Using your *brawling* skill of 4D, this is a Moderate task (a difficulty of 15). Roll four dice.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 52.
- If your roll is 14 or lower, go to 57.

48

The pirate swings his fist at you. Rather than get hit, you decide it's best to dodge. The pirate's *brawling* skill is 4D. Roll four dice for the pirate. Your *dodge* skill is 4D. Roll four dice and compare them with the pirate's *brawling* score.

- If your *dodge* roll is the same as or more than the pirate's *brawling* roll, you jump out of the way and may fire your blaster. Go to 54.
- If your *dodge* roll is lower than the pirate's *brawling* roll, you are knocked unconscious. Go to 58.

49

You make a little noise shuffling over to Captain Garnet, then cry out a little when you accidentally cut yourself. You're almost free of your bindings when the cabin door opens and a red-haired woman with a wry smile and a blaster rifle enters. "Trying to escape, eh?" she asks. "Not while I'm on guard!" She stuns you with her blaster rifle. *Go to 50.*

50

Despite several attempts, you are unable to escape these pirates. Perhaps you can escape when you arrive at their hidden base. But that's a tale for another day ...

51

Tricking the guard is a Moderate task using your *con* skill of 4D+1. The difficulty number is 15. Roll four dice and add one.

- If your roll is 15 or higher, go to 47.
- If your roll is 14 or less, go to 56.

52

Your fist swings into the pirate's face, and the woman crumples to the ground, stunned. You hear voices coming from the cockpit.

- If you grab the pirate's blaster rifle and head to the cockpit, go to 43.
- If you untie Captain Garnet and Hawk, go to 55.

53

No matter how hard you press the control panel, the cabin door does not open. "Don't try escaping," you hear a voice say from the other side, obviously a pirate guard. "If you try anything funny, I'll blast you." *Go to 50.*

54

You fire your blaster at the pirate. Since you are much closer, this is a Very Easy shot with a difficulty number of 5. Your *blaster* skill is 4D: roll four dice.

- If your roll is 5 or higher, you hit the pirate. He slumps to the ground, stunned. *Go to 44.*
- If your roll is 4 or less, your shot goes wild. The pirate's fist comes down on your head and you are knocked unconscious. *Go to 58.*

55

Moving quickly, you untie the sashes binding Captain Garnet's and Hawk's wrists. Hawk wakes up while you're untying him. "You won't get anything out of me! I'll take this ship back one way or another ... oh, it's you. Sorry, I thought you were a pirate."

Hawk's cries wake Captain Garnet up. "Ow," he says, rubbing the back of his head. "I hate being stunned."

Hawk's cries have also alerted one of the pirates in the cockpit who suddenly appears in the doorway. He kicks his pirate friend's blaster rifle out into the corridor, out of your reach. "Nice try at escaping," he says as he stuns you all. *Go to 50.*

56


"Uh, say there," you begin, "Can we have some food or something; I'm starving."

"No way," the pirate outside says. "I'm not giving you any chance at escaping. Not during my watch." *Go to 50.*

57

You swing and knock the blaster rifle out of the pirate's hands, but the woman quickly recovers, swings at you and knocks you unconscious. "Hah!" she says. "Thought you could escape from me." *Go to 50.*

58

You wake up again in the cabin with Captain Garnet and Hawk. This time you're tied up a bit better and there are two guards at the door. *Go to 50.* 

JOIN THE TROUBLESHOOTERS!

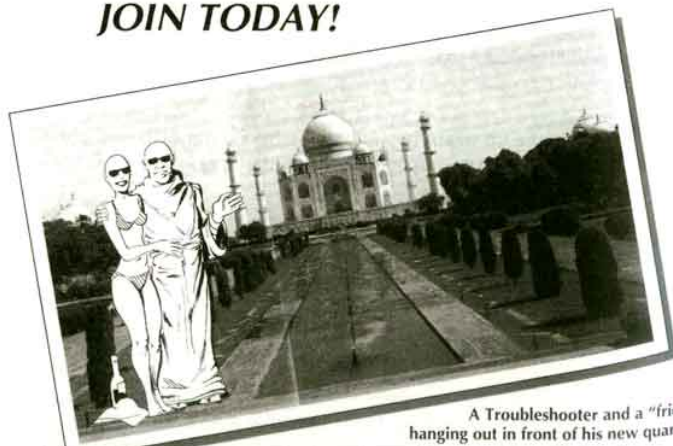
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OUTLAW BATTLE ARMOR

By Philip Tobin

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

"General Geen, General Geen, tell us a story of the ancient wars!" The children clamored around the old veteran as he walked across Salliche's forum. Geen stopped and leaned heavily on his cane.

August, 1994

Star Wars Adventure Journal • 237

"Yes, yes, but only a short tale."

The children cheered, following Geen to a nearby stone bench where he sat himself down and began his tale.

"Many years ago, when my grandfather's grandfather was a general in the Old Republic, there was a great marauding band of raiders who destroyed entire towns, killed many innocent people and stole riches beyond belief. They destroyed the entire spaceport on Wroona, and robbed the Vaults of Narner. Nobody knew who these terrible warriors were, because their faces were hidden behind the cold masks of their battle armor.

"And what terrible battle armor it was. Every arm bristled with blasters, every back had a jet pack strapped to it, and every helmet surveyed the battle with its targeting sensors and tracking computers. Trophies hung from ammunition belts and shoulder armor, and the multicolored breastplates were blaster-scored from numerous battles. Nobody was safe from these vile marauders."

"How did they stop these armored raiders?" one child asked.

"Ah, I was just getting to that," Geen replied with a gnarled smile. "Despite all their great armor and powerful weapons, these mercenaries were completely destroyed by a lone Jedi Knight called Soonis. Which only goes to prove that outward appearances can often be deceiving ..."

The white armor of the stormtroopers, the varied armor of unsavory bounty hunters, and the heavily armed suits of Imperial spacetroopers are all examples of protective battle suits in the *Star Wars* universe. Many suits of armor serve to inspire fear in opponents besides protecting their users from battle damage. While they are difficult to acquire — and some, like the suits of powered armor, are extremely rare — suits of battle armor are sought after by mercenaries, would-be bounty hunters and others who seek military might.

Armor in *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* can offer player characters extra protection in battle or on special missions. Heavily armored adversaries can make challenging gamemaster characters. Ancient or rare suits of armor could be used as objects to be retrieved or stolen during an adventure.

Armored suits vary greatly, and the skills necessary to use any suit vary with the suit being worn, depending on the suit's weapons, sensors and other gear.

Armor weapons is a *Dexterity* skill used to fire blasters and other firearms mounted on the armor.

Melee combat is used whenever a character in armor engages in melee combat even if the melee weapon is a part of an armored suit, such as a blade concealed in a gauntlet. Some types of powered armor give a bonus to melee damage.

Missile weapons is used when using a missile weapon incorporated into a suit of armor. Missile weapons include mini-proton torpedo launchers and grenade launchers.

Brawling is used when striking an opponent while unarmed. Powersuits that boost the wearer's strength sometimes do additional brawling damage.

Powersuit operation allows a character to move and maneuver while wearing a powered suit of armor. Characters would also use this skill instead of *dodge* when trying to dodge while wearing power armor. In many instances *powersuit operation* behaves like *starfighter piloting* does — the skill is used to "pilot" a suit of power armor, since power armor is a form of personal vehicle. *Powersuit operation* is a *Mechanical* based skill, not a *Dexterity* based skill.

Armor Weapons

Both regular armor and power armor can be modified with extra weapons mounted directly on the armor's surface. While typical weapons include various forms of blasters and grenade launchers, many exotic weapons and devices exist to give armor users an extra advantage in combat.

The number of weapons one can mount on a particular suit of armor depends on the style of armor, compact nature of the weapon and power requirements (if any). Generally, one can mount from two to four weapons systems on a suit of armor, not counting jet packs and targeting and sensor packages.

For more ideas about weapons, devices and sensors that can be incorporated into a suit of armor, see the entry on Boba Fett on page 90 of the *Star Wars Movie Trilogy Sourcebook*. Here are some other weapons commonly adapted for armor use.

■ Conner Antipersonnel Net Gun

Model: Conner APNG3

Type: Restraining net gun

Skill: Missile weapons

Ammo: 1

Cost: 750

Availability: 2, R or X

Range: 3-10/19/25

Damage: 5D stun, 5D electrical

Capsule: This gun, often mounted on forearm armor, fires a single net

that can snare a Human-sized opponent. A single line keeps the net attached to the gun after firing. If the net successfully ensnares an opponent the attacker can on following rounds release an electrical charge through the line, into the net and at the target, causing 5D damage. The net gun is a popular option for bounty hunters modifying their armor, although the electrical charge sometimes severely damages or kills captured prey.

An opponent can work free of the net by making an opposed *Strength* roll greater than the stun damage of the net. Replacement nets cost 100 credits.

■ Tangler Gun

Model: Salus Tangler Elite 1

Type: Tangler gun

Skill: Missile weapons

Ammo: 5

Cost: 900

Availability: 3

Range: 5-10/30/60

Damage: 2D, 4D stun damage

Capsule: The tangler gun fires a triple strand of durawire weighted at each of three ends. The spinning wires ensnare opponents, causing 4D stun damage. The impact of the weights causes 2D damage as well. An opponent can work free of the tangler by making an opposed *Strength* roll greater than the stun damage of the tangler.

This weapon is available as a short, wide-barreled sidearm with a folding stock and retractable sight for those who want to use the tangler without having to mount it on armor. An extra clip of five tanglers costs 25 credits.

■ Duo-Flechette Rifle

Model: Salus DF-D1

Type: Flechette rifle

Skill: Armor weapons

Ammo: 5

Cost: 1,000

Availability: 3, R or X

Range: 3-10/30/60

Damage: 5D

Capsule: This gun fires twin cartridges filled with slivered shrapnel flechettes out its stubby double barrel. It is a powerful weapon at short ranges, but is not terribly accurate or effective at longer ranges.

■ Mini-Missile Launcher

Model: SoroSuub Firestorm-1

Type: Personal missile launcher

Skill: Missile weapons

Ammo: 3

Cost: 1,500

Availability: 3, R or X

Range: 3-40/120/400

Blast Radius: 0-2/8/12/20

Damage: 5D/4D/3D/2D

Capsule: This launcher fires missiles with incendiary warheads. The missiles have no guidance system and must be aimed directly at a target. SoroSuub's Fireball missile package is a similar version of the Firestorm-1, but the mini-missiles have small guidance packages which lock onto targets acquired through a targeting sensor package in an armored suit's helmet. Additional mini-missiles cost 100 credits each.

■ Mini-Torpedo Launcher

Model: Mon Cal Defenses Mini-Torpedo Launcher

Type: Mini-torpedo launcher

Skill: Missile weapons

Ammo: 3

Cost: 1,250

Availability: 3, X

Range: 3-30/120/350

Damage: 6D

Capsule: This weapon fires a self-propelled underwater torpedo with an explosive charge that detonates on impact. The torpedo must be aimed at a specific target and will not adjust its course if the target moves. However, the torpedo's firing and guidance systems can be rigged to a sensor tracking package to acquire and follow a particular target with the proper tools and guidance systems components.

Due to its size, this weapon can only be fitted to heavy power armor adapted for use in aquatic environments. Additional torpedoes cost 100 credits each.

■ Electric Field

Model: Corellian Personal Defense "Big Shock"

Type: Electric shock lacing

Cost: 1600

Availability: 3 and X

Damage: 3D

Capsule: The "Big Shock" is a webbed lacing applied to armor surfaces to generate an electrical field that does damage to those touching the wearer. Electrical damage can be delivered if the wearer touches an opponent (tackling or punching him and doing the electrical damage along with brawling damage), or if an opponent strikes the wearer in hand-to-hand or melee combat. The shock is enough to short out the power circuits in most vibro-weapons.

A smaller version of this weapon, known as the shock glove, consists of an armored gauntlet incorporating a power supply. The shock glove does only 1D electrical damage, and costs 500 credits.

Electrical shock lacing must be used on powered armor suits, as normal battle armor cannot fulfill this weapon's power requirements unless fitted with unwieldy generators or power cells.

Since the shock lacing coats the outer surfaces of the armor, it rarely harms the wearer. However, if used in wet conditions, the shock lacing inflicts its damage on the wearer as well as an opponent. In any case, shock lacing applied too close to other powered armor systems like weapons and sensors often short circuits those systems, especially in wet conditions.

Battle Armor Suits

Suits of battle armor — especially heavily armed and modified suits — are not easily found. Typically armor is scavenged from ancient battlefields or purchased and heavily modified with costly weapon and sensor systems. Most bounty hunters don't part with their favorite suits of armor without a fight.

The Empire has outlawed many of the more powerful suits of armor, fearing they would fall into the hands of pirates, criminals and Rebels. Some private corporate security forces have been allowed to maintain special armored guard units. The Empire has looked the other way regarding bounty hunters and armor, as bounty hunters often serve the Empire's purposes in working against criminals and Rebels.

Listed below are several examples of armor suits characters and gamemasters can introduce into their games.

Gladiator

Model: Min-Dal JX4 Gladiator Prototype

Type: Personal battle armor

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: 4, X

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +2D to *Strength* for physical attacks, +1D for energy attacks. Covers head, torso, and arms. No *Dexterity* penalties

Conner Net Gun: stun damage, damage 5D if electrical charge is released, uses *missile weapons* skill, ranges: 3-10/19/25, mounted on left forearm armor.

Vibro-shiv: STR+1D damage, retracts into right gauntlet.

Jet Pack: Has a Move of 100 meters horizontally, 70 meters vertically. Uses *jet pack operation* skill, base difficulty is Easy, modified by obstacles. Has 10 charges, can expend up to two per round.

Capsule: For many years the Soruus system's provincial government sentenced criminals to fight to the death in immense arenas for public sport. Min-Dal's operational prototypes for this model armor were tested in these gladiatorial contests. Although arena security was good, and had been increased — enough to prevent combatants from breaking from custody and harming the spectators — sabotage and a quick diversion gave the criminals wearing these suits an opportunity to escape. Once free, the small group committed atrocious crimes before the Empire stepped in to hunt and destroy most of them.

Public outcry against this incident forced Min-Dal to cancel their armor program. One of the criminals, Morana Fal, evaded capture with two suits, her own and one from a fallen comrade. Currently there is a reward of 10,000 credits for her capture and 3,000 for each intact suit returned to the Min-Dal corporation.

611 Combat Armor

Model: Corellian 611 Combat Armor

Type: Personal battle armor

Cost: 5,000

Availability: 3, F

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +2D to *Strength* for physical attacks, +1D for energy attacks. Covers head and torso. No *Dexterity* penalties.

Capsule: This Corellian suit is one of the most commonly available suits of armor, which makes it very popular among bounty hunters. The 611 protects fewer areas than regular bounty hunter armor, but is more maneuverable. It also comes without any installed weapons. Despite its lack of armaments and antiquated systems, it's much more common than other armor. The suit was originally designed for military engineers to provide them some protection and added strength while working on projects under fire.

One flaw of this particular armor is the weight of the protective material. The armor is light enough to wear, but severely handicaps any efforts at swimming. Add +10 to the difficulty number of any *swimming* rolls made while wearing this armor.

Stalker Armor

Model: Salus Corp Stalker Armor M1-10

Type: Light armor

Adventure Idea

The escaped criminal Morana Fal has been sighted on the planet Lanthrym in the Elrood sector. She is believed to be in the employ of crimelord Boss Kagggle, becoming a very valued enforcer for the crime boss. The characters must find Morana Fal on Lanthrym, and capture the skilled warrior, fighting off Boss Kagggle's other bodyguards and agents along the way. Characters could easily make an enemy of Kagggle should they capture one of his favorite enforcers.

Cost: 8,000

Availability: 3, R

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +2D to *Strength* for physical attacks, +2D for energy attacks, -2D to *Dexterity* and related skills. Covers head, torso, arms and legs.

Heaviness: Due to the suit's weight, the skills *hide*, *sneak* and *swimming* cannot be used while wearing this armor.

Tangler Gun: 4D stun damage, uses *missile weapons* skill, ranges: 5-10/30/60, mounted on right arm.

Duo-Flechette Rifle: 5D damage, uses *armor weapons* skill, ranges: 3-10/30/60, mounted on right forearm armor.

Retractable Blade: STR+2D damage, concealed in right gauntlet.

Sensors: A sensor pod and targeting computer provides +1D to *search*, and +1D to weapons skill rolls.

Capsule: This suit was designed by the Salus Corporation on Rodia for specific use as bounty hunter armor. The suit has since gained much respect in the bounty hunter community because of its versatility. Two configurations are available — one tailored to comfortably fit Rodians, and another designed to fit most generic humanoid body types.

Power Armor

While powersuits are common in the *Star Wars* universe for industrial purposes, armored powersuits bristling with extra sensors and weapons are extremely rare. The ones seen most often are those protecting Imperial spacetroopers and those in the possession of the most infamous bounty hunters. But other combat powersuits exist, although they are extremely difficult to find and are cumbersome to use.

Using servos and hydraulics for powered movement, a powersuit enhances a soldier's natural strength abilities. Power armor is a powersuit armored and armed for combat.

While operational suits of power armor are rare, there are several models that were once widely used. Some of these suits are lost, while modified versions of others are in the possession of bounty hunters and mercenaries.

Several power armor classifications exist, from light to assault. The more powerful a suit of power armor, the more difficult it is to find.

Disadvantages of Power Armor

The many advantages of power armor could lead one to wonder why it isn't more common? For all the advantages, wearing power armor also brings on a number of distinct disadvantages.

Since power armor uses servos and hydraulics for locomotion and increased strength, characters in heavier power armor have a reduced movement speed. The weight of many suits prevents the

user from swimming. Unless a suit is outfitted for underwater propulsion, power armor sinks like a block of permacrete.

Another disadvantage is that a character in power armor becomes a target — people marching around in power armor draw a lot of unwanted attention. Criminals see power armor as a rare item to be stolen and sold for profit, or used to further their own underhanded schemes. Enemies see power armor as a threat to be removed from a battle as quickly as possible. Bounty hunters view those with power armor as competitors who probably rely more on the armor's systems than their own skills.

Another disadvantage is the enormous cost to obtain and especially to maintain a suit of power armor. Damaged parts need to be repaired, and destroyed weapons and sensors systems often need to be replaced completely. Lastly, power armor is illegal except to certain individuals specially licensed by the Empire (spacetroopers and some Imperially sanctioned bounty hunters). Unauthorized possession and use of power armor is punished severely. The required licenses are difficult to obtain and are very expensive.

Damage to Power Armor

When power armor is hit in combat, its effectiveness diminishes like regular armor. But what is the chance of an armor-mounted weapon, sensors or servos being damaged? To determine how hits damage power armor systems, use the optional "Power Armor Damage Chart" below.

The amount of damage that makes it through the armor to affect the character reflects how badly the armor has been damaged. If the character is wounded, then the armor is lightly damaged in the area of the attack. If incapacitated, then armor is heavily damaged. Severely wounding a character results in severely damaged armor in that area. Armor is destroyed in that area if the character is killed by the attack.

Once the severity of the damage to the armor has been determined, a roll on the "Power Armor Damage Chart" shows additional damage effects. Use the optional hit location chart on page 63 of *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*, to determine whether a shot hits an armored area.

Example: *Fycor is a young bounty hunter who has managed to obtain a suit of Nemesis Armor. While tracking down a wanted felon, he becomes caught up in a blaster fight. One blaster shot hits him in the right arm. Fycor has a Strength of 3D+2 and the suit adds +2D for a total*

of 5D+2. Fycor rolls a total of 13, but unfortunately his opponent rolls 21 for damage. Fycor is wounded and his armor is lightly damaged. His opponent rolls one die and looks up the results on the Power Armor Damage chart. He rolled a 3. Fycor has had one weapon in his armor's

Power Armor Damage Chart

Lightly Damaged Armor

Roll 1D	Result
1-2	-1D to maneuverability (-1D to <i>Dexterity</i> and all <i>Dexterity</i> skills).
3	On board weapon hit and destroyed.
4-6	Armor loses one pip off its effectiveness.

Heavily Damaged Armor

Roll 1D	Result
1-2	-2D to maneuverability (-2D to <i>Dexterity</i> and all <i>Dexterity</i> skills).
3	-2 to movement allowed in a turn.
4-6	Armor loses one pip off its effectiveness.

Severely Damaged Armor

Roll 1D	Result
1-2	Power supply destroyed.
3	Overloaded power generator will explode in three rounds.
4	Disabled weapons. All weapons shut down.
5-6	Armor loses all of its protection bonus in that area.

right arm, his light repeating blaster, destroyed!

Power armor is also difficult to put on and remove in stressful situations, like when a damaged suit's power generator is overloaded. To quickly remove a power suit, the character must roll the *powersuit operation* skill. The difficulty in removing a suit is directly related to the type of power armor. Light power armor requires a Difficult powersuit operations skill roll to remove. Medium power armor requires a Very Difficult roll, and heavy power armor requires a Heroic roll.

These skill checks should only be required in combat situations

or situations when a character wants to remove or put on the suit quickly. If characters fail the skill check they must wait until the next round to try again at the same difficulty. If they succeed then they must spend the entire round either putting on or taking off the armor.

If a suit of power armor explodes while still on a character, the wearer takes 5D damage, none of which is absorbed by the armor.

Long Lost Power Armor

None of the suits of power armor listed below can be purchased on the open market. Since power armor is so rare and powerful, many suits have disappeared, been stolen or were taken off the market as defense risks to the Empire.

These power armor suits give some examples of the advantages and disadvantages of making power armor available in a game. Suits like these can form the basis for adventures — the characters can be assigned to retrieve known suits, steal plans, or hunt down and capture individuals using these powerful armored weapons.

Malgon Armor

Model: Modified X5 Malgon Armor

Type: Light power armor

Skill: Powersuit operation

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: 4, X

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +2D to *Strength* for physical attacks, +2D for energy attacks; -2D to *Dexterity* and related skills. Covers head, torso, arms and legs.

Heaviness: Due to the suit's weight, the skills *hide*, *sneak* and *swimming* cannot be used while wearing this armor.

Strength: Servos in the arms and torso provide a +1D *Strength* bonus for *lifting* skill rolls and *melee* and *brawling* damage.

Sensors: The helmet is equipped with a sensor pod which provides a +1D bonus to *search*.

Flame Projectors: 5D damage, uses *armor weapons* skill, creates cone one meter wide, variable one to five meters long. One projector is mounted on each arm.

Capsule: This rare suit was designed for service in or near larger power plants, chemical factories and other installations where explosives and blasters could cause immense fires. The original suit was designed with chemical nozzles along the arms to shoot fire suppressant chemicals.

Due to an Imperial "request," all production of this armor was halted and most known suits were recalled. No reason was given by the Empire for recall of the suit.

A handful of the suits were never turned in and found their way to the black market, where the fire suppressant chemical system was modified to a flame projector weapon.

Dragon

Model: SoroSuub NLZ5-11 Dragon

Type: Medium power armor

Skill: Powersuit operation

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: 4, X

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +3D to *Strength* for physical attacks, +2D for energy attacks, -2D to *Dexterity* and related skills. Covers head, torso, arms and legs.

Heaviness: Due to this suit's weight, the skills *hide*, *sneak*, *running* and *swimming* cannot be used while wearing this armor.

Strength: Servos in the armor provide a +1D *Strength* bonus for *lifting* skill rolls and melee and brawling damage.

Speed: Due to the bulk of the armor, the wearer's *Speed* is reduced to 7.

Sensors: Provides 180 degree vision, macrobinocular vision, mini targeting computer. Provides +2D to *Perception* and *search* rolls. Contains a multi-frequency targeting and acquisition system (MFTAS) which gives +1D to all ranged weapon skill rolls against targets at medium and long ranges.

Body Glove: A climate-controlled body glove incorporates additional heating elements to allow comfortable operation in moderately hot and extremely cold climates.

Defensive Blaster: 3D damage, uses *armor weapons* skill, ranges: 3-4/8/12, mounted alongside helmet.

Twin Flamers: 5D damage (fire linked), uses *armor weapons* skill, creates cone one meter wide, variable one to five meters long, mounted on left forearm armor.

Mini-Missile Launcher: 5D damage, uses *missile weapons* skill, ranges: 3-40/120/400, mounted on shoulder armor.

Sealed Enviro-Filter: Filter system can block out harmful molecules, or the suit can completely seal, drawing upon a two-hour internal supply of oxygen.

Capsule: This suit was designed by the SoroSuub corporation for use by SoroSuub security forces and Sullustan military forces. The armor is best

suited to dealing with poorly armored opponents and vehicles. Because most of its weapons do damage to large areas, the armor is especially good at dealing with larger numbers of opponents. Although the suit was built with the Sullustan physique in mind, other humanoids can fit into the power suit with a little discomfort.

Unfortunately for the SoroSuub corporation, which had invested a great deal of money and effort into the project, the prototype suit and all copies of the plans disappeared at about the time SoroSuub allied with the Empire.

Nemesis

Model: Mili-Corp DZ 17X Nemesis

Type: Medium power armor

Skill: Powersuit operation

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: 4, X

Game Effect:

Armor: +3D to *Strength* for physical attacks, +2D for energy attacks; -2D to *Dexterity* and related skills. Covers head, torso, arms and legs.

Heaviness: Due to this suit's weight, the skills *hide*, *sneak*, *running* and *swimming* cannot be used while wearing this armor.

Strength: Servos in the armor provide a +1D *Strength* bonus for *lifting* skill rolls and melee and brawling damage.

Speed: Due to the bulk of the armor, the wearer's *Speed* is reduced to 7.

Sensors: Provides 180 degree vision, macrobinocular vision, mini targeting computer. Provides +2D to *Perception* and *search* rolls. Contains a multi-frequency targeting and acquisition system (MFTAS) which gives +1D to all ranged weapon skill rolls against targets at medium and long ranges.

DEMP Gun: 3D ionization damage, uses *armor weapons* skill, ranges: 3-4/8/12, mounted on left forearm armor.

Light Repeating Blaster: 6D damage, uses *armor weapons* skill, ranges: 3-50/120/300, mounted on right forearm armor.

Body Glove: A climate-controlled body glove incorporates additional heating and cooling elements to allow comfortable operation in moderately hot and extremely cold climates.

Capsule: The Nemesis was designed for use by corporate security forces during the Old Republic, and was commonly found in the militia of planets or sectors controlled by corporations. Most of the suits were destroyed in conflicts during the final years of the Old Republic. The suit has become popular with the very few individuals with intact suits. Arms dealers believe that fewer than six of these suits remain operational.

Adventure Idea

Rumors abound that a group of Imperial technicians may have the only copy of the Nemesis suit's design plans. The characters are sent to a remote Imperial research station to spy on this research group's activities and to obtain a copy of the plan for the Nemesis if it exists. They must infiltrate the research installation, avoiding TIE fighter patrols, special security sensors and numerous stormtrooper guards.

Most of these suits are in the hands of powerful bounty hunters or elite mercenaries, such as Forig Thull, a mercenary fast becoming infamous in the Outer Rim Territories.

Juggernaut

Model: Cozzell Juggernaut 510 Combat Power Armor
Skill: Powersuit operation

Type: Assault power armor

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: 4, X

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +3D to Strength for physical attacks, +3D to energy attacks; -3D to Dexterity and related skills. Covers head, torso, arms and legs.

Heaviness: Due to this suit's weight, the skills *hide*, *sneak*, *running* and *swimming* cannot be used while wearing this armor.

Strength: Servos in the armor provide a +3D Strength bonus for lifting skill rolls and melee and brawling damage.

Speed: Due to the bulk of the armor, the wearer's Speed is reduced to 5.

Sensors: Provides 180 degree vision, macrobinocular vision, mini targeting computer. Provides +2D

to Perception and search rolls. Contains a multi-frequency targeting and acquisition system (MFTAS) which gives +1D to all ranged weapon skill rolls against targets at medium and long ranges.

Body Glove: A climate-controlled body glove incorporates additional heating and cooling elements to allow comfortable operation in moderately hot and extremely cold climates.

Medium Repeating Blaster: 7D damage, uses armor weapons skill, ranges: 3-50/120/300, hand held with braces and targeting computer interface along right forearm armor.

Grenade Launcher: 5D damage, uses missile weapons skill, ranges: 1-250/350/500, mounted on left shoulder.

Retractable Claws: STR+2D damage, mounted in left gauntlet.

Capsule: Juggernaut armor was originally developed many

years ago for use with large mercenary and militia forces for heavy firepower infantry support. The incredible cost of integrating all the different weapons, targeting and environmental systems caused the Cozzell Corporation to cancel the project. Few know if an operational prototype was ever developed.

Leviathan

Model: Mon-Cal Leviathan Power Armor

Skill: Powersuit operation

Type: Assault power armor

Cost: Not available for sale.

Availability: 4, X

Game Effect:

Armor: Provides +3D to Strength for physical attacks, +3D to energy attacks; -1D to Dexterity and related skills under water, -3D to Dexterity and related skills on land. Covers head, torso, arms and legs.

Customized: If worn by someone other than its owner add an additional -1D to the Dexterity penalty.

Heaviness: Due to this suit's weight, the skills *hide*, *sneak* and *running* cannot be used while wearing this armor on land.

Strength: Servos in the armor provide a +3D Strength bonus for lifting skill rolls and melee and brawling damage.

Speed: Due to the bulk of the armor, the wearer's Speed is reduced to 5 when on land. Special underwater propulsion units in the leg armor give the wearer a speed of 15 while swimming underwater.

Sensors: Provides 180 degree vision, macrobinocular vision, mini targeting computer. Gives +2D to Perception and search rolls. Contains a multi-frequency targeting and acquisition system (MFTAS) which gives +1D to all ranged weapon skill rolls against targets at medium and long ranges. The targeting system also allows torpedoes to lock on and adjust course to follow moving targets. Includes specialized sonar gear. Thus this armor is designed to deal with deep waters where light is absent.

Body Glove: A climate-controlled body glove incorporates additional heating and cooling elements to allow comfortable operation in moderately hot and extremely cold climates.

Duo-Flechette Rifle: 5D damage, uses armor weapons skill, ranges: 3-10/30/60, mounted on right forearm armor.

Mini-Torpedo Launcher: 6D damage, uses missile weapons skill, ranges: 3-30/120/350, mounted in shoulder armor.

Capsule: The Mon Calamari designed this suit for a secret squad of commandos which harasses Imperial aquatic installations on planets sympathetic to the Rebel Alliance. Its weapons are specially designed for

Adventure Idea

The Empire has recently contracted the Cozzell Corporation to continue work on the Juggernaut suit, but for Imperial use only. Rumors have reached the Alliance that the Empire has a working prototype currently under testing. The characters must find and infiltrate the Imperial labs working on the suit and permanently sabotage the Juggernaut project.

Adventure Idea

Ylan Ghalir, the Mon Calamari designer and manufacturer of the Leviathan power armor, has been captured by Imperial agents. The characters must track down the agents and free Ylan from an Imperial prison before he is interrogated.

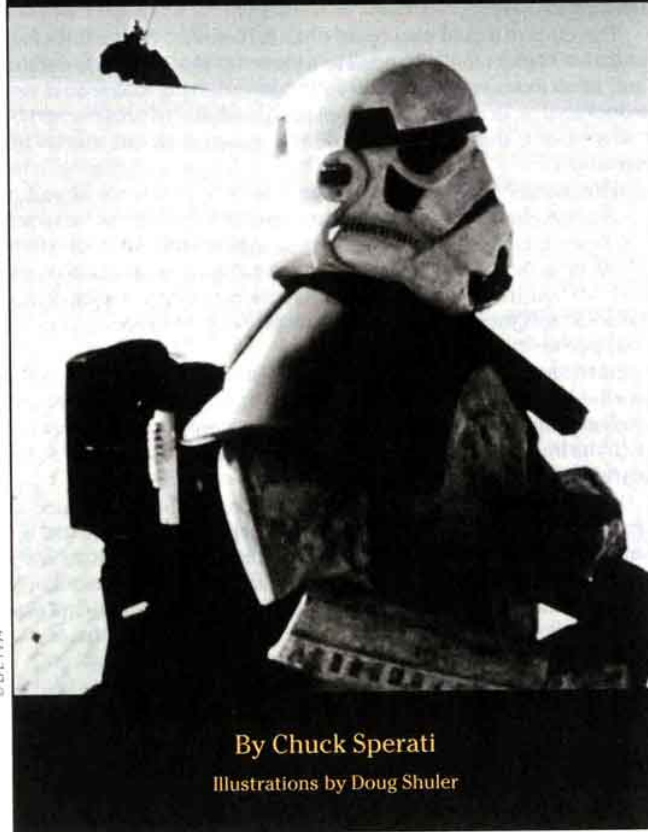
underwater combat against elite Imperial aquatic units. Like Mon Calamari starships, each suit of Leviathan power armor is unique — a work of art as well as a functional weapon. Each suit is tailor fit to its user — new suits must be specially commissioned.

The Leviathan suit is not pressurized and does not carry any air tanks, since the Mon Calamari are amphibious and can withstand deep sea pressures.

Only four suits of Leviathan armor exist which are currently operational.



Droid Trouble



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By Chuck Sperati

Illustrations by Doug Shuler

For years, Tereb Ab'Lon had carefully planned and manipulated his rise to power, swearing to one day hold the title of Imperial Senator. That dream was shattered the day the Emperor dissolved the Imperial Senate.

As Ab'Lon looked about the Bothan Embassy, his gaze finally resting on his immediate superior, the Bothan Ambassador to the Empire, Gattrar Shey'Tyan, the taste of rebellion whet his appetite. He watched as the ambassador helplessly submitted the Bothan people to the rule of a dictator, yet a slight smile managed to touch his fanged maw.

The Empire would not, could not, last forever. With a little luck and a lot of planning, he hoped to help bring about an early demise and secure himself a position in the government that would rise from its ashes. A position with real power, where his name would be known to all, and the destinies of entire worlds would rest on his decisions.

The council room had all but emptied when Ab'Lon's attention returned to matters at hand. As the aide to the Bothan Ambassador, his tasks included keeping an eye on opponents' strategies and political tactics aimed at discrediting Shey'Tyan and his position. A task Ab'Lon thoroughly despised, as he constantly attempted to cause Shey'Tyan's fall to assume his position, thus increasing his own power.

But no longer, he thought to himself. After Ab'Lon secretly joined the Rebellion, Shey'Tyan's fall from power meant nothing. His goal was now the total collapse of the Empire. A goal that was to begin with the Imperial Navy operation plans he silently dropped into his astromech droid's memory banks two days ago.

Shey'Tyan started toward him, his regal attire flowing behind as he moved. Ab'Lon watched him approach and tried to hide the satisfaction he felt in himself. Tomorrow he would meet with a Rebel agent and turn the plans over to the Alliance, the first step in his eventual rise to power. But today, modesty and humility in the face of his superior were the key to ensuring tomorrow's successes.

■ ■ ■

Blaster bolts exploded outside the cockpit of the stolen Bothawui shuttle. Ab'Lon pulled it into a tight barrel roll and readjusted the trajectory to match his escape course.

"Get those hyperspace coordinates set," Ab'Lon growled as he completed the maneuver. "I'm a diplomat, I can't dodge trained TIE pilots forever." The faint cries of his astromech droid, followed by the usual fweep, echoed through the cockpit.

Another volley of blaster fire erupted about the craft as Ab'Lon dropped it into an extreme dive. The fur around his neck rippled in panic as he stared helplessly at the deflector shield display indicat-

ing failure. The momentum from the dive had pushed him down into the pilot's seat, restricting his movement until the lagging drive compensators kicked in.

He knew that an *Ambassador*-class shuttle was not designed to take this kind of punishment. Of course, he wasn't trained to battle a line of TIEs and a *Victory*-class Star Destroyer either. With a little luck, they might both pull out unscathed.

Ab'Lon glanced at the sensor display quickly. The Star Destroyer was cresting Bothawui Proper, but it had yet to break orbit and pursue. Why should it, Ab'Lon thought to himself — without a gunner he couldn't put up a fight. The patrolling TIEs were more than enough to blow him out of the sky.

The TIEs released another barrage that rocked the shuttle. Ab'Lon tried to pull out of the dive into a hard port double turn. Blue lightning played off the control panels as several direct hits took out the shields and ionized the controls all at once. He lost control and began to spin, colliding with one of his pursuers.

The rear-end collision left both ships with minor damage, but even as the TIE spun away, Ab'Lon could feel the shuttle slowing. A quick scan of the drive display, which was just now coming back on line, revealed the problem. One of the coolant lines to the main sublight drive had been severed, causing an automatic drive shutdown.

Ab'Lon's pointed ears dropped and his fur rippled in a quick wave down his neck. "Is the hyperdrive down as well?" he called as he hurriedly scanned the control displays for anything that might help him out of this situation.

After a short pause, a decisively negative series of warbles, clicks, and whistles — followed by a fweep — came from the droid at the nav computer console over his left shoulder.

Quickly, Ab'Lon checked the sensors. The TIEs had banked around and were coming up fast, but the Star Destroyer had only just begun to pursue. The shuttle was still a good 30 seconds out of tractor beam range.

"Unidentified shuttle, this is the Star Destroyer *Temerit*," the voice blistered with pride as it flowed through the comm. "You are ordered to surrender immediately." There was no mistaking the unspoken intent behind those cold, mechanical words should he try anything else.

"Are the coordinates set yet?" he called out expectantly. The shuttle might be dead in space, he thought, but the hyperdrive was still functional. If he could just make the jump to hyperspace before

the *Temerit* could lock its tractor beam ...

An affirmative whistle, followed by a fweep, was precisely what he had been waiting for. A slight smile touched his lips. "Hold on," he called back to the little droid. "I'm going to make the jump."

The warbles of protest, followed by a low moan and a series of panicked fweeps, went completely unheeded. Ab'Lon made the ancient Bothan gesture of good hope, and pulled the hyperdrive lever.

■ ■ ■

Nim Bola made a left out of the Mos Eisley Cantina and walked past the small crowd gathered outside. He could see a Barabel's head standing a half meter above the rest of the group and knew that his Rodian partner had to be nearby. There was no doubt that they were going to covertly attempt to follow Bola, but there was no reason to let them know. He casually moved past the community junkpile and started for his office.

In one graceful movement, Bola pushed a wind-blown golden lock of hair out of his face and switched on the small comlink attached to his collar. "You were right," he whispered into the comlink, "it's a double-cross." He casually waved away a couple of Jawas from a nearby droid lot. "I'll take them through the alley opposite the hotel's west side," he whispered, glancing over his shoulder and picking up speed. "Be ready for them there."

He pulled his timeworn gray jacket tight as the chilling night breeze kicked up. "Cold, dark, and deserted," he muttered to himself as his strides steadily increased. "Perfect time for an ambush, especially when you're not the one being ambushed." A smile touched his lips as he started to jog for the alley, taking a quick glance behind. At that moment, the two bounty hunters broke into a dead run, straight toward him. *C'mon*, he thought to himself, *come and get me*.

■ ■ ■

The familiar starlines flowed into the mottled sky of hyperspace and a slight smile crossed Ab'Lon's features, an expression that more resembled a snarl than a smile.

"Fweep, calculate and set coordinates to make a second jump from the Piroket to the Tao-Grant system," he said, the relief of escape filling his lungs with every breath. "There's an established Alliance cell on the second moon of the system's lone gas giant."

Ab'Lon glanced around the cockpit of the stolen shuttle and

Tereb Ab'Lon



Type: Bothan Diplomat

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 2D+1, dodge 4D, running 2D+2

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Bureaucracy: Bothawui 7D, bureaucracy: Imperial 6D, business 6D+2, cultures 4D+1 law enforcement 5D, law enforcement: Imperial 8D+1, planetary systems 5D+1

MECHANICAL 3D

Communications 7D+1, spacetransports: Bothawui diplomatic shuttle 4D+1, sensors 3D+1

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Bargain 7D, con 6D+1, persuasion 8D

STRENGTH 2D+1

Climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 3D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Computer programming/repair 5D+1, droid programming: Astromech 5D+2, droid repair: Astromech 4D+1

Character Points: 3

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, datapad, hold-out blaster (3D)

Capsule: Tereb Ab'Lon is an average politician with dreams of greatness. He's not known for taking chances, but is quick to leap on the failure of others. He is very cunning and sly, creating elaborate plans to further his name and position. His plans are devoid of real risk, plans that keep him from assuming a real position of power.

Tereb found his calling in the Rebel Alliance. To them, his position is one of greatness, giving him access to Imperial plans they couldn't possibly gather themselves. He still likes to play things cautiously, awaiting the chance to get that one vital bit of information that will help bring about the downfall of the Empire.

frowned, the fur about his face stood on end and his nose twitched nervously. "I don't want the Empire to be able to track us," he said thoughtfully. In his 12 years in politics, he had seen far too many Bothan leaders relax their guard and make mistakes, only to lose their position and often their lives. "Set coordinates for two short jumps after Piroket, away from Tao-Grant, then a third to it."

An affirmative whistle and a fweep flowed through the cockpit. Ab'Lon couldn't help but allow a hearty smile, a fearful fanged expression that seemed better suited to convey horror than happiness. The little Artoo unit, nicknamed Artoo-ZeeOne, known also as Fweep, didn't even realize he made the noise. Six Imperial techni-

cians and innumerable Bothan droid repair techs had tried, unsuccessfully, to repair that malfunction. The task was finally abandoned and the "fweep" sound listed as a design flaw.

Ab'Lon had acquired the little droid just before it was to be shipped off and dismantled. As a Bothan, he could see the obvious advantages of having a personal droid that almost everyone found annoying, especially the Empire, with its prim and proper devotion to perfection. Later he discovered the droid to be persistently loyal and remarkably easy to keep track of.

Fweep proved to be invaluable after Ab'Lon secretly joined the Rebel Alliance. His position as top aide to the Bothan Ambassador to the Empire had given him access to certain Imperial Intelligence files that he could quietly drop into the little droid's memory system, securing it for later transmissions.

For nearly two years he'd been sending useful information to the Rebels, but nothing more. Often he'd skip over the more vital operations he'd seen — the fear of being caught in a situation that might cost him his office and his life was more powerful than his loyalty to the Alliance. Then three days ago, he got a glance at an Imperial Navy operations schedule.

At last, Ab'Lon had a chance to supply the Alliance with a vital bit of information, but it was risky at best. This type of information always had safeguards and alarms to keep anyone from doing what he was attempting, and his skills at bypassing security codes weren't nearly as good as his ability to dodge TIE fighters. Still, it was an opportunity he couldn't let pass.

At least that was his mindset until this morning, when a Star Destroyer escorting an Imperial dungeon ship arrived in orbit. Both craft immediately began landing drop ships and shuttles and launching patrol ships. In a matter of minutes the Empire controlled Lktim, one of Bothawui's largest cities. Determined not to be taken captive, Ab'Lon set his planned and practiced escape into motion. That's when he ran into the patrolling TIE fighters.

Looking back on it, he wondered if it wasn't paranoia and poor timing that got him into this situation. After all, he thought, there had been political prisoners awaiting transport on the planet. Anyway, Fweep still carried the plans and although the rendezvous was forgotten, he could still complete the mission by hand delivering the plans. He wondered how he'd be received by the Alliance.

A faint gurgling noise, followed by a series of beeps and whistles, ending with a fweep, brought Ab'Lon back to reality. "Hold on," he growled as he unlatched the restraints and pulled himself out of the

seat. "I'm on my way."

He passed through the cockpit door into the lavishly decorated recreational chamber, and turned toward the maintenance area. Fweep had somehow managed to work his way into the lower level maintenance hatch and was already assessing the damage when Ab'Lon arrived.

"How bad is it?" he asked tentatively, poking his head into the open hatch. A nauseating blue-black vapor worked its way into his nose, causing him to jerk his head back in a half growl, half cough.

Fweep gurgled, beeped, and whistled for an annoyingly long time before his final fweep. Though Ab'Lon couldn't follow much of the technical jargon, the basic problem was clear. The sublight drive was damaged beyond their ability to repair, and some of the command pathways between the hyperdrive system and the nav computer had been damaged during the battle.

"So basically what you're saying," Ab'Lon started, the fur along his neck standing on end, "is that we might not be going to Piroket. And to make things worse, if we get there we're not going to have a sublight drive to maneuver."

The droid beeped affirmatively, followed by a low fweep. Silence hung in the air as Ab'Lon sat, staring at the mess of wires, pipes, and cylinders, looking for any way out of this deplorable situation. He silently cursed the Empire and their TIE pilots.

• • •

A low moan, followed by a fweep, ended Ab'Lon's last hope of repairing the drive system. They had worked for nearly three hours on craft schematics and experimental hyperdrive logs looking for any conceivable method of jury-rigging the system and bringing the sublight drive back on line. They could do it, but not without overloading the drive generator, dismantling the hyperdrive, and getting outside the craft. All of which meant the task was hopeless.

Even if he could get the drive system on line, where could he stop off for repairs in a stolen *Ambassador*-class shuttle? The Empire would surely have scouts searching for him throughout the galaxy by now; the Rebel base on Tao-Grant was his only hope.

Ab'Lon's pointed ears began to twitch and the fur along the back of his neck rippled erratically. With a snarl and a low rumbling from deep in his throat, he began to pace. Fweep watched him quietly pacing into the recreational chamber and back to the maintenance hatch, the little droid's silver and gray dome swiveling with his master's every move.

The nav computer signaled 10 minutes to the Piroket system. Silently, trying to suppress his frustration and building rage, Ab'Lon helped the squabbling droid out of the maintenance hatch. He led Fweep over to the nav computer console and wedged him between it and two seats. The droid warbled, moaned, and fweeped, but Ab'Lon didn't seem to be paying much attention. He tapped the nav computer display switch several times before it went on-line.

"I don't know what we're going to do," he finally growled. "Let's just hope that we're going to Piroket," he said as he checked over the nav computer displays. Much of the control grid had blacked out since their initial jump and he had no way to calculate any coordinates other than those Fweep had entered.

"Three minutes to disengage," he said, more to himself than to Fweep, as he moved toward the pilot's seat. He stopped in mid-stride and looked back to the little droid. "Could you get us to Tao-Grant if we disengage the nav computer?" he asked doubtfully.

After about 30 seconds of silence, the little droid responded with a series of whistles that Ab'Lon could only translate as "maybe."

"It's worth a try," he said as he sat down and reached for the safety harness. "As soon as we ..."

Ab'Lon was slammed into the forward control panels as the shuttle jerked out of hyperspace. The sounds of smashing equipment and cracking bones filled the cockpit. He was dumped to the floor in a semi-conscious, broken mass.

Fweep let out a series of shrill cries, followed by a low moan and a short string of fweeps. Ab'Lon barely heard the little droid as he struggled to regain his feet, dimly aware of a severe pain in his chest and blood trickling into his eyes from his forehead. He slowly glanced out the cockpit to determine what the little droid was in such a fluster about. There, eclipsing the void of space, sat a planet.

His violet eyes widened and a cold chill ran up his spine, rippling the fur all the way up to his twitching pointed ears. The fog that clouded his mind quickly cleared and he leaped back into the pilot's seat, reaching for the damaged controls and ignoring the protests of his battered body.

Instinctively, he tried to pull the craft into an extreme climb. Then he remembered that the sublight drive was out. The craft rocked violently — nearly throwing Ab'Lon to the floor of the cockpit again — as it entered the planet's gravity well. Frantically, he reached for the maneuvering thruster controls, firing them in attempt to break free. There was no change in course as the shuttle hit the upper atmosphere, tossing the battered Bothan toward the back of the

cockpit.

"Hang on," he cried as he tried to make his way back to the pilot's seat. "I think we're going to crash."

The shuttle streaked downward and Ab'Lon did his best to keep it from being scattered across this planet's desert terrain. "Are you all right back there?" he yelled over the shrieking alarms and flaring warning lights. The racket filled the cockpit and annoyed Ab'Lon.

The electronic snort followed by a low fweep successfully conveyed the little droid's impression of Ab'Lon's piloting skills. He was half tempted to release the droid's safety restraints and let him

Bothawui Ambassador-class Shuttle

Craft: SoroSuub Luxury Shuttle 001

Type: Ambassador-class shuttle

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 50 meters

Crew: 2, gunners: 1

Crew Skill: See "Tereb Ab'Lon" and "Fweep"

Passengers: 10

Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons

Consumables: 1 month

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2

Hyperdrive Backup: x14

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 1D

Space: 7

Atmosphere: 350; 1,000 kmh

Hull: 3D

Shields: 1D

Sensors:

Passive: 15/1D

Scan: 25/1D+2

Search: 45/2D

Focus: 4/3D

Weapons:

Two Double Laser Cannons (fire linked)

Fire Arc: Front

Crew: 1

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 3D+1

Range: 1–5/10/25

Atmosphere Range: 100–500/1/2.5 km

Damage: 4D

Capsule: The Ambassador-class shuttles were specifically built to spoil those with power. The Bothan ambassadors had these craft outfitted with comfort in mind. Some of its features include a huge meeting and recreational chamber, fully stocked galley, elegant dining facilities, and roomy deluxe cabins.

bounce around the cockpit for a while, but the ground was approaching fast. Besides, he decided, Fweep could probably magnetically anchor himself in place. A trick he wished he could use to keep himself in the seat of this shuttle. He'd been thrown to the cockpit floor once too often — the pain in his chest still stabbed like a vibroblade.

He fired the maneuvering thrusters again, hoping to bring the nose of the shuttle up and keep the impact from killing him. He made the gesture of good hope, realizing that several fingers on his right hand were broken when they wouldn't extend to the proper angles. As he braced for impact, he once more cursed the Empire for putting him into this situation.

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The speeder raced across the desert terrain of the Dune Sea. Nim Bola, a man who never much cared for the company of Rodians, decided that this one smelled worse in the sun than in the dark confines of the cantina. The thought of returning to the rank atmosphere of the Pit of Carkoon didn't exactly make matters better, but there weren't many solitary places to permanently dispose of incriminating evidence. The Sarlacc was both.

Bola glanced at the two figures, piled one on top of the other in the speeder's only passenger seat, and a smile touched his worry-lined features. The ambush couldn't have gone any better. He'd lured them into the alley and Tavri dropped the Rodian with a single shot before the enemy could draw his weapon. The Barabel, on the other hand, took two blind shots at Tavri and turned to track Bola before three shots from the others' sporting blaster and two from Tavri's heavy blaster dropped him to the ground. The perfect payment for revenge.

They'd hired him to track an Ithorian who had been frequenting the cantina lately. The pay was too good and the job too easy. Looking back on it, he decided that it may have been a good idea to warn them of the Ithorian's pet meat eating plant, but then again, surprise is the spice of life.

Bola brought the speeder to a halt a good 15 meters above the pit, well out of range of those damned tentacles. He glanced down at the waiting pink maw, the odor about the thing made the Rodian smell good.

"Well," he said as he lifted the lighter of the two and dropped him over the edge of the speeder, "I hope you taste better than you smell." As he watched the Rodian roll down the pit into the Sarlacc's

Nim Bola



Type: Detective for Hire

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D, blaster: sporting blaster 8D, brawling parry 6D, dodge 8D, melee combat 5D, pick pocket 6D, running 7D

KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Alien species 8D, bureaucracy 6D, business 6D, cultures 7D, languages 6D, planetary systems 5D, streetwise 9D

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 4D+2, communications 3D, repulsorlift operation 5D, sensors 4D, space transports 5D+1, starship gunnery 4D+1

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Bargain 7D, con 10D, forgery 10D, gambling 8D, investigation 13D, persuasion 8D, search 12D, sneak 8D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 3D+1, swimming 4D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Computer programming/repair 7D, droid programming 3D+1, first aid 5D+2, security 8D+2

Dark Side Points: 4

Character Points: 13

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, datapad, sporting blaster (3D+1), vibroblade (STR+3D), knife (STR+1D)

Capsule: A self-styled detective for hire, Nim Bola has made a good, if not dangerous living for himself. The thrill of adventure and financial rewards have made him one of the better detectives in the galaxy, free-lancing his skills out to the highest bidder. He's always been one to take chances, often losing a month's pay on the sabacc tables, but he always seems to come out ahead in the long term, very rarely accepting defeat. He's perhaps best known for his ability to deal with anybody, from the foulest Gamorrean to Imperial officers, a practice most see as extremely dangerous and stupid.

throat, he wondered just briefly what happened to its victims. Sure he'd heard rumors, but none had been conclusively proven. He shook the thought away, swearing to never find out first hand.

The whistling sound of something headed toward him at high speed brought Bola back to reality. He gazed skyward, but whatever it was, was hidden in the light of the second sun. He hefted the Barabel over the edge of the speeder and dropped him into the pit.

The heavier Barabel sank into the sand, but a thick tentacle shot from the Sarlacc's throat and quickly dragged him past the rings of fangs filling the maw, into the blackness beyond.

Bola balanced himself and looked skyward for a glance at the craft that was bearing down on him so quickly.

A sudden rush of air rocked the speeder as the craft hurled by, not more than 20 meters overhead. Bola was thrown out of the speeder. He reached out with his left hand and grabbed for the foot step. He caught himself and glanced down. Fear gripped him as he dangled over the Sarlacc by one arm. He pulled himself back into the craft.

He sat down, breathing heavy and shaken. For the next few moments, he tried to ease his breathing and lose the thought of falling into that disgusting pit of death. Silently, he swore he'd never get this close to that monstrosity again.

It wasn't until he heard the explosion that Bola realized the craft that buzzed him wasn't someone deliberately trying to kill him, or kids from Anchorhead messing around. He turned the speeder toward the smoke rising over the dunes and hit the accelerator, hoping that this wasn't another mistake.

The shuttle slammed into a sand dune, tearing the bulk of the lower starboard wing off, and thrusting Ab'Lon into unconsciousness for the duration of the crash. When he'd finally regained some of his senses, he could dimly hear a low moan, followed by a fweep from somewhere behind, accompanied by the soft crackling of electricity all around. An odd sense of vertigo made his fog enshrouded head spin, and he coughed violently as thick black smoke filled his lungs.

It wasn't until he opened his eyes that Ab'Lon realized the shuttle was lying on its side — what was left of it anyway. The restraints pushed against his broken ribs and with every breath a new sensation of pain rippled through his battered body. Everything hurt.

He tried to release the restraints with the broken fingers of his right hand, while getting a firm grip on what was left of the weapons console with his left.

After about 30 seconds of fidgeting with the latch, it popped free. His grip on the console was instantly broken and he hit the starboard wall — now the bottom of the cockpit — with a thud. It took him a few minutes to get to his feet. He crumpled back to the floor several times in pain as he tried. He had a very difficult time breathing and his right arm had gone completely numb after the fall.

Several rays of daylight slipped through cracks in the hull, furnishing just enough light to assess the damage. Fweep was still strapped in, but one of the cockpit chairs had been dislodged and was lying on the floor in a mess of debris. The battered and dented little droid seemed to be on the verge of falling. He released a series of shrill fweeps as various electrical wires surged near his swiveling dome. Very little of the cockpit had escaped damage and there was no way Ab'Lon could get the little droid down without some assistance. He scanned the area for anything that might help.

The entry ramp was lying partially open and he decided that it might be his best chance. Slowly, he worked his way through the wreckage toward the sunlight streaming in. Part of him hoped and part of him feared that maybe someone saw the crash who might help him.

The wreckage was scattered across a 300-meter radius, but somehow the bulk of the craft remained in one piece. It was of alien design, but resembled an *Ambassador*-class shuttle Bola once saw while investigating a case on Coruscant a few years ago.

He drew his heavy blaster pistol from its holster and, working his way through searing shrapnel, moved toward the cracked-open entry ramp. He half expected a stormtrooper or two to leap out, but the sheer devastation of the ship quickly put those fears to rest. He was six meters away when something stumbled out of the shuttle and fell face first into the sand.

Bola edged up closer, half expecting a double-cross, but that was his nature and it was a difficult feeling to ignore, even in these circumstances. The back of the creature's royal blue and gold vest was torn and scorched. Its back heaved, obviously gasping for air. Furry, taloned fingers clawed slowly, uselessly at the sand. The fur along the back of its neck stood on end, occasionally rippling in the hot desert breeze.

Placing his left boot under the creature's right shoulder, Bola cautiously turned it over. A low groan escaped its lips and its chest heaved in a series of choking coughs. The mottled, singed fur of the creature's face partially covered some nasty wounds. Its clothing was torn and hanging, revealing a disfigured, badly battered chest. A single piece of jewelry hung around its neck — a silver pendant. It was partially blackened, but the workmanship was exquisite. Bola shuddered — he wasn't even sure if a bacta tank could save this creature from death.

Slowly, the creature's eyes moved, at first fluttering, then finally opening. Bola peered down into the creature's wide, violet eyes, looking for any sign of life.

"You," the creature visibly gulped, starting the thought over. "You must help me, Artoo," it muttered between breaths. "Get the Artoo unit," it sighed heavily, nearly losing consciousness.

"What Artoo unit?" Bola asked, vaguely wondering how hard the creature had hit its head.

"In the ..." it started, but was interrupted by an abrupt wail of clicks, whistles, and moans. Bola moved cautiously into the mangled craft, leaving the battered creature muttering something to itself. He climbed over the twisted metal of the cockpit, glancing at a growing fire in the hold, before peering in.

He wondered how anything could have survived the devastation that surrounded him. A quiet moan, followed by a fweep, surprised Bola and he turned, training his blaster on the noise. There, clinging to the cockpit floor, which now stood vertically, was an Artoo unit. It was partially strapped to a swivel chair and wedged against a damaged computer console. Bola tried to stifle a smile, but the scene was just too comical.

"C'mon," Bola said with a hearty smile, "let me help you down from there."

The droid moaned and fweeped throughout the process — a process which taxed Bola's patience to the point where he was tempted to shut down the annoying little droid and leave it there. But after about five minutes it was quietly working its way out of the craft. Bola moved to the creature, still lying on its back in the sand, and felt for a pulse.

It opened its eyes and gazed up at him. "Take the droid," it started slowly, "to the Alliance." Its hand grasped Bola's shirt, and it pleaded, "Please."

Bola looked directly into the creature's eyes, and grasped the other's hand. "What's in it for me?" he asked coldly, throwing the creature's hand to the ground.

The creature bared its teeth, its ears pointed skyward, fur rippling along its neck. "What?" it growled.

"You heard me," Bola said, matching the other's gaze. "I am not taking that squabbling droid anywhere for nothing."

The creature's blown temper, combined with its injuries, must have been too much for its body to take. Unconsciousness doused the fire in its eyes, and Bola watched as the creature's body went limp.

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Fwweep (Artoo-ZeeOne)



Type: R2 Astromech Droid

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 2D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 4D, bureaucracy: Bothawui 7D+2, bureaucracy: Imperial 6D, planetary systems 6D

MECHANICAL 3D

Astrogation 6D, communications 8D+1, starfighter piloting 4D

PERCEPTION 2D

Sneak 3D+2

STRENGTH 2D+1

TECHNICAL 4D

Computer programming/repair 7D+1, security 5D, starfighter repair 6D+2, starship weapon repair 6D

Character Points: 10

Move: 6 (4 while damaged)

Equipped With:

- Three wheeled legs (one retractable)
- Retractable heavy grasper arm (+1D to

lifting)

- Retractable fine work grasper arm
- Extendable 0.3-meter-long video sensor (360-degree rotation)
- Small electric arc welder (3D damage, 0.3-meter range)
- Small circular saw (4D damage, 0.3-meter range)
- Video display screen
- Holographic projector/recorder (1-meter range)
- Fire extinguisher
- Small internal "cargo" area (20 cm by 8 cm)
- Information storage/retrieval jack for computer link-up
- Broad band antenna receiver (can monitor broadcast and communication frequencies)

Capsule: R2-Z1 (Artoo-ZeeOne), nicknamed Fwweep, is a troublesome little droid who can be as annoying as he can be stubborn. Although he doesn't realize it, R2-Z1 makes a sound resembling a pitched "fweep" that changes according to mood. He has an incredibly one-tracked mind and persistently works at any given task until it is completed, a trait that brings him trouble as often as praise. Fwweep is extraordinarily loyal, making the transition between masters difficult at best. But once he accepts a new master, he will serve faithfully to the point of his own destruction.

Ab'Lon could feel the twin suns beating down on his aching body. A rush of hot desert air slammed into his face as his head rolled to the side. Most of his body had gone numb, and the parts he could feel rippled in waves of pain. A sense of movement, the quiet whine of an engine, and the arid desert wind slapping him in the face were more than enough clues to relay the obvious. He wondered where he was

going. A thousand destinations coursed through his mind, not the most unpleasant of which was an Imperial holding cell.

The vehicle that carried him came to an abrupt stop and he could feel movement beside him. The horrible stench assaulting his nose was nearly unbearable. He could smell dead and decaying carcasses and biological waste, among other atrocities he couldn't begin to define. It was nearly enough to awaken his unconscious body, but not quite.

"Well, here's your final stop *en route* to the Alliance," the vaguely familiar voice rang through Ab'Lon's mind. Something was tugging at or lifting his body, he wasn't sure which. He tried to scream, to explain the importance of his mission, anything, but his battered body refused to respond.

"Just thought you'd like to know," the voice began again, "I'm gonna find out how much of a reward is being offered for the information in this droid. I'd be willing to bet a sabacc pot that the Empire will pay better." Ab'Lon desperately tried to match a face to the voice, but recognition seemed just beyond his grasp. There was a short pause in which he could feel his body being moved around, yet he was powerless to stop it. "Well, be seeing you," the strangely familiar voice rang out as his body was released.

He fell for what seemed an eternity. All the while he wondered how all his carefully laid plans had put him into this position. He was supposed to be a savior for the Alliance — now no one would know of his sacrifices. Someone else had the fruits of his labor and there was nothing all his years of planning could do to alter that — no contingency that might save him.

Just as he convinced himself that he had been flung into the void, he hit the unforgiving sand, pushing out whatever air remained in his lungs. He could feel himself rolling over, as if he were tumbling downhill, and again he was powerless to stop it.

Something wrapped about his waist, stopping his descent. Needle-like projections pierced his skin through the tattered rags that served as clothing. All the pain that had plagued his body was suddenly gone. His entire body went numb and he could slowly feel his consciousness slipping away. The quiet whine of a vehicle speeding away was the last thing Tereb Ab'Lon heard before unconsciousness claimed him for the last time.

♦ ♦ ♦

The lone figure stood in the shadows of the docking bay, the tips of his cranial tentacles bouncing erratically. His boss had only entered the freighter five minutes ago. Just speaking to Rebel operatives was



considered treason, let alone making a deal to sell information to them. And of course, Bola just went off to make the deal, leaving Tavri to watch for any Imperial activity or, more likely, spies.

Tavri's gaze left the ship and wandered about the old, stone docking bay. Burn marks littered the walls and, in several places, large chunks of stone were missing. Probably the result of blaster fire, Tavri thought. The machinery was dirty from hundreds of years of overuse, no one bothering to tinker with or clean anything that was still functional.

He gazed up into the Tatooine sky — even from this cruddy old docking bay it was incredible. The suns set one at a time, making for lasting and beautiful sunsets like no other world could offer. It's a shame that the rest of this dustball isn't as fascinating, Tavri thought to himself, returning his gaze to the ship.

Something glittered in the waning sunlight over top of the freighter. Tavri stared a little harder, then quickly glanced around at the old machinery. None of it showed the slightest reflection.

He drew his heavy blaster pistol and whispered into the comlink clipped to his collar. "We may have trouble, be ready to get out of here." Almost as if on cue, the low hum of the freighter's engines warming up filled the docking bay.

Tavri, staying in the shadows, moved around to the opposite side

Tavri

Type: Twi'lek Mercenary

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 4D, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 8D, brawling parry 5D, dodge 6D, grenade 4D+2

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Business 6D, intimidation 5D+2, streetwise 6D

MECHANICAL 2D

Repulsorlift operation 6D, starship gunnery 4D+1

PERCEPTION 4D

Con 7D, gambling 6D+1, hide 5D, search 5D+2, sneak 6D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D

TECHNICAL 3D

Blaster repair 5D, computer program/repair 5D, first aid 7D, repulsorlift repair 3D+1, security 5D

Special Abilities:

Tentacles: Twi'leks can use their tentacles

to communicate in secret with other Twi'leks, even in a room full of individuals.

Character Points: 12

Move: 10

Equipment: Blast vest (+1 from energy, +1D from physical, torso only) comlink, heavy blaster pistol (5D)

Capsule: Tavri has wandered the galaxy since he was old enough to leave home. In order to stay out of the civil war, Tavri spent much of his time in the Fringe, hiring out the skills he's learned to the highest bidder. A mishap with the Imperials landed him in a detention block, at the same time a detective for hire named Nim Bola was investigating a recent prison break. Bola made some type of bargain for the Twi'lek's freedom and hired him as his bodyguard. Tavri feels he owes Bola a tremendous debt and is extraordinarily loyal. Over the past few years, he has come to call his employer his friend.

of the freighter. The sounds of scuffling and something clattering on the floor, followed by a shush, rang in his ears. Whoever they were, they weren't very good at being inconspicuous. That could be good, and bad. Tavri slipped into an opening beneath the noise and started up the stairs.

He paused about midway, listening intently to the quick grunts that sounded an awful lot like — giggling. After pausing two more times, he finally arrived at the top of the stairs and carefully peered

into the small controller room.

Two Ossans sat in the middle of the room. They seemed to be playing some kind of game. Tavri watched as they flung small polished, circular rocks toward a short series of small triangular rocks that made up some type of obstacle course. Each face of the triangular rock that was hit glowed slightly. The point of the game seemed to be to hit as many faces with one fling of the rock as possible. The Ossans giggled with each fling of the rocks — Tavri couldn't help a slight smile.

A new voice mewed in, startling him. He gazed over one Ossan's shoulder to see a Jenet sitting at a small metal gadget, which he immediately recognized as an Imperial listening device. Silently, he cursed himself for getting caught up with the game.

"I hired you two to watch my back, not play games," the creature hissed. Tavri didn't know much about Jenets. But he did know they had perfect memories and an incredibly advanced sense of hearing. "Now get off your butts and guard that stairwell," he said, obviously upset. Tavri couldn't blame him — Ossans are very childlike. If not for that, their immense strength would make for great protection.

The Ossans grumbled as they put their game away. Tavri switched his blaster over to stun and, as the Ossans began to stand up, hit them each with a blast. The bright blue aura of the stun blasts got the Jenet's attention. Tavri switched the blaster back and moved toward the frightened creature.

"What are you doing here," Tavri asked, although the question was rhetorical.

"I, uh, was just ...," the creature started.

"For a species known for their perfect memory, you sure seem to be stumbling for words," Tavri interrupted. "Now tell me, who hired you?"

The creature went for its weapon, but Tavri's blast hit it square in the chest. The smell of charred fur assaulted his nose as he grabbed the equipment and started for the stairs. He stopped just long enough to grab the small sack the Ossans had put their game into and began to descend the stairs.

He smiled to himself as he switched on the comlink and gave Bola a run-down of the events.

"Good job," Bola's voice blistered through the comlink. "Everything went perfectly. In two days we're going to be 50,000 credits richer." Tavri smiled broadly at the thought of his cut and started for Bola's place to celebrate.

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Answers and contest winners will be published in May, 1995, in *Star Wars Adventure Journal* #6.



Explosive Developments

by Peter Schweighofer

Illustrations by John Paul Lona

That night the group from the tavern had moved through the streets of Wroona's starport district, following a series of back alleys.

"I knew Moff Jellrek," Jai said, stepping to the front of the group. "I almost killed him myself."

"For those who meet Moff Jellrek, their first response is usually to try to dispatch him," Tru'eb said.

"I tried so many times, he put a bounty on my head," Jai replied.

"What did you use, a sniper's rifle?" Platt asked.

"Rifles aren't my style," Jai said. "I used explosives. The concentrated kinds."

The group stopped before a door at the end of one dark alley. Dirk knocked three times, then the door opened.

"Lo hong, lo hong, nechak," beckoned the Rodian inside.

"Cut to the chase, Tulagn," Dirk said, waving for the others to enter. The back storeroom was piled with unmarked plastic crates. "Where are the goods?"

The Rodian scampered over to one crate near the center of the room. He opened it and smiled at the explosive charges inside.

"Whoa!" Starter cried. "There must be enough bombs in that crate to blow up a Star Destroyer. What're you going to do with all ..."

Platt clasped her hand over Starter's mouth, silencing him.

Dirk hefted one of the charges in his hand. He looked to Jai. "How many you think we'll need?"

Jai moved to the crate and examined another charge. "I'd say about five — that should do the job."

Starter, released from Platt's grasp, popped another crate open, then removed one of the thermal detonators packed into the crate. "Hey, Jai! Catch!" Starter called, tossing the detonator at her.

She spun around, her eyes going wide and frantic when she saw the detonator in mid-air. Jai caught it with one hand, then made sure it wasn't armed.

Starter stood in the corner, snickering to himself. "A little jumpy there, aren't you, Jai?"

Before Starter could breath again, Jai had her free hand at his throat, pinning him against the wall. "Don't ever, ever joke about thermal detonators," she snarled. "Or you just might find yourself having one forced down your throat ..."

"Could we make some attempt at acting like civilized beings?" Tru'eb asked. Jai released her grasp and Starter gasped for air.

"Thank you," Tru'eb said.

"We'll take five," Dirk told the Rodian.

"Why's she so hyper over the detonator?" Starter asked Platt. "It

was only a joke."

"Your reaction to Starter's trick *was* rather extreme," Tru'eb noted.

"Let's just say I've had some bad experiences with thermal detonators," Jai snapped.

"You want to tell us about it?" Platt suggested.

Jai ran a finger along the scar across her left cheek, then looked back at Dirk, who was busy haggling with the Rodian for the explosives. "I suppose we have time," she said, sitting down on a crate.

"Moff Jellrek had already issued a bounty on my head for my several failed assassination attempts," Jai began. "I had to blow the guy away before one of his hired goons did the same to me. I was on Romar, where Moff Jellrek had his estate. I had hidden my ship in the Derrbi Wastes and hiked three days, sneaking past sensors and scout patrols, until I reached the mansion ..."

Jai crouched behind some fancily cut shrubbery, scanning the area for patrols. Two army troopers paced near the mansion's main entrance, but the short run to the open door of the repulsorlift bay was clear. She checked her heavy blaster pistol, making certain the safety was off, then made sure the two explosive charges inside her satchel were set. She closed the flap on the bag, looked for any more guards, then dashed to the bay.

Nobody was inside. A few speeder bikes hovered along one wall, but the Moff's Chariot command speeder was sitting right near the bay's wide entrance. Jai glanced at her chronometer — the Moff was leaving in five minutes for the starport. If Jai worked fast enough, it would be the shortest flight in his life.

She popped the hatch to the pilot's station and leaned inside. She clicked the detonator timer to five minutes, armed the charge and affixed it beneath the pilot's command console with the magnetic grip plate. She did the same with the other explosive charge, but put it beneath the opposite console.

Jai was about to slip out of the speeder when she noticed a small display screen and a knob concealed beneath the pilot's console. After checking the wires and circuitry linked to the small unit, she turned the knob a few clicks. The display lit up — 01:00. 00:59. 00:58. 00:57 ...

Moff Jellrek is really going to get it this time, Jai thought.

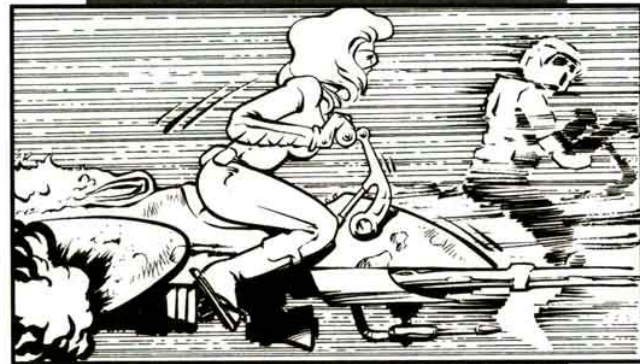
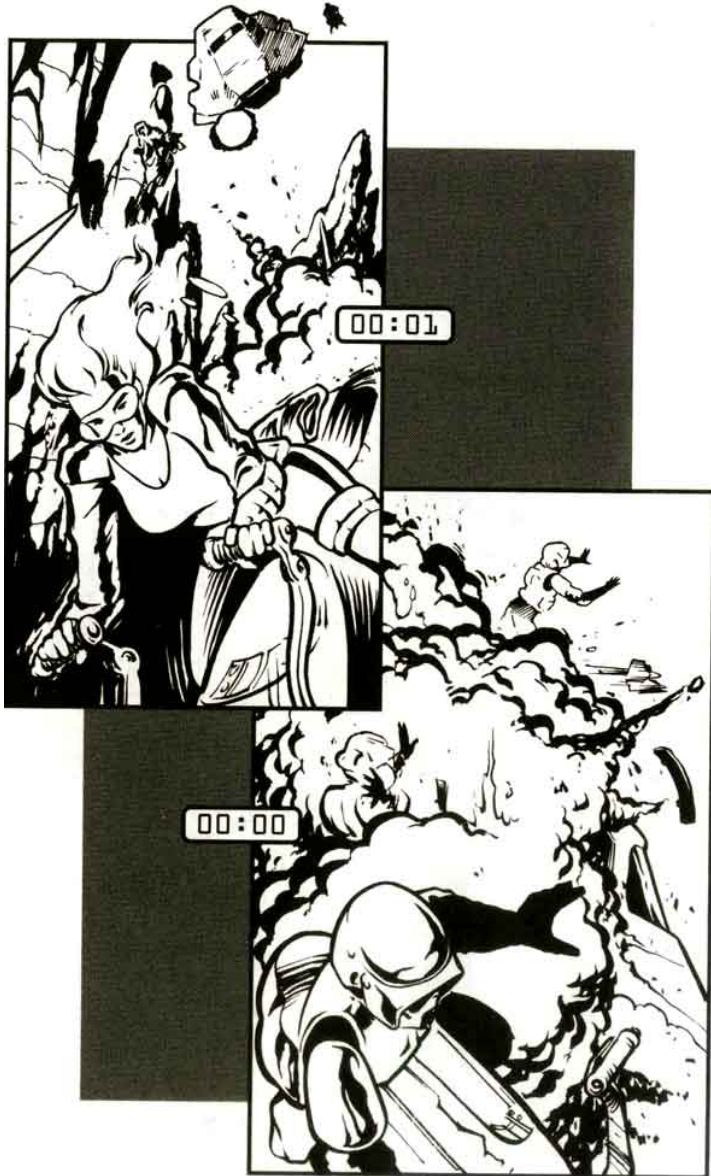
She slipped out of the command speeder and reached up to close the hatch.

"Halt!" cried the trooper near the bay door. "Stay where you are."

In one swift motion Jai drew her blaster and dropped the trooper

to the ground. No doubt more guards would hear. She needed a quick escape, and not in the command speeder.





The trooper zoomed to one side of her and slammed into the rocks with a fiery explosion.

After some repairs on the speeder bike's repulsorlift unit, Jai returned to her ship, *Doomsayer*, a small Ghtroc freighter nestled in one of the Derrbi Wastelands' canyons. She slipped off the speeder bike and spat in the dust. She had missed Moff Jellrek again.

Jai took a step toward her ship and froze. Something was wrong. She drew her blaster, all the while peering into the rocky crags. Jai sniffed the air. Someone had been here.

Stepping carefully to the closed starship hatch, she inspected the dust. Just as she thought — footprints. They led up the canyon right to the hatch.

Jai pressed the hatch release panel and dodged to one side of the entry ramp.

The ramp whined as it lowered from the hull. Dusty footprints led

up into the freighter. Jai cautiously stepped into the ship, blaster at the ready. The footprints led to the cockpit, but Jai checked out the engineering station, crew cabin and hold first. When the door to the cockpit slid open, Jai didn't see anybody. She approached the pilot and co-pilot seats. "What the ..."

A thermal detonator sat in the pilot's chair, several colored lights methodically blinking away ...

Jai spun around and dashed out of the ship, dodging down the hatchway and into the dust.





Jai peered at the hunter, then noticed another thermal detonator clipped to her belt. She could feel the knife's cold edging closer to her throat. Jai reached for the detonator, flipped the arming switch, then kicked the bounty hunter in the gut. The knife zipped along her face as it flew from the bounty hunter's hand. Jai leapt for the ship's ramp and closed it behind her. Clutching her side, she found the thermal detonator still blinking in the pilot's chair:



Jai cursed, then powered up the ship. As she lifted off, the thermal detonator she had activated on the bounty hunter's armor incinerated the canyon and buffeted the *Doomsayer*. Jai razed the entire canyon with the *Doomsayer's* guns, just to be certain. But there was no sign of the bounty hunter ...

...

"And to this day, I have no idea whatever happened to Beylyssa," Jai said. "Which is why I'm so jumpy when people like you start tossing them around." She glared at Starter.

"Hey, I didn't know that bounty hunter cut up your face like that," Starter said. "Not that it makes you look ugly or anything ... I mean, it's like, uh ..."

"He who keeps silent lives longer than he who wags his tongue," Tru'eb counseled, patting Starter on the shoulder.

"I've heard Beylyssa's still around," Platt added. "Or at least someone like her who uses that disarmed detonator trick."

"Well, she needs to buy her explosives from someplace," Dirk grunted. "Say Tulagn, you ever know a bounty hunter who popped the trigger wedges out of thermal detonators?"

The Rodian shrugged his shoulders. "Ne hinga, ne lochak."

"Figures ..." Dirk muttered. "We're all set."

"Great," Platt chimed. "How about a nightcap out at my ship. I've got a good stash of Gruvian Tovash to help everyone sleep well ..."

Roleplaying Game Statistics

Jai Raventhorn

(At the time of "Explosive Developments")

Type: Outlaw

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 6D+2, dodge 5D, grenade 5D+1, melee combat 4D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Streetwise 4D, willpower 4D+2

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Repulsorlift operation 5D, space transports 4D

PERCEPTION 2D

Con 4D, hide 3D+2, sneak 4D

STRENGTH 3D+1

Brawling 5D, lifting 4D+1, stamina 6D+2

TECHNICAL 3D

Demolition 4D+2, repulsorlift repair 4D, security 5D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 11

Move: 10

Equipment: Blast vest (+1D physical, +1 energy, torso only), comlink, two heavy blaster pistols (5D)

(Three years after the Battle of Endor)

Blaster 9D+2, brawling parry 5D+2, dodge

7D, grenade 6D, melee combat 5D+1, run-

ning 4D+2, thrown weapons 5D

Intimidation 6D, streetwise 4D+2, sur-

vival 5D, willpower 6D

Astrogation 3D+2, space transports 4D+2,

starship gunnery 4D

Con 5D, hide 4D+2, sneak 6D

Brawling 7D, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 4D+2, stamina 7D

Demolition 7D+2, repulsorlift repair 4D+2, security 7D+1

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 12

Capsule: Jai Raventhorn always knew the Empire meant trouble, but she had little to do with it during her quiet life working as a mining engineer on Rodaj. Until one day the man she was to marry was gunned down by an Imperial officer for no apparent reason. As she held him in her arms, his last words to her were "Avenge ... my love."

The man ultimately responsible for her lover's death was Moff Jellrek, whom Jai tried several times to assassinate using her expertise in demolitions. She later joined the Rebel Alliance as a SpecForces operative. After the Battle of Endor, she became disillusioned with the New Republic, partly due to her sister Morgan's death at Endor. Jai left the New Republic to travel with Dirk Harkness and other companions throughout the crumbling Empire on a reconnaissance mission. With Harkness, she helped found the Black Curs, a mercenary intelligence group.

Jai is known for her short temper and disregard for her personal safety in battle. She is very tall with long blonde hair and piercing blue eyes. Jai always wears a red article of clothing, usually a red shirt, and a green blast vest. When thinking she'll often finger the eight centimeter scar across the left side of her face. If Jai doesn't look angry, a troubled look clouds her face.



Peter Schweighofer



Beylyssa

Type: Bounty Hunter

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 7D, dodge 5D+2, grenade 5D, melee combat 6D, melee parry 5D+1, missile weapons 5D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Languages 4D, streetwise 5D, survival 4D+2

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 3D+1, space transports 4D+2, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 3D

PERCEPTION 3D

Intimidation 5D, investigation 5D+2, search 4D, sneak 6D

STRENGTH 3D+2

Brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 6D, stamina 4D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Armor repair 4D+2, blaster repair 5D, demolition 8D+2

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 3

Character Points: 7

Move: 10

Equipment: Arelik bounty hunter armor (see below), two heavy blaster pistols (5D), two thermal detonators (one dummy, see below)

Capsule: Little is known of Beylyssa's origins. Some say she is the daughter of an Imperial Advisor, others believe she's a super-commando left over from some long-forgotten military unit.

Her characteristic black and gray bounty hunter armor is feared throughout the galaxy. Her emotionless helmet has a long, black braid of hair emerging from the back. Few know if this is her true hair or simply a crest she wears. Nobody knows the face which hides behind her helmet's dark faceplate.

Beylyssa has been seen working for the Empire, and is responsible for killing several Rebel operatives. She single-handedly destroyed the Rebel cell on Durgon after hunting the fledgling Rebel group for months. She has also worked for several crimelords.

Beylyssa is ruthless and cunning. Her penchant for setting up traps involving thermal detonators is known only by those few who barely escaped with their lives from such traps.

Beylyssa's Armor

Model: Modified Arelik Armor

Type: Modified personal battle armor

Cost: Not for sale

Availability: Unique

Game Effects:

Basic Suit: Provides +2D to Strength for physical attacks, +1D for energy attacks. Covers head, torso and arms. Dexterity and related skills are -1D.

Sensor Pod: +1D to search.

Infrared Sensor: Adds +1D to Perception in darkness.

Turbo-Projected Grappling Hook: 20-meter lanyard, uses missile weapons skill (ranges 0-3/10/20), spring-barbed hook (3D+2 damage if used on a live target).
Winch: Capable of lifting 100 kilograms (Beylyssa and her equipment only).
Environment Filter: Helmet filter system can prevent harmful molecules from entering the lungs.

Tampering with Thermal Detonators

Beylyssa's trademark is the thermal detonator. Nobody knows where she buys them in the large quantities she often uses, but some say a Rodian arms dealer on Wroona keeps her well supplied.

Beylyssa tinkers with detonators — some explode as usual, but others have the trigger wedges removed, allowing the timer to tick down, even after reaching the zero mark. These "dummy detonators" are good for scaring Beylyssa's prey. Bounties often panic and act clumsily, stumbling away from the dummy detonator and into Beylyssa's blaster sights.

Removing the trigger wedges from a thermal detonator is risky business. Characters who wish to make dummy detonators like this must make two Very Difficult *demolition* rolls, one to open the detonator housing and remove the trigger wedges, and another to reassemble the detonator without setting off the explosives. Once reassembled, the detonator is stable, and is rather useless until the trigger wedges are replaced (a Heroic *demolition* task).



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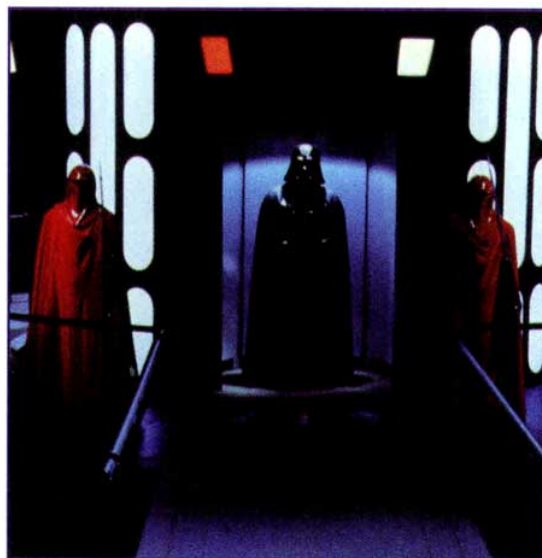
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