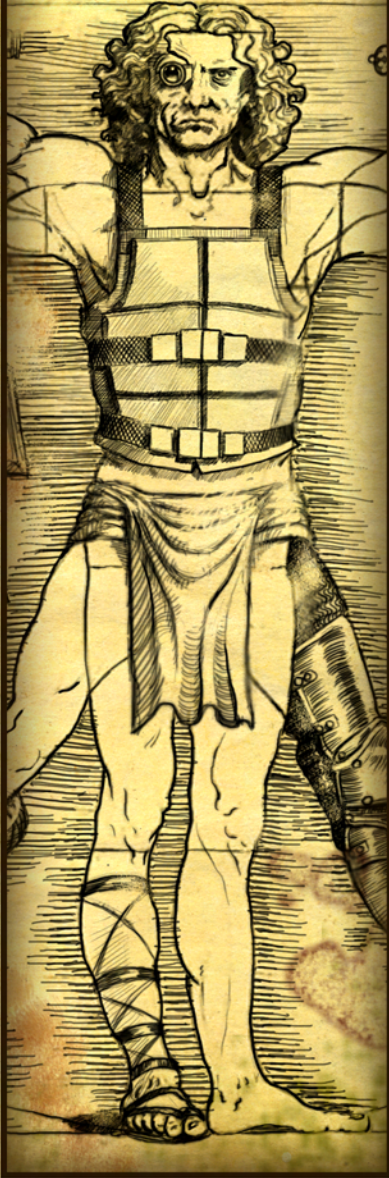


BASIC ROLEPLAYING

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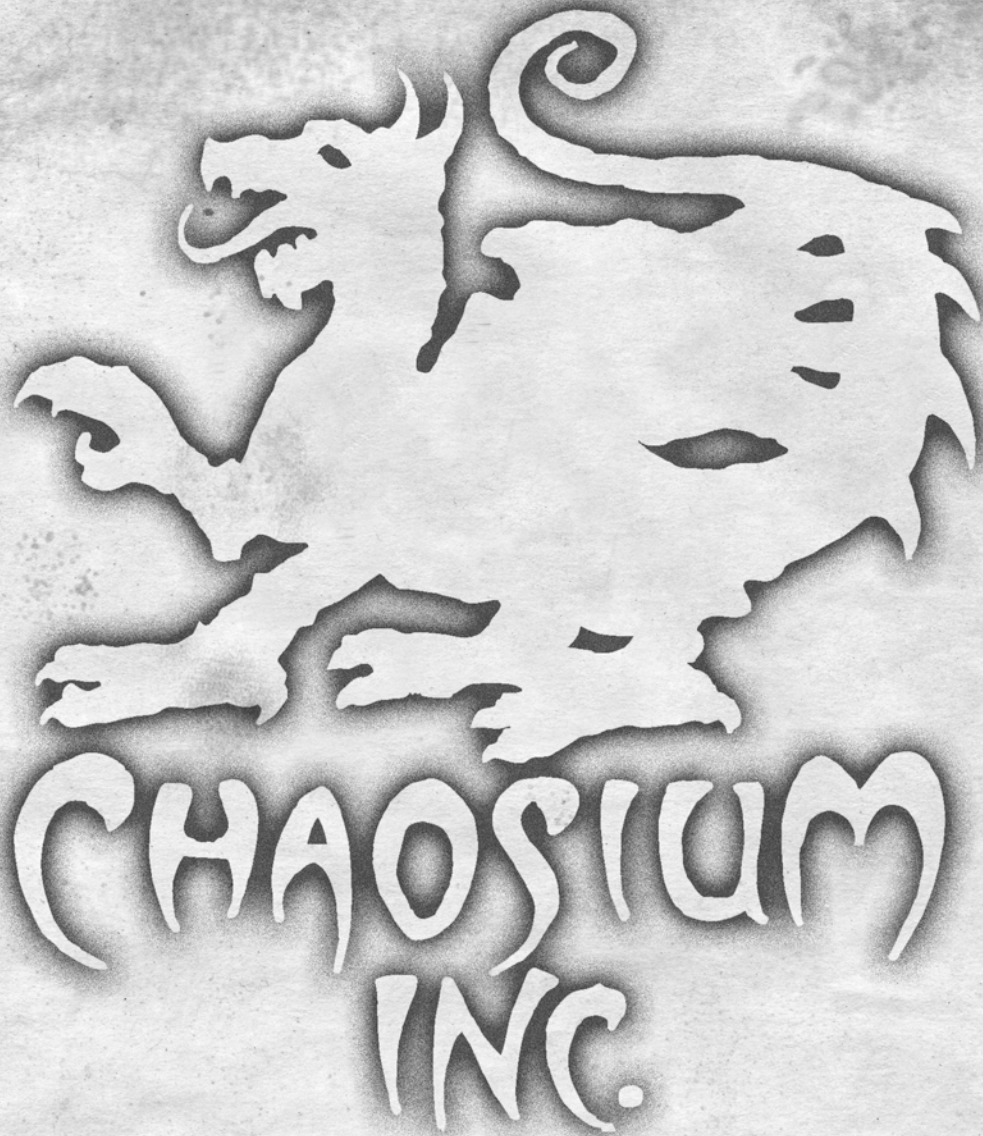
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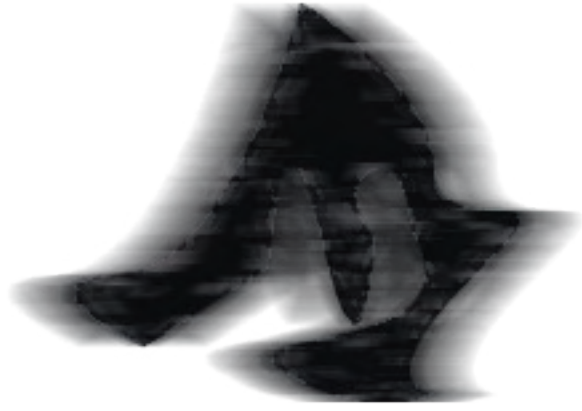
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People travel between worlds via the Gate network, operated by the fanatically anti-technology Guild of Gate Wardens, mutant humans known as the Gifted who have Psionic powers known as Gifts. Bulky and high-mass cargo must be transported by faster than light (FTL) starships, and only the cyborgs of the Pilots' Guild can survive FTL translation. Earth was lost to the nano-plague over a millennium ago in an apocalypse known as The Fall. Now the several dozen core worlds and their numerous colonies are governed by a multitude of different arrangements, all under the uneasy peace that has endured for the thousand years since the signing of the Accords between the Pilots' Guild and the Guild of Gate Wardens, which brought to a close the war between the Guilds. The governments, religions, and multi-corps jockey for position beneath the Guild's fragile détente, while the mutually hostile Sauriki and Quertzl aliens beset humanity.

History

When humanity escaped the nano-plague that engulfed Earth, it did so in a blind panic. Most people didn't understand the subtleties of the Gates and their operation—they just wanted to leave. Gate wardens were working flat out as it was, desperately trying to ship enough people off world while defending the Gate centers from the nano-plague. The event was so monumental that Humanity reset its calendars to a Post Fall (PF) notation.

Gates are delicate things. While it is theoretically possible for a single Gate warden to activate and target a Gate on another world, in practice the strain of opening a Gate even to a well-known target is enormous, and most wardens would

lose control of the biofeedback fields and die within seconds. Thus, Gate teams are composed of several individuals gifted in convergence and always include at least one bio-field specialist. This practice spreads the load between the team members and allows the emergent mind of convergence to monitor the component individuals using the bio-field specialist's knowledge. Also, while a Gate can be opened from one end, it takes is considerably easier if there is a Gate facility at the target end—even more so if it is manned and co-operating in the establishment of the Gate. But, equally, an active facility with personnel can interdict Gate creation on that world.

The near colonies initially worked with the Earth Gates to accept the flood of refugees, but there came a point at which they had to cut off the flow. Gates to established colonies began to shut down, and the remaining population on Earth truly panicked. Frightened refugees forced open some Gates, others killed Gate wardens, and many took the desperate gamble of opening "random" Gates to previously untested worlds. Some were so desperate as to enter Gates with merely "theoretical" target points. By this point, people were so terrified by the spread of the nano-plague that they were willing to take the risk—tens of thousands leaped through Gates, some of which were so unstable that they were collapsing as people passed through them. Humanity was scattered, ill prepared, and unequipped across the accessible worlds within reach of the desperate Gate wardens of Earth. Current estimates are a closely guarded secret of the Guild of Gate Wardens, but best guesses are that humanity reached thousands of worlds within a sphere approximately 1,000 light years in diameter centered on the Sol system.

The nine established off-world colonies obviously bore the brunt of the refugees but were also best suited to coping with the flood of people. One, Alpha Centauri, was over-confident, perhaps too generous. They kept accepting refugees so long that the Plague came through with them through. In the end, humanity lost two worlds to the nano-plague.

The Present Day

It is 1362 years since the loss of Earth and the Fall. Since between-world communication occurs at the discretion of the Gate Wardens or the Pilots' Guild, no single unified government exists. The Guilds, although mutually antagonistic, each value their independence, and neither wishes to rule directly nor

The Accords

The Guild of Gate Wardens is highly suspicious of advanced technology and severely restricts its movement through Gates under their control—that is, all Gates in the Human Sphere. Under the treaty between the Gate Wardens and the Pilots' Guild, agreements known as the Accords, the restrictions on technology and other laws that apply throughout the Human Sphere are policed by the feared enforcement arm of the Guilds—the Instrumentality.

Most severely restricted are nano-tech and similar technology, which is entirely forbidden by the Guild and which all Gate Wardens will seek to destroy whenever found.

Next most severely restricted is computational and communication technology (as the two are intrinsically linked and seen as enabling technologies to the creation of nano-tech): the Guild has a deep distrust of any and all attempts at creating Artificial Intelligence. On most worlds, personal communications are limited (but often based on efficient digital technology), and Gate Wardens' distrust of the Pilots' Guild means that satellites are usually banned and thus exceptionally rare.

Four broad levels of technology are encountered in the Human Sphere, some rarely, and a fifth is included for completeness. In descending order:

Precursor/Ultra-tech: Technology so advanced it is incomprehensible, even to the Pilots' Guild. Known mostly from legends and

stories, to date there has been no known incident of functioning Precursor tech found on any world in the Human Sphere.

Ship Tech: Technology of the FTL vessels of the Pilots' Guild. Also known as Banned Tech, as it is forbidden on all worlds covered by the Accords. Nano-tech, AI / autonomous expert systems, high-powered computing/communications technology, sophisticated "field" technology. For diplomatic purposes some exceptions are permitted—it is generally accepted that Pilot's "presences" (robots remotely controlled by the Pilots who remain in orbit on their ships) are Ship tech, but the Guild of Gate Wardens in most circumstances permits them planet side.

Core Word Tech: The technology levels sustained by the extensive manufacturing and scientific infrastructure of the core worlds of the human sphere. Digital communications, limited "field" technology (pseudo-antigrav for vehicles, personal shields, and simple force-field constructions). Simple beam weapons, early Gauss weapons, "high-tech" fire arms (binary propellant, case-less, and so on).

Frontier Tech: Technology sustained by frontier/colony worlds, employing wheeled vehicles or beasts of burden and riding animals at best, with simple firearms, no "field" technologies, and poor communications such as analog radio, telegraph, or heliographs.

Primitive Tech: Technology of "lost" Worlds, where humanity has survived in isolation since the Fall. Primitive black powder firearms represent the best military technology in this category, with simple water power or possibly primitive steam engines as the pinnacle of civilian technology.



to see the other in power. Both also have something the other needs: The near-immortal cyborgs of the Pilots' Guild can transport materials in bulk between worlds (trips of several light years taking several months) and can easily supply worlds with raw materials without the need for planet bound, environmentally damaging industry; and the Guild of Gate Wardens permit the near instantaneous movement of people and small masses between the settled worlds of the Human human Spheresphere.

The settled worlds need the Gates to keep in touch with each other and the ships to keep trading and thus, in some cases, to survive. Both guilds need the settled worlds as sources of recruits, food, and materials, but since neither guild wishes to rule directly, others have stepped into the power vacuum. Strong figures, prepared to seize power, came to prominence on many worlds in the immediate aftermath of the Fall. Some enjoyed the power so much that they clung to it, establishing dictatorships; others established new forms of governance, either falling back on old models from Earth or inventing new ones.

Many corporations survived, some merely as a name or power structure ambitious individuals could usurp, others—such as Vascon Corporation or Yamatatchi Industries, both of which had headquarters off Earth—remained much as they had always been, albeit now no longer constrained by the United Earth Edicts but only by the Accords between the Guild of Gate Wardens and the Pilots' Guild. The Five Great Corporations are effectively multi-world trading powers, constrained to operate on any given world by local agreements as the Gate wardens and pilots can effectively sever corporate communications at any time.

The Guild of Gate Wardens is highly suspicious of advanced technology and severely restricts its movement through Gates under their control—that is, all Gates in the human sphere. Most severely restricted are nano-tech and similar technology, which is entirely forbidden by the Guild and which all Gate wardens will seek to destroy on sight. Next most severely restricted is computational and communication technology, as the two are intrinsically linked and seen as enabling technologies to the creation of nano-tech. The Guild also has a deep distrust of any attempts at creating artificial intelligence. On most worlds, personal communications are limited

but often based on efficient digital technology, and Gate wardens' distrust of the Pilots' Guild means that satellites are exceptionally rare.

Timeline

DATE	EVENT
2143 CE/0 PF	The Fall and exodus from Earth.
0—20 PF	Dark Years. Chaos, anarchy, the fall of Alpha Centauri.
20—100 PF	Gate Hegemony. Rise of the Gate Dictatorships on several worlds.
100—150 PF	Insurrections and rebellions against the Gifted.
150 PF	Re-contact. Pilots re-contact several human worlds. Gate Hegemonies in crisis.
150—300 PF	Guild Wars. As the Gate Hegemonies fall some Pilots attempt to conquer worlds of their own, and some Multi-corps make power plays of their own. People previously opposed to the Gate Hegemonies find themselves allied with the Gifted against the Cyborgs of the FTL ships and their Corporate "allies."
286 PF	Joshua Stoneheart (of the newly formed Guild of Gate Wardens) and Pilot Sergei Androvitch of the Alliance of Neutral Pilots (later the Pilots Guild of Terra) sign the Accords, agreeing to limit their respective involvement in human politics in return for cessation of hostilities and guarantees of their respective rights; afterward, all Gifted are the province of the Gate Wardens, and all Afflicted are the province of the Pilots' Guild. Nations outside the Guilds are not consulted but are content with the settlement, as the Guilds drove the conflicts.
432 PF	Formation of the United One God Catechism and the Dominion of Lasteen, a multi-world religious establishment reminiscent of the Holy Roman Empire of Earth.

684 PF

First Contact (by a Pilots' Guild Explorer Vessel) with Sauriki in the Telebraith System. Since this is well beyond the Human Sphere, the Sauriki are not regarded as a threat, and the contact is not revealed to the rest of Humanity until 953 PF

819 PF

First confirmed Precursor site discovered on the newly opened world of Lesterion IV

872 PF

Declaration of the Commonwealth of Free Worlds, later renamed the Commonwealth of Dalriada. Several worlds revolt against rule by the Feudal electors of the Dominion of Lasteen and establish themselves as republics within a multi-world trade and cultural association named

after the martyred revolutionary, Kieron Dalriada.

953 PF

First Human Gate opened to Sauriki World; after a brief skirmish, human forces withdraw. Pilots' Guild makes public their knowledge of the Sauriki.

1127 PF

First Contact with Quertzl Hive on Veron III.

1247 PF

Sauriki attack and overrun Tessent II outpost, beginning ongoing hostilities.

1284 PF

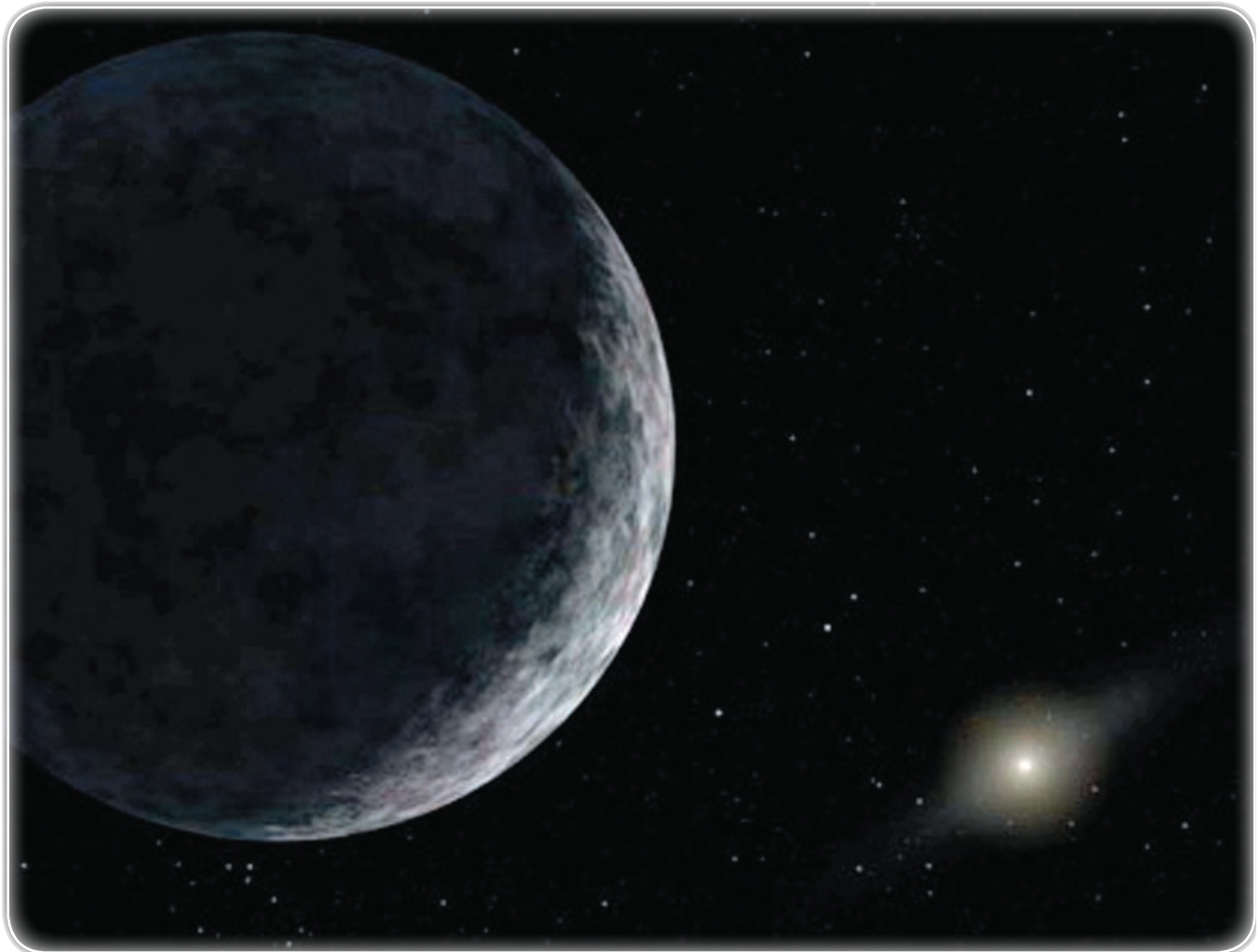
Tripoint Facility opens.


1296 PF

Hegemony of Jedepare, a feudal multi-world dominion covering seventeen worlds, splinters in civil war.

1362 PF

The present, over a thousand years since the Accords were signed





A COMPACT GUIDE TO THE HUMAN SPHERE

The Accords: The treaty between the Guild of Gate Wardens and the Pilots' Guild that founded the modern era and ended the Guild Wars.

The Afflicted: The 0.1% of the human population with genetic defects causing physical disabilities exacerbated by living in deep gravity wells and might (in 1% of such cases) be capable of tolerating the FTL transition. Once identified, such individuals are claimed by the Pilots' Guild and, if not capable of being Pilots, staff the Guild's off-world facilities.

The Curtain: The real-space defensive cordon the Pilots' Guild maintains around the Sol and Centauri systems.

The Commonwealth of Dalriada: An avowedly anti-religious trade and cultural association composed of about a dozen worlds that arose out of a rebellion against the UOGC/Dominion of Lasteen and some of its member worlds. The Commonwealth is a mixed bag of democracies and other political systems.

Fields: Post-fall science has built on the limited understanding of 22nd Century Earth to delineate a unified model of the physical universe showing that most phenomena are the result of interactions of certain fundamental "fields." Manipulation of these fields can achieve certain physical effects: lambda (λ), mu (μ), omicron (\omicron), and tau (τ) fields allow limited manipulation of gravity, electro-magnetism, and kinetics, respectively. Both Gates and FTL starships are applications of such fields.

Gates: Only a Gifted with the right talent—or a team of Gifted in convergence, one of whom has the right talent—can establish a Gate at a Gate node. Modern Gate nodes are usually underground chambers specially constructed for the purpose; originally they were stone-age monuments such as Stonehenge and Stanton Drew, where specific arrangements of carefully selected stones interacted with subtle local geological anomalies to produce unique geo-gravitic conditions.

Gates can transport only a dozen or so people at a time—actual total mass varies depending on node, team and target—and there must be at least one mind present, and the Gifted must maintain a degree of concentration throughout the translation: a few seconds for a "routine" translation, up to a minute or so for a particularly difficult translation, which might involve a long distance, high mass, overriding an interdict, or other challenge.

Theoretically, a Gifted can target a Gate on any other world or, with great effort, even "probe" for new worlds, but "point to point" on-world Gate transport is a legendary achievement never witnessed, and opening a Gate to a virgin world is extremely difficult and potentially dangerous.

A Gate node at the target makes it easier to establish a Gate, as does a Gifted or Gifted team generating a receiving field, which "captures" a non-specific Gate targeted at a world, "tethering" it to the Gate node on the target world where it is generated. A team of Gifted can in theory block a Gate opening, a feat requiring a contest of strength and skill between the respective Gifted and can have disastrous, even fatal, consequences for the losing side.

In theory a Gate can be opened into any gravity well: the true fate of the Alpha Centauri colony is that the Gate Wardens, rather than permit Nano-tech to run rampant on another world, opened a Gate into the stellar primary. Stellar core material erupted out of the open Gate for nearly a second before the Gifteds' defenses were overwhelmed—more than enough time to sterilize the planetary surface and destroy the nano-tech already present.

The Gifted: The 0.1% of the humans with some degree of Psi-power (usually low-level lambda field manipulation, or minor telekinesis) have the potential to be Gate Wardens. Once identified, the Gifted are claimed by the Guild of Gate Wardens. Note that "telepaths" or 'paths are exceptionally rare and almost always violently insane. The known Gifted types include:

- *Pushers*, who remotely move objects with their minds (telekinetics).
- *Warmers*, who manipulate heat (thermo-kinetics).
- *Lightning rods*, who can manipulate electrical and electrostatic fields (electro-kinetics).
- *Faith healers*, who can accelerate healing, extend endurance, block pain, and so on (bio-feedback specialists).
- *Fielders*, who create low-powered field effects such as anti-grav, personal shields, or Gate effects.

Teams of Gifted can work together to achieve greater effects, but a true convergence—a mind that emerges from the synthesis of the participating Gifted—is complex and difficult to achieve, requiring skilled biofeedback talents to monitor the convergent structure of gifted minds.

Of the 0.1% of humans who are Gifted, 99% are "minor" talents, typically pushers who can move a centi-credit slowly across a table, or thermo-kinetics who can warm a cup of coffee a few degrees over several minutes. Most such Gifted become low-level functionaries within the Guild.

Of the 1 in 100,000 who manifest substantial talent, most are pushers, thermo-, or electro-kinetics, but Gate operations require a degree of fielder talent, and team operations are risky without a biofeedback talent in convergence.

Representatives of both Wardens' and Pilots' Guilds test children between the ages of 7 and 9, and

if either Gift or Affliction is detected, the selected children depart with the appropriate Guild, leaving behind their biological family forever. Many try to avoid being taken by the Gate Wardens, but few succeed, and the Wardens' internal indoctrination programs are terrifyingly effective, rarely failing to sever family ties. In contrast, many poor families hope for a child to be inducted in to the Pilots' Guild, but few are taken, and no indoctrination is required, as ensigns rapidly leave their family and relations behind. True pilots live their hugely extended lives in disjointed, dislocated fragments of isolation, spending long periods in journeys between worlds that can take months or even years. Since supra-luminal ships are cut off entirely from normal space, and fully cyborged Pilots can't enter normal planetary gravity wells, their direct social contacts are limited to their own crews of cyborgs and AIs.

Kingdom of Gos-ferrenie: The smallest of the Hegemony of Jedepare successor states, Gos-ferrenie is the most stable. The kingdom rules two worlds.

Principality of Holcova: A nation of three worlds, Holcova is one of the successor states to the Hegemony of Jedepare. The Principality is still wracked by so much internal conflict that the Guild of Gate Wardens has threatened to sever contact with the Principality unless matters stabilize.

The Human Sphere: This collective term describes the worlds currently in contact via the Gate and FTL ship network settled by Humanity in the Diaspora of The Fall. The Human Sphere is generally recognized as consisting of the Core Worlds (40–50 worlds), the Established Colonies (15–20 worlds, colonized for a century or more but less than five hundred years), the New Colonies/Outposts (approximately 50 worlds colonized in the last century or so), and the Fringe Worlds (approximately 30 worlds not in regular contact or not colonized for various reasons).

The Instrumentality: This feared law-enforcement arm of the Guilds enforces the firm restrictions on technology and other laws that apply throughout the human sphere.

Kingdom of Jedepare: This feudal nation of six worlds is the largest of the successor states to arise

from the collapse of the Hegemony of Jedepare, a feudal multi-world dominion covering seventeen worlds, which splintered in to civil war in 1296 PF. Its current ruler, King Valdrada, is the son of the last Hegemon of Jedepare, a man keen to be seen as a more responsible ruler than his father, who presided over the disintegration of the Hegemony.

The Dominion of Lasteen: Theocratic association of twelve worlds, all of which are exclusively followers of the United One God Catechism religion and each of which has a vote in electing the Emperor (civilian leader) of the Dominion. Only candidates approved by the Hierophant of the Unified One God Catechism can be elected, and they hold office only with the Hierophant's approval. Individual worlds are generally feudal, low tech, and deeply hostile to the Multi-corps, especially Bio-Metria, whose eugenics programs were declared blasphemous by Heiratic Writ in 1332.

The Logopolitan Orders: A number of quasi-religious orders that bear some resemblance to monastic orders from the Middle Ages on Earth and which specialize in information retrieval and processing but make minimal use of computers and other such restricted technology. Instead they use highly trained and disciplined human operators who participate in what can be described only as gigantic living computers made up of thousands of human participants.

Multi-Corps: These great trading powers of the known worlds operate on multiple worlds. Five trade associations are generally recognised as having Multi-corps status: Vascon Corporation and Yamatatchi Industries, known as The Elders because they can trace their origins to pre-Fall Old Earth; plus the Young Pretenders, Kiros-Petrov Manufacturing Associates (KPMA), Bio-Metria Technologies (BMT), and Umbra Incorporated (aka Umbra or Umbra Inc.).

Multi-World Governments: Surprisingly few governments rule over multiple worlds. At one time there were three such multi-world governments, but in the last century one, the Hegemony of Jedepare, has splintered in to three successor states, making the current total five: The Kingdom of Jedepare; the

Principality of Holcova; the Kingdom of Gos-ferrenie; the Dominion of Lasteen, and the Commonwealth of Dalriada. The rest of the core worlds are either single-world governments or, in some cases, Balkanized worlds. Since the Guilds dislike dealing with such volatile structures, fragmented worlds tend to move rapidly toward some degree of unified world government, as the alternative is being cut off by the Guilds.

New Territories: The volume of space fully opened for exploitation by the construction of the Tripoint Facility some eighty years ago are called the New Territories. They are the farthest of the Known Worlds from the core worlds and Old Earth, and to date they remain free of Sauriki and Quertzl incursions.

The Outer Dark: This term refers to all worlds not yet contacted; technically, The Outer Dark includes The Lost, worlds humans reached during the Fall but which haven't been contacted since, and the Untouched, worlds humans have never visited.

Precursors: In the past five centuries, humanity has found evidence on several worlds of an unidentified ultra-tech capable alien species, a civilization that appears to have died out some 100,000 years ago and that was present throughout this region of space.

Quertzl: These hive-mind insect-like aliens can't use Gates, relying on STL generation ships and their unique stable telepathy. They possess only frontier technology, but their innate telepathy, hostility, and locust-like invasion of worlds makes them a serious threat.

Religions of the Human Sphere: Few earthly religions survived the Fall unchanged, and the Dark Years and Guild Wars left their marks as well. The most common religions are the Unified One God Catechism, an amalgamation and revision of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions of Earth, and the Vedic faiths, a complex group of interrelated theologies loosely derived from the Vedas and Upanishads of India on Earth. The UOGC is common throughout the Human Sphere and effectively "rules" the Dominion of Lasteen, albeit ostensibly there is a civil authority in the form of the Emperor elected by the member worlds of the Dominion, subject to

the approval of the Hierophant in New Mecca. The UOGC throughout the Human Sphere answers to the spiritual authority of the Hierophant, but only within the Dominion of Lasteen does this also grant real political power, although some Frontier worlds can be fervently religious. Many minor faiths drawing on old Earth traditions or newly created since the Fall flourish among the poor and throughout the Lost and outer worlds, as well as various cults inspired by the Afflicted, the Gifted, and various aliens, especially the Precursors. In general, the Guild of Gate Wardens discourages cults centered around the Gifted on the Core and Frontier Worlds, and the Guild moves swiftly to eliminate them on the Outerworlds of the Outer Dark when discovered. The Pilots' Guild, having a somewhat disjointed view of mainstream planet bound humanity, largely ignores the equivalent cults that arise around the Afflicted, but they can be ruthless in retrieving "their own."

Sauriki: Gate-capable Saurian aliens first contacted nearly six hundred years ago, Sauriki were then at frontier tech levels but have progressed to Core technology. More troubling is that they appear to be much more FTL tolerant than Humanity, and as of the attack on Tessent II, they appear to have entered a mysterious, highly aggressive phase.

Technology Guidelines: Part of the Accords grants the Guild of Gate Wardens the power to limit technology transfer via the Gates, and the Instrumentality strictly enforces these Technology Guidelines.

Tripoint Facility: A rare example of co-operation between the Guilds, Tripoint was an uninhabited star system the Pilots' Guild used as a way station and navigation point. When the Gate-driven colonization of the sector expanded traffic, however, the Guilds felt it would be useful to have a manufacturing facility in the system to harvest the rich resources of its two gas giants and several asteroid belts. However, the manpower for such extensive operations in relatively high-G environments was an obstacle, so the Guild approached Yamatatchi Industries. Yamatatchi agreed but pointed out that the Gate Wardens might view any facility as a breach of the Accords, and that recruiting would be difficult without Gate access—STL ships could reach the system, but the journey would take within a decade from the

nearest inhabited system. With no other option, the Gate Wardens were approached and, despite some misgivings, eventually agreed to the project. The Tripoint Facility was opened in 1284 and remains the oddest human colony—a city in space, inside and on the surface of an asteroid in the trailing Trojan point of Tripoint V, a gas giant with an extensive ring system like Saturn's.

Rumors and Legends

- The Pilots' Guild is in contact with several additional alien species/AIs/Earth.
- The Guild of Gate Wardens has several hidden worlds no one apart from Gate Wardens visit.
- There is a planet called Shadow, still ruled by a Gate Hegemony that did not sign the Accords, that possesses Ultra-tech and a way to open Gates to worlds in the Human Sphere without the Gate Wardens' knowing.
- The Precursors had visited Earth before the Fall in the distant past, and the Gate Wardens / Pilot's Guild / Multi-corps have suppressed the evidence.
- The Gate Wardens / Pilot's Guild / Multi-corps eradicated the nano-plague on earth centuries ago, but have kept humanities restored birth place as a safe haven for themselves.
- The Sauriki claim that humanity attacked them first.
- BMT are working on artificial ways of creating Gifted and Afflicted people.
- Umbra have built a machine that can activate a Gate.
- The Hierophant of the UOGC is in league with the Quertzl.
- The Gate Wardens / Pilot's Guild / Multi-corps are suppressing details of human worlds in the Outer Dark that have human populations that did not arrive via gate from Earth.

Vascon Corporation: One of the five great corporations to operate across multiple worlds, and along with their arch-rival, Yamatatchi Industries, one of only two able to trace their origins back to Old Earth, since both had corporate headquarters off Earth at the time of the Fall.

Warfare: Given the restrictions on Gate Travel and FTL ships, one might think that humanity's oldest pastime would be impossible in the age of the Accords, and in a sense it is. But humanity is remarkably persistent and inventive in its pursuit of violence. Assassins Wars are common, as are "proxy wars," where local forces are recruited on world. As on Earth in the Age of Sail, personal integrity, trustworthiness, and loyalty are highly prized. Allied monarchs on other worlds cannot send conventional military aid, but they can lock out a shipment on an FTL ship so that only trusted allies have access. Personal training and discipline, as a substitute for the achievements of banned tech such as computers, have reached unprecedented levels.



OUTPOST 19

Adventure

Outpost 19 is the designation of Vascon Corporation's archaeological research station on the frontier colony world of Jeterieff V, a site that has been quarantined because of the outbreak of an unidentified disease. Can the medical trouble-shooters scrambled via Gate from the Tripoint Facility medical Center contain the outbreak? Or will they discover that something more sinister is behind the crisis?

This adventure is compatible with Basic Role Playing, the Chaosium d100 System, and it draws on previous Chaosium BRP based games for additional rules and setting details. Chapter 5 outlines the BRP options assumed and explains new rules specific to this adventure.

Background

Vascon Corporation has a number of R&D facilities on newly opened worlds—some are corporate domains, others are jointly sponsored worlds. Jeterieff V is a world joint sponsored by Vascon and His Grace King Valdrada of the Kingdom of Jedepare. The Guild of Gate Wardens and the Pilots' Guild opened Jeterieff V for human occupation only in the last twenty years. It also has several possible Precursor sites, and Vascon Corporation has a research outpost investigating the most promising candidate.

Yesterday, the Guild of Gate Wardens announced a Medical Interdict on civilian travel to and from Jeterieff V. Publicly, all they are saying is that there is a medical emergency at the colony and for safety reasons they are restricting access. They have informed Vascon privately that there has been

an outbreak of an unidentified disease at Outpost 19. Vascon has scrambled an emergency medical troubleshooting team (the PCs) to investigate from the resources and peoples available to them at short notice at Tripoint Facility. All equipment the PCs take will have to be carried via Gate (that is, it must be man-portable) and must comply with Gate Warden technology restrictions (no field tech).

Adventure Synopsis

Once the PCs arrive on world at the sole Gate in New Valdrada City they discover that the main colony is unaffected so far, but Outpost 19 has reported several deaths from an unidentified disease. The Guild of Gate Wardens take the mission leader to one side and impress upon him or her the Guild's exceptionally dim view of Multi-corps tampering with Ultratech. An additional piece of information comes to light during this conversation: the FTL ship that recently re-supplied the colony, and which was expected to leave, has remained in orbit but is not responding to hails. The Deputy Director of Outpost 19 "rescues" the PCs from the Gate Wardens and reveals another piece of information: the Director of Outpost 19 is missing. The PCs may stew on these nuggets during a two-hours flight via transport helicopter to the outpost.

The Pilot of the FTL ship had been monitoring the outpost, as the director of Outpost 19 is his direct descendant, and like many Pilots, he covertly follows the fortunes of his planet-bound descendants. This Pilot has gone beyond simple observation, however, and has been surreptitiously guiding his descendant toward more impressive discoveries. The outpost,



under the Director's supervision, in turn at the suggestion of her "mysterious" benefactor, the Pilot, was digging in to the Precursor ruins and accidentally triggered a surviving piece of Precursor technology, releasing a form of nano-tech that has caused the apparent plague at Outpost 19. The Pilot has sent a remote presence (a human-like remote-controlled robot) to observe. The seeming plague is actually a form of pseudo-nano-tech reliant on

device the Director has activated is a "nano-facture," and it is redefining and releasing new nano-tech "packages" every few days based on increasingly accurate models of its "new" environment.

When the Director collapsed in her office, the Pilot's remote presence rescued her and brought her to its shuttle. There the alien nano-tech has proved far more robust because of the relatively fewer impurities in the atmosphere and the much higher ambient EM fields.

ambient EM fields. It is also initially less toxic, for Shiptech level medical technology is much better, but the nano-tech adapts. The alien nano-tech has now infected the shuttle and many of its systems. The Pilot is currently uncertain how to proceed, as it wishes to save the doctor but can't retrieve the shuttle, since the Precursor nano-tech would have a field day on the FTL ship, and the shuttle systems are too compromised to risk the flight to orbit. Until something changes, the Pilot monitors Outpost 19 and the Precursor ruins and may either hijack a cure, if the PCs create one, or recruit the PCs to fix the problems in the shuttle. The Pilot's presence is currently free of infection and continues covertly to monitor the outpost,



ambient electrom-magnetic (EM) fields for power. In its initial form, it is rapidly terminated in the ambient environment, but it remains extremely toxic to humans, as it is intended to sustain an alien physiology. Once terminated, for it leaves a tell-tale signature of atomic molybdenum in human the blood of infected individuals, which has yet to be noticed by the outpost medical staff. Unfortunately, the

but it has to be cautious as, by its very nature, it is surrounded by intense EM fields in which the nano-tech thrives.

Further complications are a local predator infected by the a nano-tech package and, optionally, either the presence of a spy among the currently surviving staff at Outpost 19 or a native species that appears to be related to Quertzl that PCs and NPCs

Vascom Corp. Executive Summary, Jeterieff System

Jeterieff is a K class main sequence star with nine associated planetary bodies, including one super gas giant (Jeterieff VIII), one inner system asteroid belt (between Jeterieff III and IV) along with the usual outer system halo of debris.

Jeterieff V is the only inhabitable planet, a Class B Type 7 Jungle World at the Inner Edge of the Viable Life Zone with no significant companion bodies.

Population Level 2 (on the order of 50,000 souls), classified as a Colony. Joint sponsored by the Kingdom of Jedepare and Vascon Coporation, the usual sub-license per amendment 8 to the Accords applies, but to date, no other Multi-corps or Nations have applied for access.

The Pilots' Guild maintains a Class D facility with limited landing zone for Interface vehicles and a single orbital platform for FTL ships.

The planet exhibits an orbital eccentricity of 0.13 and an axial tilt of 14.3 degrees, with a Day/Night cycle of some 26.1 standard hours. It has a mean diameter of 11,200 km and a mean surface gravity of 1.09 standard gravities.

Jeterieff V is at the extreme inner edge of the Viable Life Zone for its star, so illumination and temperatures are higher than standard.

Freestanding water covers 82% of the planetary surface on average, and much of the land is low lying. Arms of the shallow seas penetrate far inland, providing ready sources of moisture for precipitation and creating vast areas of salt marsh. Humidity and precipitation levels are considerably higher than standard. Despite its position at the inner edge of the VLZ, there is some evidence that Jeterieff V's climate may be the result of a runaway greenhouse effect, presumably from natural greenhouse emissions from the extensive volcanism.

The world has only seasonal ice caps and the equatorial regions are exceptionally hot, with temperatures reaching as high as 65 degrees Celsius. Only Polar Regions have any chance of experiencing a real winter, and only very high latitudes experience temperate conditions. Middle latitudes are almost entirely tropical jungle, teeming with lush vegetation and a hugely diverse range of animal life, much of it yet to be classified. Since the atmosphere is near standard (oxygen-nitrogen plus inert traces), the only major issues for colonists and visitors are the temperature and humidity. Skies are usually overcast at best, and the planet has an intact ozone layer that filters a portion of the high UV incident, so the most pressing issue is ambient temperature and moisture. Even so, standing orders from the King's Reeve in New Valdrada City recommend all personnel make extensive use of suitable topical UV screens while on world.

The colony currently occupies the most favorable site on world for human occupation, a relatively lightly forested upland plateau of some quarter of a million square kilometers in the higher latitudes. Focused on New Valdrada City, home to approximately 20,000 colonists, the colony has been established for only some twenty years and has yet to spread beyond the plateau. At this stage, primary exports are natural materials: there is an extensive logging industry, (monitored by the Guild), and some progress has been made harvesting pharmaceuticals and food crops from the forests. Both the King's Reeve and Vascon Corporation are also involved in surveying work, as Jeterieff V's extensive volcanism holds out the promise of useful mineral. Vascon Corporation has also applied for and obtained a Writ of First Discovery (per amendment 12 of the Accords) to investigate a possible Precursor site on a low-lying promontory projecting in to the ocean some 600 kilometers southwest of the colony site.



may well mistake for true Quertzl.

This adventure ends with the PCs' successful resolution of the crisis at Outpost 19. Subsequent adventures might address the consequences of these events—not least the first confirmed piece of functioning Precursor technology, the PCs' possible good relations with a Pilot of the Guild, and the mystery of the Quertzl-like species of Jeterieff V.

Maps and Encounters

All maps and diagrams are in metric units. Much of the detailed sequence of events is left for the referee to determine in light of player action and few if any specific encounters are spelled out. Descriptions of the outpost and dig site and all NPCs along with a suggested timeline of events are, however provided, along with suggestions for possible events and notes covering possible courses of action such that a GM should be able to cope with whatever the players do.

Standards and Assumption

Date: Fiveday, Second Tenday, Fourth month, 1362 PF (Post Fall). Place: Tripoint Facility and Jeterieff V, New Territories

Characters

The adventure assumes that the PCs are a hastily assembled but reliable team of up to six troubleshooters with appropriate medical, Precursor xeno-archaeology, and Frontier World survival skills to provide an initial assessment and attempt a solution to the crisis at Outpost 19. If not using the pre-generated characters, the PCs should be designed to fulfill the essential roles noted in Chapter 5. If necessary, the GM can use the appropriate pre-generated PC as an NPC in that role. In any event, if no one is playing Dr. Woltor, the Team leader and Medical doctor, he must still be present as an NPC. Other pre-generated team members can be replaced on the proviso that the new characters are suitably qualified for the role they are filling, and that Vascon's thorough and competent vetting procedures will not have missed anything—no spies, agents for hostile organizations, or individuals of criminal intent will get through ... unless that's what the GM wants.

Equipment

While the PCs may equip themselves at Tripoint

Facility before departing for Jeterieff V, they must comply with the weight limitations of Gate travel, and any material they take must comply with the Guild of Gate Wardens technology restrictions.

Briefings and Departure

The team is assembled by communications page to a nondescript meeting facility rented and secured for the purpose by Vascon, rather than at Vascon's main offices in the Tripoint Facility. It is assumed that all PCs were at the Facility, between contracts and available for work, and have chosen to accept Vascon's job. Their appointment is to meet Michael Jeteren, a mid-rank Vascon Executive with responsibility for Practical Development Security (a convoluted way of saying he's responsible for security at Vascon facilities). The meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., Tripoint local time.

Jeteren introduces the PCs (and any NPCs), indicates briefly the team roles and responsibilities as he sees them, and then briefs the team on the crisis at Outpost 19. He passes around details of Jeterieff System (give the players the handout) and indicates that the Guild of Gate Wardens has agreed to Gate the party to New Valdrada City later the same day. The PCs have approximately three hours to assemble any equipment they need before they must assemble at the Tripoint Gate facility at 2:00 p.m. local time. Jeteren reminds them of the weight restrictions that apply to Gate travel and emphasizes that he expects the party, as Vascon employees, to comply fully with the Technology Accords and not transport any contraband technology.

At 2:00 p.m., the PCs assemble at the Gate. This is a short mag-lev ride from the main part of the facility, back toward the surface of the asteroid. The Gate Wardens maintain a private warren-like complex around an ancient impact crater. They had Yamatatchi and the Pilots' Guild seal the crater from space with a giant reinforced transparent dome. The floor of the crater was suitably graded, and in the center the Gate has been built: an outer ring of upright stone slabs linked in a continuous ring by lintels, and an inner U-shape of even more massive trilithons. Above, the dome shows a sweeping vista of local space with the banded upper atmosphere of the gas giant and its companion rings and moons against a rich star field.

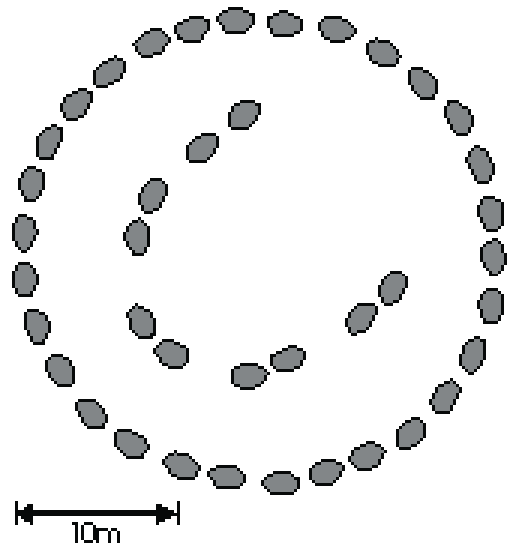
As the PCs enter, there is rustle of movement,

Tripoint

Tripoint is built inside an asteroid. Although there are surface facilities to service the FTL ships that use Tripoint as a way station and the extensive STL fleet that mines the rich mineral resources of the system, the bulk of the population lives deep inside the asteroid in what is effectively a giant underground city. Since Tripoint is a closed environment, it relies heavily on hydroponics for food and atmosphere reprocessing, and local ordinances strictly prohibit material and behaviors that might jeopardize the integrity of the environment. Weapons laws are quite restrictive, and local taxation includes a levy specifically to defray the costs of maintaining the facility's atmosphere—locals often joke about Tripoint being a free port in which even the air isn't free.

Although built in part by the Pilots' Guild, the involvement of the Guild of Gate Wardens in the founding and running of Tripoint means that technology was and is strictly limited. The facility makes no use of "Ship Tech." Instead, old-fashioned pressure doors achieve atmospheric seals between sections, and lighting and electricity are generated by a combination of nuclear and thermoelectric generation (structures on the surface of the Tripoint body generate electricity from the EM and thermal gradients incident on the surface). Inside, large fans help circulate the atmosphere, but there are continuing issues with condensation. Transport through the tunnels that make up the main transport routes is either on foot, or via small electric vehicles, although there is a limited mag-lev train line that links the more distant parts of the facility (the Port, the Gate facility, and the Heavy Industrial Sector). Rich districts have "slide walks" and restrict vehicle access; the poorest districts tend to discourage the electric vehicles simply through the increased risk of muggings (it's a bit hard to flee at 5–10 kph, especially when doing so is likely to bowl over numerous pedestrians). Mars in the film *Total Recall* would be a good model of Tripoint.

and five robed and masked figures walk toward them from the center of the horseshoe of trilithons: the Gate Warden team. Each is dressed in voluminous purple robes and wears a smooth stylized mask of what appears to be polished granite. The five bow in eerie unison, and then the rearward four peel off and take up positions equally spaced around the outside of the U of trilithons. The remaining warden—an easy Spot roll allows a PC to notice the silver solar cross inset in to the forehead on his mask, indicating the rank of Prefect within the Guild—greet the PCs and asks them to swear that they will not knowingly infringe on any aspect of the Accords when transported to Jeterieff. Once this formality is complete, he gestures for them to take up positions inside the U of trilithons and goes to stand in the mouth of the U.



Standard Gate Layout

There is a moment of electric tension, a sweeping sense of prickling unease, and then the space bounded by the central trilithon fills with a shimmering reflective plane. "Depart Travelers, with the good will of the Wardens of Tripoint. The Wardens of Jeterieff stand ready to receive." The prefect's ritual words are strangely un-muffled, despite his mask.

The PCs march forward into the wall of restless quicksilver, there is the familiar moment of pause, a weird sliver of interruption in perception and awareness, and they find

themselves walking in to a U shape of trilithons from the space bounded by the central trilithon. On top of the usual disorientation of finding oneself in a mirror image of where one was a moment ago, the humidity and dense air hits the team like a hammer blow—all PCs must make a stamina roll or drop to tired fatigue level; PCs who succeed drop to winded. A night's sleep will begin to acclimatize PCs to local conditions and raise their fatigue level one step, but that will be their best level for the next 20 – CON days, at which point they will be fully acclimatized.

Standing in the mouth of the U of trilithons is a purple robed Gate Warden—a routine Spot roll allows a PC to note that this one has a gold solar cross inset in to his mask, indicating the rank of Castellan. There are four other wardens in position round the outside of the U of trilithons. The Gate itself is on a flat plateau of land on a low hill, surrounded by a substantial looking wooden palisade. Leaden clouds loom overhead, and the moist air is heavy with cloying organic scents and the distant noises of human activity.

“You will follow,” says the Guild Castellan, and immediately he marches away to a low building at the edge of the Gate compound. PCs with knowledge of the internal structure of the Gate wardens will know that it is unusual for a Castellan to deal directly with non-Guild members.

Depending on which characters are present, the PCs may or may not be involved in the following discussion. While the majority of the group and their equipment are held in a large room, Dr. Woltor is taken to another chamber where the Guild Castellan frostily reminds him of the Guild's position on the use of banned technology. He also reveals that the colony was recently re-supplied by an FTL ship, the *Pride of Antioch*, and that the ship has not left orbit and is not responding to hails from the ground. For a map of Jeterieff IV, see the Maps Section.

Fortunately for Dr. Woltor and the rest of the PCs, they are rescued from an extended grilling by the Guild by the arrival of Conrad Flaxton, Deputy Director of Outpost 19, who has come to New Valdrada City in one of the outpost's helicopters to pick up the team. He arrives at the Gate compound in a Vascon ATV driven by Miguel Fulacci, Technical Director from the outpost. Having extricated the PCs from the Gate Warden compound, Flaxton and Fulacci drive them across the sprawl of New Valdrada

to the Vascon compound through raw streets newly carved from the upland plateau that forms the main colony site. Many of the buildings are constructed of ubiquitous and renewable local materials, and the streets are sparsely populated. Pedestrians make up most of the traffic, although a few alcohol-powered vehicles navigate the streets, and the PCs will see a mag-lev train depart the small station as they pass through the center of the city. Partway through the PCs' journey, the humidity transitions to rainfall, but this has no apparent impact on the sweltering heat or the louring sky.

While en-route to the Vascon compound, Flaxton brings PCs up to date regarding the situation at Outpost 19. The death toll has risen to four, although one of those deaths appears to be unrelated to the infection—an attack by local fauna. Flaxton is obviously troubled by this event and reluctantly admits if pressed that there have been no previous problems with native predators in the three, nearly four, years the outpost has been operating. Dr. Miscen, the Operations Director for Outpost 19, has quarantined the primary dig site and restricted all personnel to the compound except for essential monitoring and security duties. Remote passive monitoring devices at the dig are still operating, and the small security force at the outpost is on high alert and maintaining regular patrols.

Conversation during the two-hour flight is rather difficult due to the ambient noise of the helicopter, and the thick jungle makes radio reception on Jeterieff V erratic, but with altitude the helicopter manages to get a signal through and receives a message back, much to Flaxton's consternation: two more of the staff have fallen ill, and Dr. Miscen is missing.

Outpost 19

The following details sketch the situation when the PCs arrive at Outpost 19 and include an outline of normal operations as well as the ways in which the staff have adapted to the current crisis.

The outpost is a fenced compound of a half-dozen pre-fabricated buildings on a small rise near the southern edge of the promontory that bounds the salt marshes of the great river delta. The helicopters are housed in a secured building on the edge of a landing field atop a hill a kilometer or so east of the outpost, with a cleared jungle path linking the sites. Another path leads from the saddle between the

two hills down to a low point in the cliff providing relatively easy access to the northern edge of the river salt marsh. Vascon has created a fairly reliable causeway between areas of higher ground, leading to the primary dig site, some three kilometers in a direct line from the outpost, or four kilometers on foot.

Vascon has cleared a three-meter wide strip around the six-meter high chain link fence that defines the outpost perimeter, but it is clearly a struggle to keep it clear of the returning jungle foliage. The fence has one double Gate gate on the east side, where the trail from the landing pad arrives. Inside the Gate gate there is a small watch station with a hard-wired link in to the base communications net. Normally the watch station is not used, but now an armed security officer is on duty at all hours. The Gate gate is kept closed at all times now; previously it was closed only at night. For maps of the outpost and the surrounding area, see the Maps Section .

Bunk One: At the southern end of the compound, Bunk One houses the residential accommodation for Outpost 19's compliment of 16 scientists and technicians. It includes bunkrooms (segregated by gender, two persons per room) plus sanitation and communal areas (showers, toilets and two common mess rooms) on two floors. It has basic climate control and, while not cool, provides some relief from the oppressive humidity and intense UV outside.

Bunk Two: At the northern end of the compound, Bunk Two houses the residential accommodation for eight guests and the outpost's eight-member security detail. Identical to Bunk One, the security personnel have claimed the cooler ground floor, so the PCs must bunk upstairs. The upper floor's common room has a good view of the jungle north of the compound, and it's possible that conversations in this common room will be monitored by the Pilot's presence; bouncing a laser off the window is the easiest method.

Services Building: Adjacent to Bunk Two and the Main Lab building, the Services Building houses the base generators, the three AT ground vehicles, and the mechanical workshop for maintaining them as well as the base stores of large equipment, including field tents, trestle tables and other bulky and or infrequently used gear. The Technical and

Security Directors both have offices in this building. The armory is also here, reached via the Security Director's office, but only security personnel have access. The workshop has limited climate control. A buried digester processes waste from the sanitation facilities in the other buildings, except the secure lab, which has its own digester.

Main Laboratory Building: Another two-story building, Main Lab houses not only the two main laboratories for the base but also a mess hall and kitchens, several meeting rooms, and offices for the other two directors. The Operation's Director's office is reached through a small personal lab space. The building is fully climate controlled and one of the most comfortable places in the outpost.

Secure Laboratory Building: Not only is this two-story building fully climate-controlled but also it has two separate biologically secure labs, one on each floor, with proper airlocks. This building also houses the secure biological store originally intended to house large samples prior to shipping off world but now pressed into service as a morgue: the dead outpost staff are here. Also present on the top floor and climatically isolated from the rest of the building is the small medical facility where the two infected personnel are currently being treated. A separate waste digester is buried under the building to process waste from the secure lab's sanitation facilities.

Stores: This small, non-climate-controlled building between Main Lab' and Bunk One contains the bulk of the outpost's stores: food supplies, equipment, and consumables for the labs and offices. The main fuel reservoir is a honeycomb tank buried beneath the building. The main communications relay is here, and the base array of aerials is mounted on the roof of this building, accessed via an internal spiral staircase.

Hangar: This is the only building at the landing field and, since there is no exterior fence as at the main out post site, it is kept locked at all times. It houses the stores and equipment for maintaining the two helicopters, as well as the fuel (again, a buried honeycomb tank). The helicopters are rugged transports and are usually secured on the landing area.

All the outpost buildings have telephones in most communal rooms and offices and the buildings are linked via hard wiring to the communications center in Stores; there is also a PA system that covers the whole outpost. In addition, personal communicators can be registered with the communications center, allowing people to be contacted directly, rather than paging them to the nearest phone. In practice, radio reception is a bit spotty over long distance, but it's the only viable option. The hangar has no hard-wired communication link to the outpost. All outpost

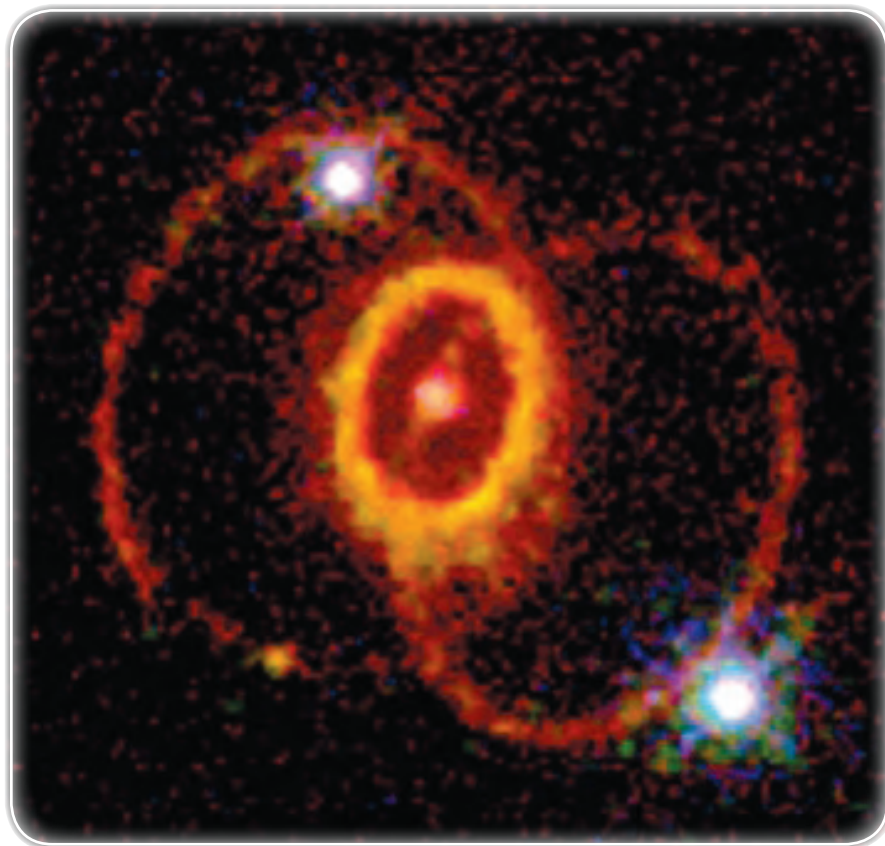
isolated place to work. The security detail of eight, including Director Erikson, maintain a minimal presence under normal circumstances, with four on duty at a time (two at the dig, two at the outpost) during the eight-hour day shift, and one security member awake at all times during the night in four shifts of four hours each. During the hours of local darkness, the perimeter Gate gate in the perimeter fence is closed, and no personnel are permitted out without a security escort and the Operations Director's permission.

In addition to its primary focus on the archaeological dig, Outpost 19 has an ongoing program to observe and analyze the local ecology. Staff members regularly sample the local flora, fauna, and environment (water, soil, and atmosphere) as well as maintaining a number of remote observation and logging points in the vicinity.

Typically there would be between three and eight research staff, and possible one or two of the technicians, at the dig site, with the remainder of the research and technical staff back at the outpost doing lab work. Non-security staff are entitled to take one rest day for every three working days, and they are required to take at least one rest day every six working days, but given the distances involved and the usual workload, these rules were frequently bent to allow groups of staff to take "long weekends" away in New Valdrada city with less disruption

to ongoing research. The last such break was three ten-days ago. Due to the necessity of continuity in research, there isn't much opportunity for staff rotation at the outpost; most of the staff get a few weeks a year off world, but Vascon is wary of losing research time or precious research data being compromised if too many people have access to the site.

Current Situation. The outpost is in disarray when the PCs arrive: the Director and senior medical



personnel are issued with communications devices with several channels, with several pre-designated channels (emergency, security only, medical only, and so on), and the PCs' comm devices can be logged with the Communications center easily enough.

Base Conditions

Normal Operations: The base under normal circumstances would be a reasonably pleasant if

officer is missing, several staff are infected or dead with a mysterious disease possibly related to the dig site, everyone is seeing ghosts, and a previously unidentified large predator appears to have moved into the vicinity to stalk base personnel and has already killed one. Pretty much everyone is haggard and drawn, and most people are jumpy.

The research and technical personnel are confined to their labs and quarters and struggling to work as normal. They are attending to their duties as best they can, albeit the stress is telling. For example, the normally laconic Stillingfleet is struggling to maintain his equilibrium as he tries, well beyond his medical competence, to save colleagues he's worked with for the last three years.

The security detail is operating in a heightened state of alertness, and their staff members are stretched to the limit; several of the younger and less experienced security personnel are struggling to cope.

Precursor Ruins

The dig site occupies the upper most portion of one of the islands in the northern edge of the salt marsh south of the outpost. Approximately 1,500 meters on its north-south axis and 1,000 meters on its east-west axis, the island is one-third low-lying swampland. Only the central high ground (approximately 1,000 x 500 meters) is "dry," a relative term in the humid conditions of the river delta. For a map of the site, see Chapter 3.

The site has been under investigation for nearly four years, ever since Dr. Miscen's routine analysis of aerial survey data collated during the establishment of the colony twenty years earlier revealed the presence of possible artifacts at the site. Initial investigation found evidence of a Precursor presence (several examples of Precursor find type #1, also known as medallions or discs—a 17.238 mm thick by 108.179 mm wide octagonal plate of manufactured ceramic with glyphs marked all over one surface, as found at every Precursor site so far identified), and Vascon applied for and received a Writ of First Discovery. This gives them a 20-year window in which to investigate the site and exploit any discoveries made.

Initial investigations were concentrated at the north end of the island, but they were hampered by the fact that Precursor building materials are

exceptionally hard to detect using standard field archaeology techniques (magnetic, electrical and ground penetrating RADAR systems), especially in the saturated soil of the region. The outpost staff persevered, however, and a picture has emerged over the last four years indicating that the site is extensive. Speculation as to its exact nature is rampant, but it was clearly a hilltop installation of some size.

Over time the older dig workings have been recovered to preserve them from long-term exposure, and attention has shifted southward. Disappointed with the relatively routine shallow finds being recovered but wary of the dangers of attempting to locate deep finds in the tricky conditions, Dr. Miscen encourage the research team to come up with new ideas for expanding their search targets. Conrad Flaxton, a seismologist by training, suggested a form of ultrasound scanning, so a detector was fabricated in the outpost workshops and the southern portion of the Island surveyed. While no clear artifact or construction signatures were noted, a large void was detected under the soil. Given the prevailing conditions, it was assumed to be artificial, and Dr. Miscen refocused the outpost's efforts to locating and opening the chamber. This they achieved eight days prior to the arrival of the PCs.

The active dig site consists of one conventional trench, some 2.5 meters deep, the trench complex dug to excavate the void anomaly that the ultrasound scan revealed, and eight covered workspaces, simple alloy framed tents with work benches and limited equipment for initial cataloguing of finds, work planning, storage, and mess facilities. The road runs to one side of the current camp, where the digging attachments for the ATVs are also stored. The entire area is covered in low, lush jungle vegetation, except where previously cleared by Vascon personnel—and it grows back quickly.

Four long, thin trenches were dug over the anomaly, revealing a cap of Precursor material. Further excavations cleared the soil around the object, revealing it to be an octagonal sloping walled structure, apparently mounted on eight solid piles driven deep in to the subsoil. The building's exterior diameter (mid face to mid-face at its base) is 11.2 meters, each exterior face is 4.64 meters at its widest, and the walls are 1.52 meters thick. The base octagon is mathematically perfect, and the angles are exact, bar beveling in the last few millimeters to round off the

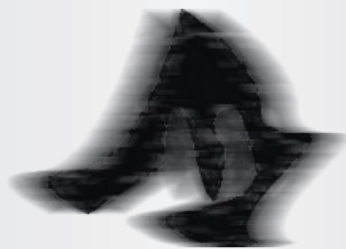
Adventure Timeline

DATE (ABSOLUTE)	RELATIVE DATE	EVENT
1 1/4	-10	Dr. Miscen agrees to Conrad Flaxton's suggestion to use an improvised ultrasound scanner to search for an elusive subsurface structure at the dig site. A previously unknown void is detected.
1 3/4	-8	Chamber at Dig site breached, nano-facture triggered by Miscen removing the control unit. "Re-boot" procedures are hampered by the lack of ambient EM fields to provide power.
2	-7	Grav lifter (the only piece of Field tech at the outpost, and always temperamental) fails. Start of ongoing issues with excessively poor Radio reception, especially from communicators in the vicinity of the dig site, as the nano-facture establishes a primary wide area lambda field.
2 1/4	-6	Imminent storm shuts work at the dig site down early; all personnel evacuate the dig by 11 am local time. The storm has intense electromagnetic fields associated with it (and a pretty lightning show for the outpost staff), sufficient to bootstrap the nano-facture's reboot procedures.
2 1/2	-5	First package released during a heavy storm, at approximately 3:50 pm. Eli Jones (Senior Security Officer) and Anton Bullato (technician), at the dig site to perform minimal checks (no work is possible during the storm), are infected but make it back to the outpost before developing symptoms. Both collapse that evening and are rushed to the infirmary.
2 3/4	-4	The first package is completely eliminated at the dig site (combination of environmental factors and lack of ambient EM). But the segments infecting Eli Jones and Anton Bullato are sustained by the greater background EM levels in the outpost medical facility and continue to alter their biochemistry. Dr. Miscen identifies their condition as some virulent but apparently non-contagious pathogen, but efforts to identify (or even isolate) the pathogen prove fruitless. Storm clears at midday, but the river is running high, so the dig site remains off limits.
3	-3	Bullato and Jones die. By the terms of Vascon's contract with the Kingdom of Jedepare and the Guilds, Dr. Miscen must notify New Valdrada city. The river level is monitored, and by midday it is deemed safe to return to the dig site. Work resumes at the site this afternoon.
3 1/4	-2	Second (upgraded) package is released while Dr. Miscen, Carol Decker, Karl Schwarz, Ingrid Yevcolovitch, and Theresa Ligotti are at the dig site. Concerned by a sudden loss of radio communication with the outpost, Miscen orders everyone back and becomes more concerned on the way back when Decker nearly crashes the ATV, and Schwarz has a seizure. All are rushed to the infirmary upon return to the outpost, but only Schwarz and Decker appear infected. Miscen declares the dig site off limits and notifies New Valdrada City. A local predator (vaguely crocodile like) in the vicinity of the dig is also infected at this point.

3 1/2	-1	Guild of Gate Wardens places medical interdict on Jeterieff V, contacts Vascon. PCs contacted. Decker dies. Aaron Badiel is attacked and killed by the infected predator while providing security for Takuma Ide (a technician) to pick up data from a monitoring point at the closest approach allowed to the quarantined dig site. Ide uses a pistol to drive off the creature but doesn't get a clear look at it. He retrieves Badiel's body and returns in shock to the outpost.
3 3/4	Today	Second package eliminated. Dr. Miscen, Ingrid Yevcolovitch, and Theresa Ligotti succumb to their infections overnight. The Pilot's Presence attempts to rescue Dr. Miscen, but the Shuttle facilities can only stabilize her condition, and the Shuttle itself becomes infected. Conrad Flaxton and Miguel Fulacci fly to New Valdrada City as soon as it is light (and are thus unaware of the new infections or Dr. Miscen's disappearance). PCs are briefed by Vascon at Tripoint and arrive on Jeterieff mid-morning, fly to outpost, and arrive mid- to late afternoon. The predator (now with a taste for human blood and somewhat "modified" from when it attacked Badiel and Ide—albeit its infection has also died by this point) circles the outpost perimeter tests the fence, and remains in the area from now on. It is shrewd and targets small groups or lone individuals where possible. Schwarz dies after the PCs have arrived—Woltor and Schmitt may be involved in the ultimately (and inevitably) doomed attempt to save him.
4	+1	Third package is released—this may be noticed on the remote monitors (motion and other sensors) at the dig, and certainly the spike in poor signal quality and EM dropouts ought to be a clue. Yevcolovitch and Ligotti deteriorate. This package is much better adapted to local conditions, and while the ambient EM is still too low to sustain it indefinitely, it has a marked impact on the immediate environment of the dig site—flora and fauna in the area begin to show distinct signs of distortion and infection.
4 1/4	+2	Yevcolovitch and Ligotti die. Third package eliminated.
4 3/4	+4	Fourth package released. This is airborne contagious, albeit still not entirely self-sustaining outside a reasonable ambient EM field (woe betide anyone infected getting in to the outpost, however). If the PCs have not solved the problems at this point, the scenario is probably heading in to survival horror territory—think about the end of John Carpenter's <i>The Thing</i> . At the very least, by this point PCs should probably be contemplating stealing a helicopter to escape, possibly after rigging the base fuel tanks to explode in hopes of sterilizing the site.
5 1/2	+7	Fifth package released. The Pilot regretfully decides at this point that nothing can be done and uses a mass driver weapon on his ship to sterilize the site.

Translating Precursor Glyphs

The Precursor Glyph system has been constantly studied since it was first identified on Lesterion IV in 819PF. Sadly, and pulp TV SF shows notwithstanding, without a passage in both a known language and in the glyph system (a so-called Rosetta Stone), there is no way to translate the glyphs. To date, over 23,000 glyphs have been identified from Precursor artifacts, leading the mainstream of researchers to conclude that the Precursor language is a logographic writing system. However, some researchers have disputed this conclusion, as they claim to have identified a grammar-like system for constructing a large portion of the known glyphs from more basic components, suggesting that the system might in fact be a syllabic or alphabetic system. Either way, the system has been infuriatingly opaque to date.



for careful examination has shown that such glyphs are perceptually positioned approximately 1 mm below the surface of the material).

When originally uncovered, the chamber was completely inert. Dr. Miscen's removal of the Control Disc (type #1) triggered a series of wake-up routines that proceeded slowly due to the low ambient power. The system gradually established a number of large-scale field effects. The largest—a sphere centered on the plinth, approximately 4,000 meters in diameter—reaches as far as the outpost and is both what killed the outpost Grav lifter and the source of intensified communications interference in the vicinity. Another more intense field extends some 80 meters from the plinth, and within its range all electrical devices behave erratically and rapidly lose power: electric lamps fail, and the Pilot's remote presence will not enter this field. The recent storm supplied a power boost, and

edges. One face of the structure was clearly recessed and split in to two halves, which were found to slide back into the adjacent wall sections. The interior of the chamber is empty except for a central octagonal plinth of Precursor material approximately 2 meters tall. The plinth is covered in Precursor glyphs, and there is an octagonal recess (roughly the size of a type #1) in one face of the plinth at approximately 1.6 meters from the floor. This is the space from which Dr. Miscen, first to enter the chamber, removed the (active) type #1 that is, when the PCs arrive, in the safe in her office. The interior space is 8.4 meters across and the interior faces of the walls 3.48 meters long. The plinth is 2.8 meters across from face to face, with each face measuring 1.16 meters at their base. The walls are of the same material and also covered in the precursor glyphs; "covered" is a misnomer,

the nano-factory managed to restart, but releasing the first package depleted its energy, so it reverted to energy-saving mode immediately afterward. The establishment of the second field accompanied the release of the second package, and since then the nano-factory has been slowly accumulating power (and biological data on its ambient environment). The interior of the chamber is now faintly illuminated, and the glyphs—a sophisticated visual display system—are now changing, scrolling through various display configurations.

Returning the Control Disc to its niche provokes a rapid change in the scrolling glyphs. It might, at the GM's discretion, be enough to deactivate the nano-factory. But a more satisfying resolution would probably be that the Control Disc must be programmed

with instructions first—and the only likely source of such information is the Pilot's Presence, which has what it believes is a deactivation sequence. If the Pilot's remote presence supplies the code sequence for the Control Pad and it is reinstated, all the glyphs change to the same 10-glyph sequence in what, to the human eye, is a rather disturbing shade of violet and a sound that can best be likened to a guttural, nasal voice chanting or repeating a phrase. This repeating announcement is a self-cleansing routine on a countdown indicating that the characters have approximately 5 minutes to leave the vicinity of the plinth before the nano-facture self-destructs, taking the site with it, as well as anybody within 500 meters of the plinth. Other suitably dramatic closures could be devised as the GM sees fit.

Evidence, Incidents, and Exemplars

The following points of information are pieces of the puzzle the PCs must uncover to resolve the mystery. Each has some notes as to how the PCs might uncover them. In many cases, relevant skills are listed with the times for failed, successful, special, and critical rolls to reveal the information. For example, if Precursor archaeology can reveal a piece of information, then the entry might read (Precursor Archaeology 8h, 4h, 2h, 1h). Note that such rolls assume the character is at least an amateur ("barely qualified": 25% + skill) and in some instance it will state professional ("capable of making a living": skill 50%+). In other cases, the entry specifies a flat period of time, as degrees of success do not provide information faster, but in such cases the entry provides additional details revealed by greater-than-nominal success. In all cases, a fumble yields no information, or else it yields misleading information as the GM determines.

The Grav Lifter: Outpost 19's Grav lifter (a field-tech-based vehicle cum trailer used to transport heavy loads using a field effect to negate a significant portion of the load's mass) failed seven days before the PCs arrived. This was a result of the activated nano-facture establishing a wide-area, low-level field. An amateur field tech examining the Grav lifter will identify burned out components that suggest there was a field conflict. (Field Tech, 8h, 2h, 0.5h, 0.16h.)

Equipment in the outpost workshop can be jury-rigged to confirm that there is a very low-level

lambda field (the necessary type to cause the burn out) presently covering the outpost. (Jury rigging the detector and performing the test requires a professional: Field Tech, 4h, 2h, 1h, 0.5h.)

A further two tests with the equipment relocated at least 1,000 meters from the previous test positions, on a successful Field tech roll at each site, allow a PC to locate the source of the lambda field—the dig site. Having identified the specific field signature in the original test, the equipment requires far less fine-tuning, halving the time requirements above.

The Radio Interference: Seven days before the PCs arrived, there was a sudden and continuing deterioration in the quality of local radio communications, especially at the dig site. This too is a result of the activated nano-facture. A professional Field Tech, Electronics Tech, or scientist with professional knowledge of Physics examining the communications facilities over time can identify the presence of a broad spectrum, low-level interference. (Field Tech, Electronics Tech, Physics, 4h, 2h, 1h, 0.5h.)

An amateur Field Tech or Electronics Tech with suitable equipment can establish that the cause is a low-power lambda field, which would account for the communications problems, and an amateur Field Tech can know this could have caused the Grav lifter failure. (Identifying the field: Field Tech or Electronics Tech, 4h, 2h, 1h, 0.5h.)

As described in the entry for the Grav lifter, the improvised field detector can also be used to triangulate the origin of the interference.

Aaron Badiel's Death: The day before the PCs arrive, Security Officer Aaron Badiel and Technician Takuma Ide went to the dig site to interrogate the monitoring equipment left on site, as it was judged that they would not be at risk as they did not need to enter the dig, merely get to within line of sight of the dig transmitter. They had successfully retrieved data and were returning in the ATV with Ide driving when a large indistinct form sprang out of the undergrowth and swept Badiel out of the ATV. Ide stopped the ATV and used the handgun Badiel had issued him to drive the creature off. Badiel was severely injured, and Ide got him back to the ATV and rushed back to the outpost, but he was dead on arrival.

Ide is unsure what the creature that attacked

was; he thinks it looked like one of the large hexapedal crocodile-like native carnivores that are common in the river, but previously they have always avoided human contact and have rarely been seen near the dig site. Also, Ide thinks there was something odd about the creature, a “hunch or hump” on its back that doesn’t match the usual description of this species.

Badiel’s body is in the secure biological store, an improvised morgue, but no autopsy has been performed. An amateur Medical Tech or Doctor can perform a basic autopsy in two hours, revealing that Badiel died from trauma sustained from an animal attack. On his body are bite wounds consistent with the hexapedal native species tentatively identified by Ide, but these were not fatal. There are also a number of deep, ragged lacerations that appear to have been caused by one or more ragged cutting edges, possibly a claw. A special or better on Medical Tech or Medicine in the autopsy confirms that there were two natural blade-like weapons that slashed Badiel repeatedly across the torso, broadly along the vertical axis of symmetry. This roll also confirms that these injuries were almost certainly the fatal ones, through a combination of immediate shock and exsanguinations. A critical with either skill retrieves fragments of a chitinous material from the lacerations.

The Infected Native Predator: The hexapedal crocodile-like native predator was exposed to the second package from the nano-factory two days before the PCs arrive. The infection has driven the creature into a bloodlust and mutated it, giving it two additional chitinous, partially exoskeleton appendages growing from its upper shoulders, each ending in a vicious, blade-like claw.

The infection has been eliminated, but the changes to the creature’s biology and biochemistry mean that it’s continuing to grow and acquire more insect-like traits. In another three or four days, it will likely die from the contradictions written in to its genetic structure, but in the meantime it keeps getting bigger and more savage.

Having killed once, the creature now prowls the vicinity of the outpost and is on the lookout for another kill. It prefers lone targets or small groups, but the GM should feel free to use creature attacks to vary the pace and tension of the scenario.

If the creature is killed and an autopsy performed by an amateur Medical Tech, it is clear that the extra limbs are some form of mutation or abnormality; a professional Xeno-biologist can confirm that they are a malignant growth and that the creature suffers from severe genetic distortion. Either form of investigation takes two hours. Comparisons between a blood sample from the predator and one of those in the outpost’s database can be made by an amateur xeno-biologist and confirm the mutation. This process takes four hours.

A spectrographic analysis by a professional Biologist, Medical Tech or Chemist of the creature’s blood reveals an atypical presence of Molybdenum that is not present in the reference samples (8h, 4h, 3h, 2h).

The Dead Infected Outpost Personnel: By the time the PCs arrive at the outpost, three people have died from the infection; shortly after they arrive a fourth (Karl Schwarz) also dies. The bodies are in the secure biological store. Dr. Miscen performed only limited autopsies on Bullato, Jones, and Decker as she is not a professional pathologist, but her conclusion was that a foreign mutagenic agent had adversely affected their biochemistry at a genetic level, causing systemic failure of various body processes. A full autopsy on any of the dead corroborates this conclusion but also indicates that there is no consistent pattern to the mutagenic effect, with different individuals exhibiting different pathologies. All the other infected staff, living or dead, have various odd abnormalities, including newly developed patches of fur or scales, the buds of new limbs growing in weird places, and so on. Analysis of the deceased person’s blood in comparison to reference samples on file also corroborates Dr. Miscen’s conclusion but also reveal the presence of atypical quantities of Molybdenum in the deceased’s blood—normally a sign of liver failure, from which none of the dead were suffering, but the quantities are exceptionally high even for that. Professional Medical Technician, Medicine (3h, 2.5h, 2h, 1h—Blood test will require an additional hour to run).

The Currently Infected Outpost Personnel: The infected personnel (Karl Schwarz, Ingrid Yevcolovitch, and Theresa Ligotti when the PCs arrive) are in isolation in the Infirmary. While all exhibit broadly

similar symptoms—semi-consciousness, fever, lesions and blistering on the skin—there are also confusing differences, further corroborating Dr. Miscen’s initial finding that a foreign mutagenic agent affects each patient differently. Yevcolovitch and Ligotti have weird patches of distorted cell growth on their thighs and upper arms (tissue samples indicate the skin in these areas is developing a scaled structure similar to chitin). A thorough full-spectrum blood analysis on the infected patients shows atypical Molybdenum. Properly filtered and sorted blood (a major undertaking—at least 8 hours work for a Biological or Medical Tech; qualified assistance halves the time) reveals the presence of a form of partially functional nano-tech—which is sustained by the ambient EM fields of all the medical equipment in the Infirmary, although this fact is exceptionally hard for the PCs to discover unless the GM desires otherwise.

Molybdenum: This transition metal (symbol Mo, atomic number 42) was used in early experiments in Nano-tech on Earth but was abandoned in favor of various rare earths. It is also the major decay product left after the alien nano-tech has broken down once it ceases to function. Surface samples from the vicinity of the dig taken since the nano-facture activated contain significant quantities of Molybdenum, which an amateur Chemist can discover (4h, 1h, 0.5h, 0.25h). Samples taken while a nano-tech package is active contain complex Molybdenum; bringing such samples back to the outpost and subjecting them to spectrographic analysis will have disastrous consequences. Molybdenum is also present in unusual quantities in the blood of the infected native predator and the deceased base personnel.

Dr. Miscen’s Communications Logs: Dr. Miscen’s personal communication directories on the base computer system have been re-arranged to conceal the deletion of several key communications. A professional Computer or Communications Tech can retrieve enough of an audit trail to indicate that some communications have been deleted—including erasure from the network secure logs, a breach of Vascon operating procedure—and that the deleted communications did not originate from any node on the outpost network, but there are no other nodes possible, unless the system has been hacked. (Communications Tech, Computer Tech, 2h, 1h,

0.5h, 0.25h.)

Dr. Miscen’s Recent Behavior: Conrad Flaxton was puzzled that Dr. Miscen backed his plan to use an improvised ultrasound scanning technique, which revealed the presence of the unopened chamber. Since then he’s been doing a lot of thinking about the sequence of events and Dr. Miscen’s behavior, and although he can produce no hard evidence and is thus loathe to voice these suspicions, he is increasingly suspicious that Miscen had an additional, undisclosed source of information about the dig site. The PCs must form a very solid relationship with Flaxton before he reveals this information.

Dr. Miscen’s Office: Dr. Miscen’s lab journal, stored in her office on a bookcase behind her desk, has a number of pages removed (where she wrote entries too revealing about her “pen pal”), but enough hints remain to indicate that she knew in advance where to dig to find the chamber. Reviewing the contents of her lab journal takes approximately half an hour.

Behind a picture of an insipid seascape to the right of the bookcase is a small safe. The desk computer is on but locked to Dr. Miscen’s account. Under a flint arrowhead on her desk, itself a priceless relic of Old Earth, is a scrap of paper on which Miscen has written her password: her birth date in letters and numbers. Converted to numerals, this is also the combination for the safe.

The Security Director and Miscen are the only surviving Vascon staff currently aware of the operating Precursor device in the safe. At first glance, the item appears to be yet another Precursor find type #1, until that is the characters notice that the glyphs on its surface are slowly changing and that it is, in fact, a functioning piece of Precursor technology. In fact, this the control element from the nano-facture uncovered in the chamber that Miscen removed, triggering the current crisis.

The Nano-tech Infection: The nano-tech packages released by the nano-facture are increasingly well adapted to local conditions. The characters can theoretically be exposed to package 2 (from the infected patients in the medical bay, albeit if basic infectious disease protocols are being followed this should be very unlikely) and to any of the subsequent packages if they are present at the dig site when

they are released. The gamemaster should give the characters every opportunity to avoid infection, as barring the characters discovering and implementing a cure very rapidly after exposure (on the order of minutes), the nano-tech rapidly scrambles the characters DNA, tissues and organs to the point that even if the nano-tech itself is eliminated, the character will die in a few days anyway. Typically, characters should make Stamina rolls every turn (hour for package 2) after exposure to remain conscious and acting normally, although they may experience flushes, bouts of nausea or disorientation anyway. As soon as they fail a Stamina check they collapse into semiconsciousness and major physical manifestations of their infection become visible: extra limb growths, variant skin, internal organ changes etc. Death will inevitably follow in at most days: the exact period is up to the gamemaster.

Possible Resolutions

There are three likely resolutions to this scenario, each with some suggestions for GMs on how to adjudicate them.

If the PCs fail to solve the problem, the nano-factory keeps pushing out packages of increasingly well-adapted nano-tech. GMs who favor a horror atmosphere will find this a thrilling route. As indicated in the timeline, the Pilot's Presence regretfully cuts his losses on day seven and fires a mass driver from orbit to sterilize the site. Possible inspiration for this outcome can be found in the films *Alien* and John Carpenter's version of *The Thing*.

The PCs can identify and perhaps cure plague by deactivating the base power supplies entirely, minimizing the ambient EM for the nano-tech, thus arresting the "infections." If this power-down period is sustained for 24 hours, it returns the nano-factory to its dormant state. This scheme requires a complete cessation of electromagnetic power—no radio, powered medical equipment, communications, lights, or climate control. Diligent research by the PCs might lead them to this conclusion of their own, and various NPCs can assist the PCs in this deduction if they are stymied.

The PCs might deactivate the nano-factory. The Pilot's presence can supply the "guess" that returning the control device triggers a shutdown, probably an explosive one. The GM might supply cryptic operations to perform on the control unit

before it is re-inserted, but the Pilot's presence evades any inquiries as to how he knows this information, providing a possible hook for future scenarios.

Your players might think of something else ... In which case the only option will be to improvise in a fashion in keeping with the mood and style of what has gone before. If up to this point the mood has been horror, go with a horror ending. If it's been sci-fi action adventure, go with that.

Complications

The Pilot's Presence is intended as a "wild card" to be used to assist, obfuscate, or obstruct matters, as the GM deems necessary. He monitors the outpost: with Shiptech it is trivially easy for him to snoop on radio communications even when they are adversely affected by the field effects, and he uses more sophisticated surveillance techniques, like bouncing a laser off the window of a room where the PCs are having a conversation, to establish what the PCs know and intend. The PCs may well realize they are being observed (but not necessarily realize by whom), and initially at least the Presence should be used as an unseen entity that can give the survival-orientated characters something to pursue while the Medical Technician and Dr. Miscen Wolter perform their initial duties and the Support Scientist and Security Expert review the base research and other data.

The Pilot's Presence came to the surface in one of the small shuttles from its FTL ship, which remains in orbit with the Pilot's physical cyborg body aboard. The shuttle is currently hidden in the jungle some 8,000 meters north of the outpost. On board is Dr. Miscen, plumbed into a ShipTech emergency medical harness. Unfortunately, this means that while the full brunt of ShipTech medical expertise is focused on keeping her alive, it has also bathed the alien nano-tech in an intense local electromagnetic field such that it is operating at near full functionality. It has thus infected the shuttle as well and has stalemated the Pilot's attempts to cure Dr. Miscen. The Pilot's Presence knows it is fighting a losing battle and that the nano-tech poses a considerable risk to the shuttle's vital systems and its own. However, since the Pilot's only option for containing the nano-tech infection of shuttle would be to trigger an emergency shut down of all systems and thus abandon Dr. Miscen to her fate, it is as yet unwilling to do this. It will not re-enter the shuttle at present and may bring



the PCs to the shuttle to show them Dr. Miscen and to persuade them of its good intentions.

The mutated native predator is present to provide a “monster,” both as a second unseen threat and to provide dramatic combat scenes. Since it is essentially a wild animal, PCs can drive it off, but equally it is diseased and suffering so irrational behavior is plausible. GMs who want to have it fight in a bloody rage until cut to pieces can justify its doing so, but equally, having a stray pistol shot startle it so it runs off at just the opportune moment to allow emergency first aid to save a PC’s life is also justifiable.

The bulk of this scenario is written assuming that the Pilot’s Presence, the shuttle, and the mutated native predator will have a role in matters. GMs can of course ignore these details if they wish. If the GM wishes to further challenge the PCs, however, two additional complications are sketched below:

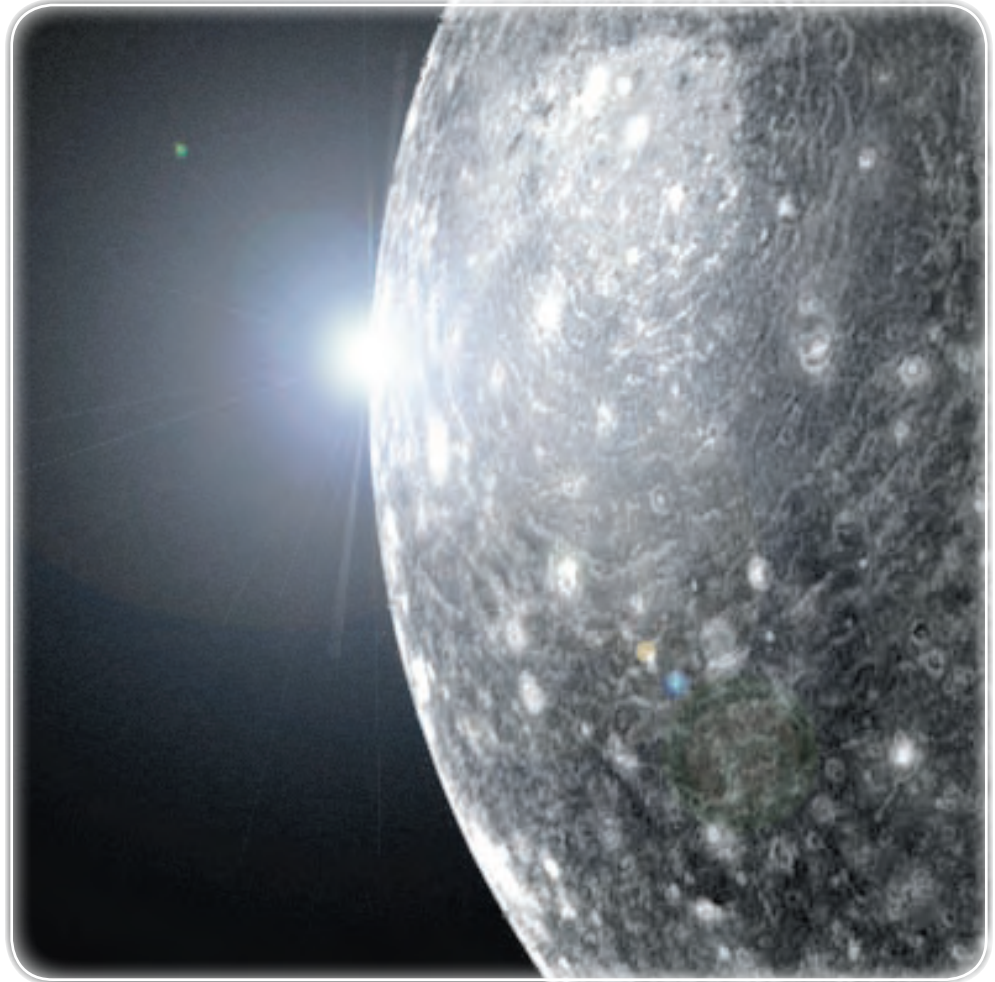
Complication One

There is a native sentient species on Jeterieff V that has until now avoided discovery or contact with the human colonists. Although a tool-using culture, it is not in the accepted sense technological and thus has left none of the telltale signs that would have lead to its discovery. Since it prefers the dense atmosphere and saturating humidity of the lowlands, there has also as yet been little overlap in the natural range of this species and the main concentration of humans on world.

However, the main problem represented by the sentient native species is that it bears a striking

resemblance to the Quertzl, hive-mind insect-like aliens that have been invading the Human Sphere on the “opposite side” to the New Territories where Jeterieff V is located. The potential for confusion, not to mention panic, if the native species are misidentified as Quertzl is enormous. And then there is the deeper issue of what the resemblance actually means ...

A small “explorer” hive wanders in to the



vicinity of Outpost 19 at about the same time that the improvised ultrasound scanner is used, ten days before the PCs’ arrival. The hive is located some fifteen kilometers inland to the east of the outpost and consists of a mixture of labor drones, “tanks,” and several scouts. The scouts maintain a continual watch on the outpost, as the hive regards it as a potential threat to the expansion of the mother hive.



The scouts are the most likely to be encountered by the PCs, as there are at least two observing the outpost at any time, and they must rely on their natural senses. If Stillingfleet sees a scout, he instantly assumes it is a Quertzl and panics. If a scout is killed and examined, spectrographic and biochemical analysis confirm that it is native to Jeterieff IV and that it bears a striking resemblance to a Quertzl, but that there are significant biological differences between the species. Critical success by professional Natural Historians or Biologists examining the data tentatively (since there is only one sample) suggest that the Jeterieff specimen shares a distant ancestor with “modern” Quertzl, as they are known on the opposite side of the Human Sphere. The implications of this fact run beyond the natural scope of this scenario.

Another variation is of course that this is an actual Quertzl hive, drawn to the Precursor site in an attempt to secure its secrets for themselves. GMs who favor more Western-influenced games might favor this approach, with a last pitched battle between the PCs and surviving outpost staff holed up in the outpost against the attacking Quertzl in shades of the film *Aliens* or *Tremors*.

Complication Two

Yamatatchi Industries, Vascon’s longstanding rival megacorp, has a spy among the base personnel, one who might attempt to contact either Guild of Gate Wardens or the King’s Reeve to discredit Vascon or simply to save her own life. Catherine Chaubrette is a resourceful woman and has been passing low-level information to her real employers since she joined the outpost staff eighteen months ago. She has suspicions that Miscen made a major discovery recently and had been concealing it before she disappeared, and Chaubrette would be willing to take substantial risks to discover what it was, especially if the knowledge ensures her own safety. She attempts to steal the nano-facture control unit from the Director’s office if she becomes aware of its existence. She can also handle firearms and a helicopter and has the skills to improvise and deploy explosives from the laboratory chemical stores, so she could make a fiery escape attempt if the GM desires, perhaps placing an improvised explosive as a distraction, then attempting to steal a helicopter. Where she fits on the scale between Bond-villain

ruthlessness and amateur recklessness is for the GM to decide.

Further Adventures

Assuming that the PCs survive, there are a number of possibilities if a GM is interested in continuing adventures in the Gate Warden universe.

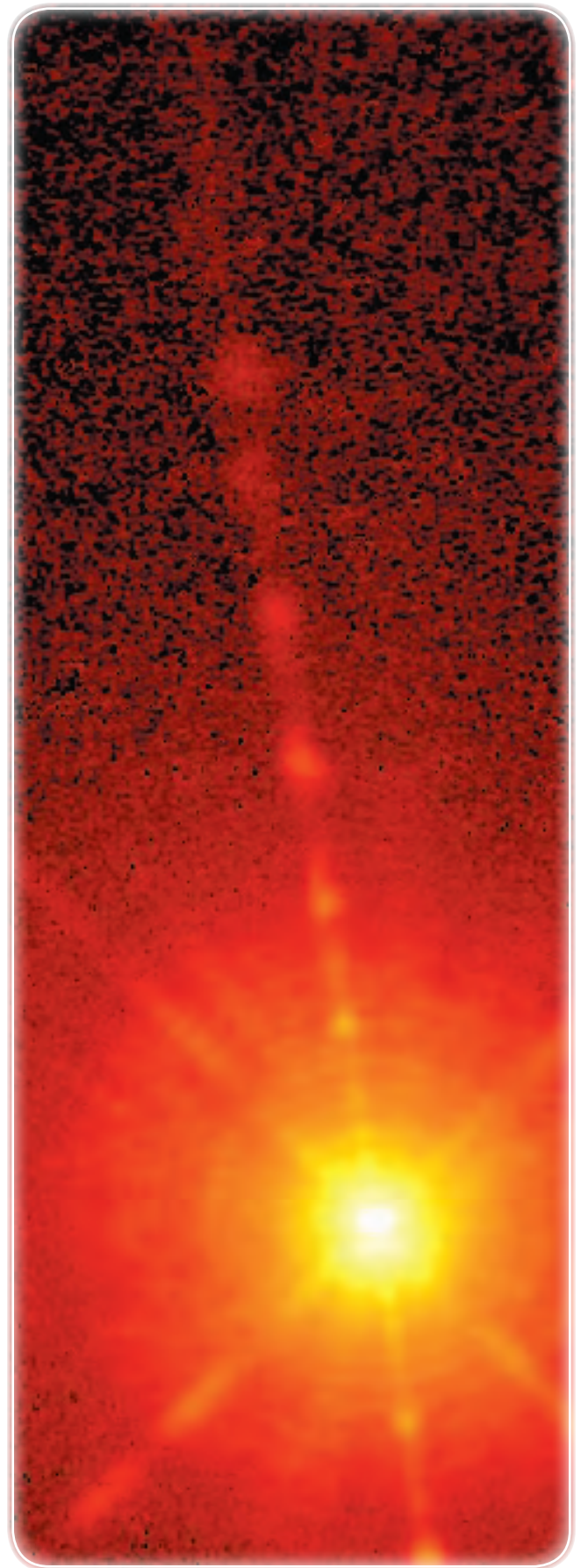
Obvious questions to answer in the first instance are: Who survived among the PCs and outpost personnel? How much of what was actually happening came to light? Did Director Miscen survive? Does the functioning Precursor control unit still survive, and who has it if so? Did any of the complications become involved, and if so which ones? What are the various powers (Vascon, Yamatatchi, the Gate Wardens, Pilots’ Guild, and the Kingdom of Jedepare) told of what happened and what might they learn through other sources?

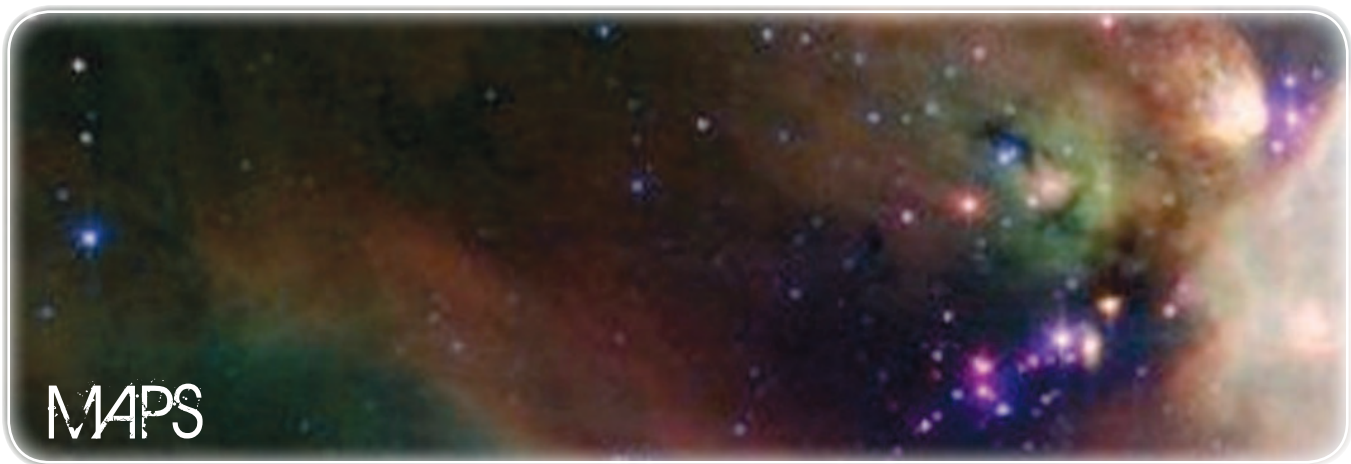
Some obvious possibilities for the GM to consider for further adventures:

- The Pilot of the *Pride of Antioch* knew there was something for Miscen to discover at Outpost 19, and when the Precursor technology ran amok it may well have had some idea of how to try to deal with it. Does the Pilots’ Guild (or just this pilot) know more about the Precursors than they have previously revealed? And might the PCs be drawn in to attempts to investigate this mystery?
- The Guild of Gate Wardens clearly suspected from the first that Precursor technology was involved, so was this more than typical Gate Warden techno-phobia? Might the PCs be pursued subsequently by the Guild’s Instrumentality, the feared “technology police” who enforce the technology restriction of the Guild Accords.
- Given the pointers from the Jeterieff V dig, where might Vascon look next in its hunt for Precursor technology, and what role might the megacorp have for the PCs?
- If the native Quertzl like species are NOT Quertzl, and are NOT fundamentally hostile to humanity, can friendly relations be established with them, and if so what secrets about the origins of the Quertzl might be revealed?
- On the far side of the Human Sphere the Sauriki are assaulting human worlds - why? What has driven the Children of the Egg to wage war upon humanity, and boot strapped them from

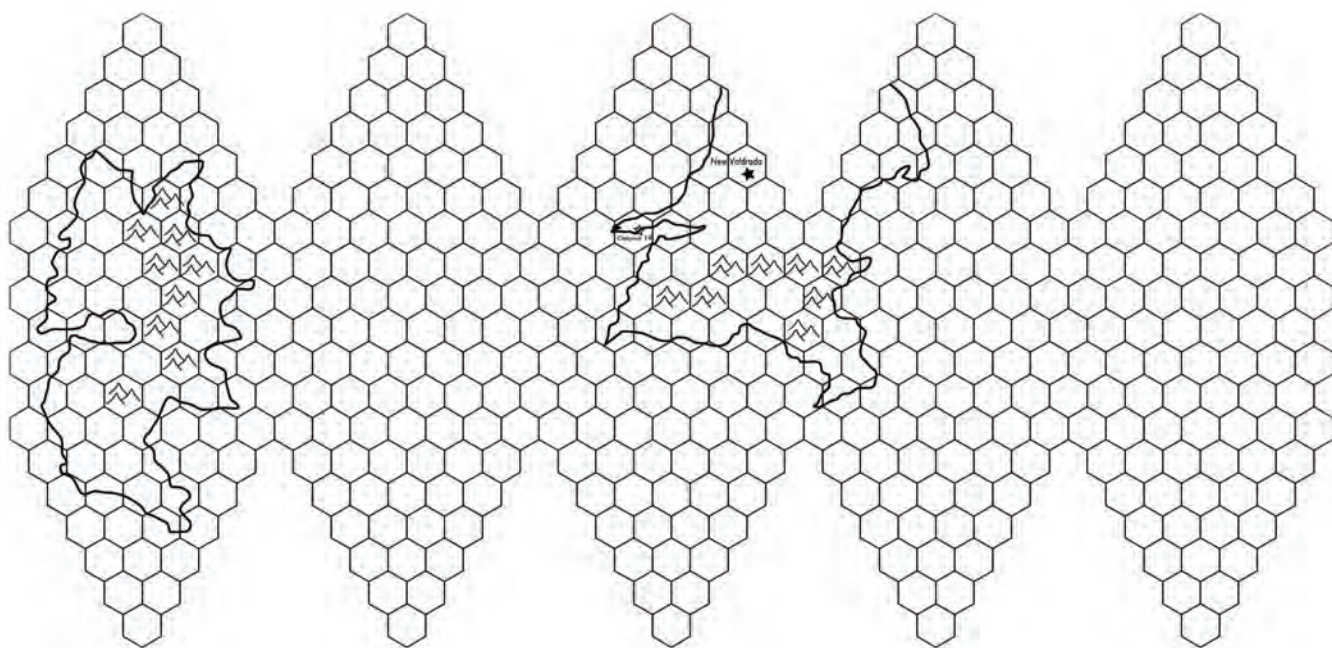
Frontier tech to Core World tech in the last two centuries?

- Yamatachi Industries may have known enough about Outpost 19 to send an agent to infiltrate Vascon's operation: where did Yamatachi's intelligence come from, and what else might they know?
- All reports and intelligence from Jeterieff had to pass through the Tripoint Facility - events will have cut off that flow of information, so who at Tripoint might take desperate measures (such as attempting to kidnap or blackmail surviving PC's) to find out what happened?
- A grateful surviving NPC (Stillingfleet for example) approaches the surviving PC's at Tripoint Facility to hire them to assist in their search for a missing relative: a sibling or child who has gone missing on the far side of the Human Sphere, in the vicinity of the expanding Sauriki front...
- A surviving NPC approaches the PC's some time later (months or years) and asks their assistance in tracking down a fellow survivor of Outpost 19 who has disappeared. Vascon has had a change of management and wishes to bury the whole Outpost 19 incident: but persistent investigation shows that all the survivors have died or disappeared, except the NPC and the PC's... What legacy of their brush with Precursor technology is at work?

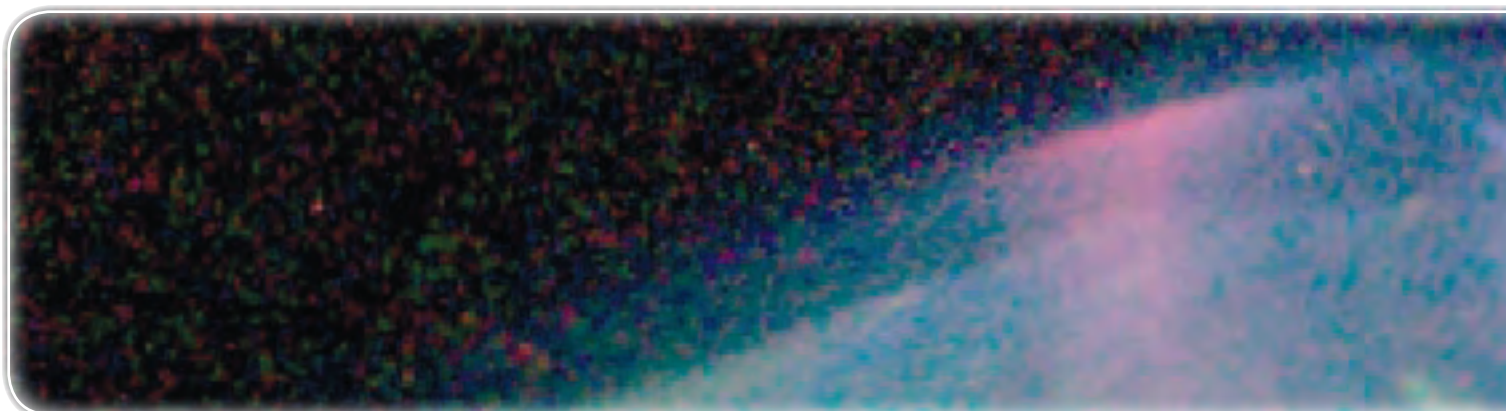




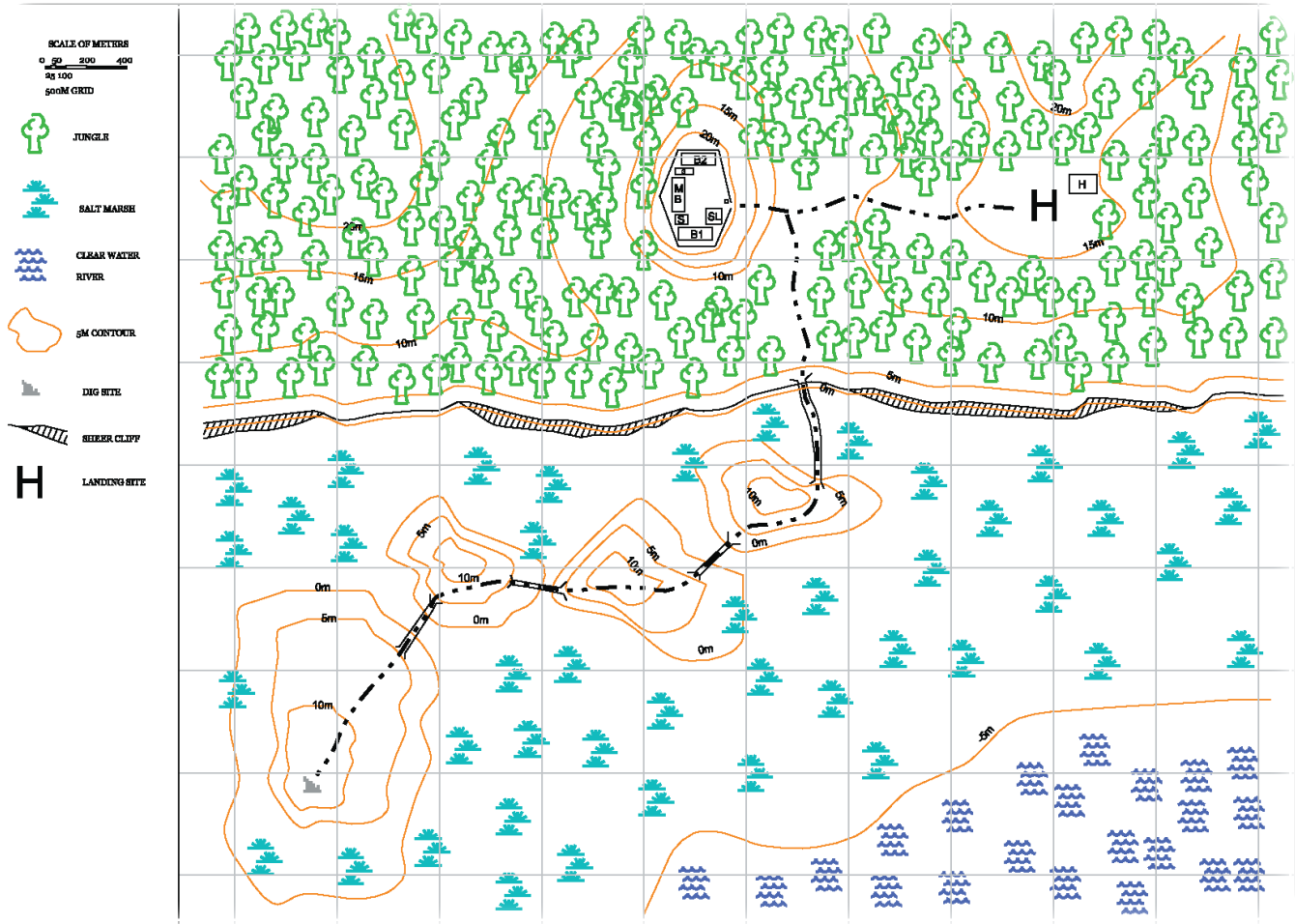
Jeterieff V World Map—Standard IS Form



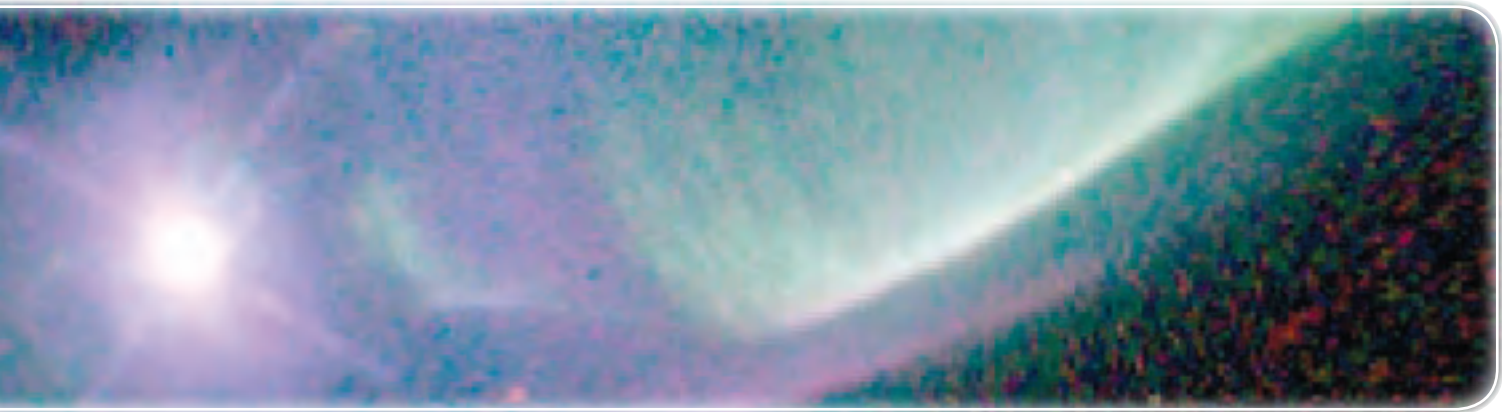
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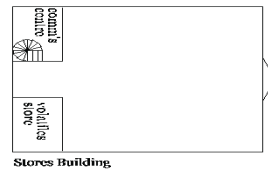
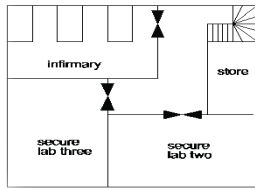
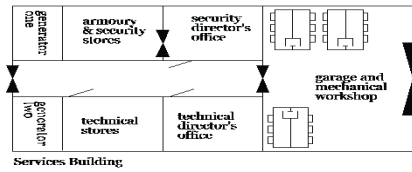
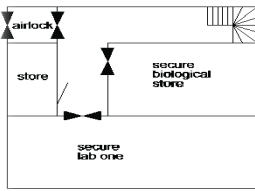
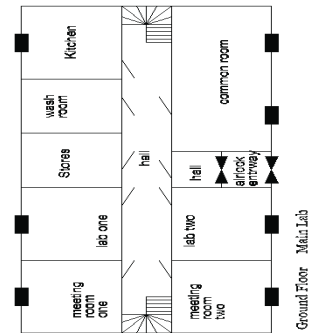
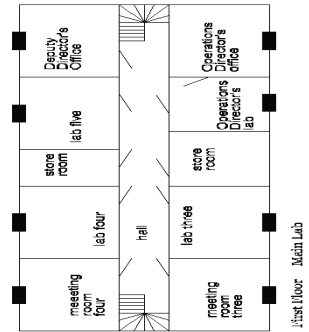
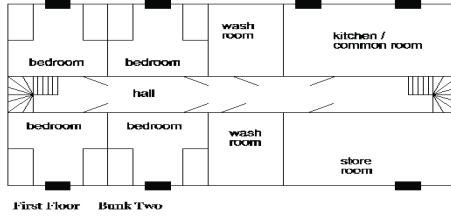
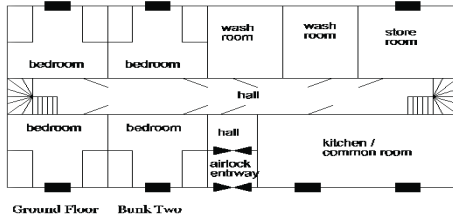
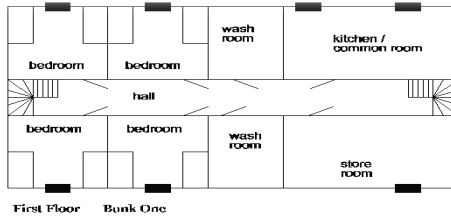
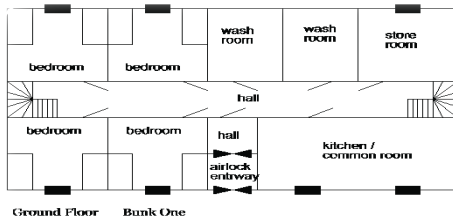
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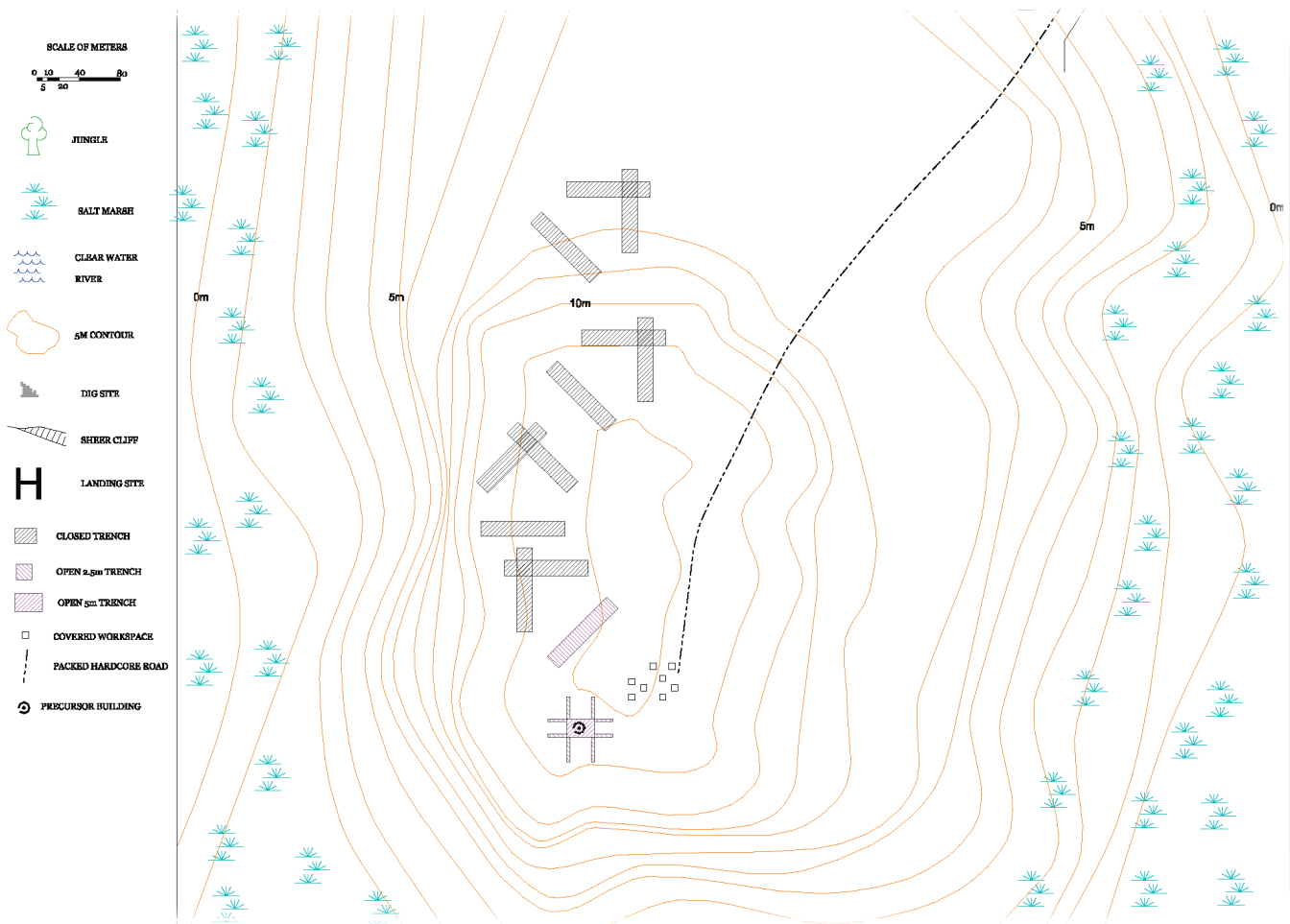
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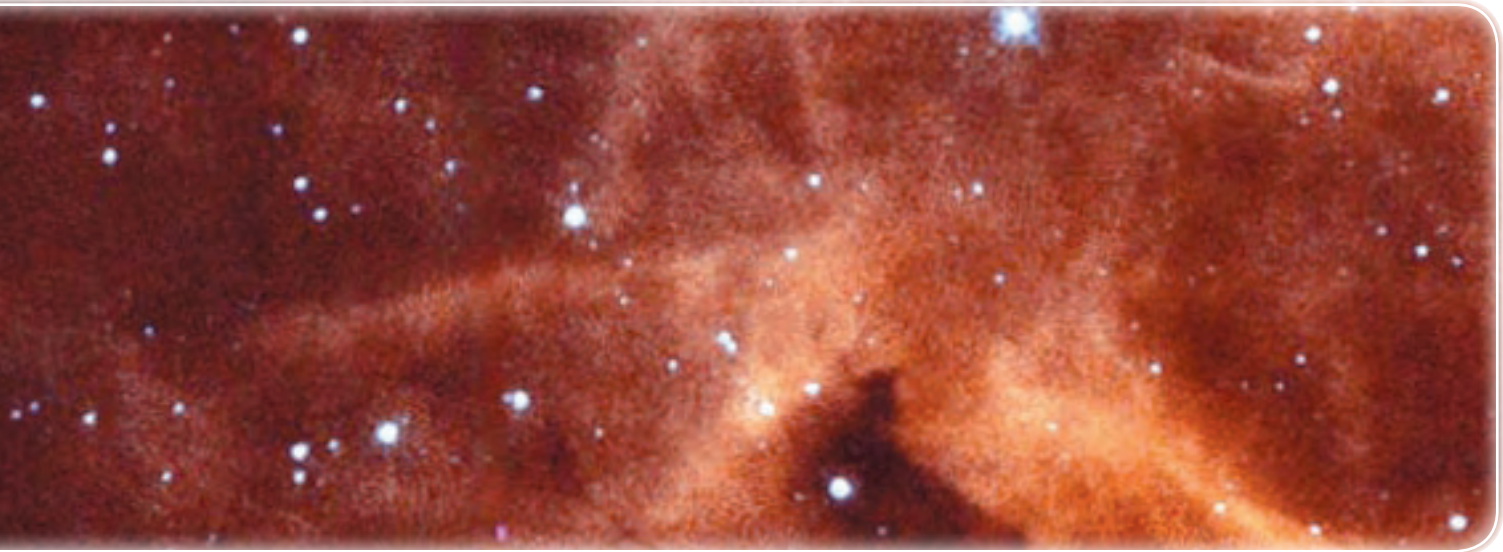
Outpost 19



The Precursor Ruins



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Outpost 19 Personnel—Command Team

Operations Director Dr. Hilary Miscen, 42 INFECTED, MISSING

STR	11	CON	9	SIZ	15
DEX	13	INT	17	POW	11
APP	8	THP	24	DB	+1D4
EXP	+8	MOVE	8		
HEAD	-/8	ARMS	-/6	LEGS	-/8
TORSO	-/10	ABDOMEN	-/8		

Skills (Cmb +6) (Com +6) (Man +6) (Men +7) (Per +7) (Phy -2) Command 40, Persuade 45, Research 55, Status 55, Technical (Computer Use) 25, Knowledge (Precursor Archaeology) 70, Biology 65, Chemistry 60, Physics 50, Planetology 50, Medicine 65, Teach 45, Listen 35, Spot 40, First Aid 45, Climb 50, Drive 30, Jump 35, Swim 35, Throw 35

Description Hilary Miscen is a tall and bony (1.9m, 59kg) woman with a long face and rather pronounced jaw framed by thin, shoulder-length brown hair streaked with gray. She dresses in utilitarian clothes and never wears makeup. A direct lineal descendant of the Pilot of the Pride of Antioch, Miscen drifted into Precursor studies from a university medical career that had never captured her imagination. Her credentials as a medical doctor and academic made her an appealing prospect to Vascon's Field Research division, and she has worked for the multicorp for nearly fifteen years. In that time she has watched her dreams of making

a world-changing discovery run into the ground by budgetary constraints and petty bureaucracy. She was thus quite receptive to the anonymous tip four years ago that lead her to evidence suggesting there was something worth finding on Jeterieff V. She has developed a covert correspondence over the last four years with an anonymous pen pal, the Pilot of the Pride of Antioch, who has guided her to increasingly impressive discoveries at the Outpost 19 dig site. She is currently suffering from a heavy nano-tech infection and is a board the Pilot's shuttle, which is also heavily infected. She almost certainly will not survive the events of this adventure, but it's possible the Pilot could manage a download of her personality and memory into his ship's computer systems.

Deputy Director Conrad Flaxton, 35

STR	9	CON	10	SIZ	12
DEX	13	INT	17	POW	12
APP	14	THP	22	DB	0
EXP	+8	MOVE	8		
HEAD	-/8	ARMS	-/6	LEGS	-/8
TORSO	-/9	ABDOMEN	-/8		

Skills (Cmb +6) (Com +6) (Man +6) (Men +7) (Per +8) (Phy +2) Command 45, Persuade 55, Research 50, Status 45, Technical (Computer Use) 45, Knowledge (Precursor Archaeology) 45, Chemistry 45, Mathematics 45, Physics 50, Planetology 60, Teach 50, Listen 30, Spot 45, First Aid 45, Climb 45, Drive 45, Jump 35, Swim 30, Throw 30

Description Slightly below average height (1.75m) and quite slim (62kg), with a round face and deep hazel brown eyes and close-cropped black hair, Flaxton dresses conservatively in regulation jungle fatigues and is not entirely approving of the more casual approach some of the base personnel have taken toward their attire. (Such concerns are however, far from his mind at present, something that has improved some of his colleagues' opinion of him.) He is not a friend of Dr. Miscen's per se but a diligent administrator and "peacemaker" who has worked hard to make the outpost succeed, despite Dr. Miscen's increasingly wayward behavior. Although employed more as an administrator than a field scientist, he has a background in the hard sciences, (specifically seismology and planetology), leading him to suggest using an improvised ultrasound scanning method when the archaeological team was frustrated trying to locate the limits of a subsurface structure without excavation. He was somewhat surprised that Dr. Miscen agreed, and ecstatic when his improvised device revealed a previously undetected void, little knowing that this was what Dr. Miscen had been expecting to find, although he has nagging suspicions he might be persuaded to voice. A conscientious man, Flaxton is more adaptable than even he has realized and will be willing to countenance anything that will clearly improve the chances of the surviving base personnel.

Security Director Johanne Erikson, 45

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 15
 DEX 13 INT 13 POW 11
 APP 12 THP 28 DB +1D4
 EXP +6 MOVE 8
 HEAD -/10 ARMS -/7 LEGS -/10
 TORSO -/12 ABDOMEN -/10

Skills (Cmb +5) (Com +4) (Man +5) (Men +3) (Per +4) (Phy ±0) Command 45, Persuade 35, Research 30, Status 45, Technical (Computer Use) 35, Knowledge (Precursor Archaeology) 25, Dodge 45, Artillery 45, Heavy Weapons 50, Firearms 70, Stealth 50, Listen 45, Spot 55, First Aid 45, Climb 55, Drive 45, Jump

55, Swim 45, Throw 55, Strategy 45, Track 35

Description A solidly built man of average height and build (1.8m, 70kg), Erikson sports graying military cut hair and pale blue eyes. A gruff veteran of conflict with the Sauriki on the opposite side of the Human Sphere, Erikson switched careers to corporate security ten years ago and has no regrets, but he is perhaps simplistically loyal to Vascon and more honorable than his employers deserve. He got on well with Dr. Miscen, mistaking her personal ambition as devotion to Vascon, and he finds Flaxton irritating. He is, when the PCs arrive, the only person alive, besides Miscen, who knows that Miscen retrieved a still-active piece of Precursor technology from the chamber and that it is in the safe in her office. He will be reluctant to compromise Vascon's rights, but he also doesn't wish to lose any more personnel. He becomes furious if the existence of working Precursor technology is revealed to anyone else, as it puts him in an awkward position—this is potentially the most valuable discovery ever made by a Vascon research team, but it could also clearly jeopardize their relations with the Guilds. This is not to mention the obvious suspicion—subsequently to be proved fact, of course—that this discovery is linked to the infections and deaths.

Technical Director Miguel Fulacci, 32

STR 11 CON 9 SIZ 14
 DEX 15 INT 18 POW 17
 APP 10 THP 23 DB +1D4
 EXP +9 MOVE 8
 HEAD -/8 ARMS -/6 LEGS -/8
 TORSO -/10 ABDOMEN -/8

Skills (Cmb +9) (Com +11) (Man +9) (Men +8) (Per +11) (Phy +1) Command 25, Persuade 55, Research 50, Status 45, Technical (Computer Use) 45, Knowledge (Precursor Archaeology) 35, Chemistry 45, Mathematics 45, Physics 45, Biology 45, Teach 50, Listen 30, Spot 45, First Aid 45, Climb 45, Drive 45, Jump 35, Swim 30, Throw 30, Electronics Tech 55, Mechanical Tech 55, Communications Tech 60.

Description A tall, gangling man (1.94m, 62kg) with shoulder-length dark hair usually kept in a scruffy ponytail, green eyes, and a straggly beard and moustache, Miguel Fulacci is a cheery “lifer” for Vascon. He was born on a Corps world, and Outpost 19 is his third “frontier” posting and his first as TD. While he is overly casual for Flaxton and Erikson’s tastes, his technical competence and adaptability endeared him to Miscen and most of the research staff.

Outpost 19 Personnel—Security Team

Generic Stats:

STR 15	CON 11	SIZ 13	DEX 16
INT 11	POW 9	APP 13	THP 24
DB +1D4	EXP +5	MOVE 8	
HEAD -/8	ARMS -/6	LEGS -/8	
TORSO -/10	ABDOMEN -/8		

Skills (Cmb +8) (Com +2) (Man +8) (Men +1) (Per +1) (Phy +9) Dodge 45, First Aid 35, Drive 40, Firearm (Rifle) 60, Firearm (Pistol) 50, Grapple 65, Listen 35, Navigate 45, Spot 40, Stealth 40.

- *Senior Security Officer Juan Pedro Rodriguez, 38:* a seasoned campaigner, calm, steady, unimaginative.
- *Senior Security Officer Eli Jones, 42:* Deceased.
- *Senior Security Officer Alejandro Matia, 32:* insecure and out of his depth, using gruffness to cover his fear. Matia is likely to panic and do something stupid in a real crisis. A friend of Eli Jones, having served previously with him at two other Vascon sites.
- *Security Officer Aaron Baddiel, 32:* DECEASED (animal attack).
- *Security Officer Elliot Mitchell, 27:* a wise head on young shoulders, wise cracking and philosophical, tries to keep everyone together. Flirts in a friendly fashion with Georgia Sternowski.
- *Junior Security Officer Georgia Sternowski, 26:* taciturn and withdrawn, but surviving by staying focused.
- *Junior Security Officer Kadin m’Haba, 19:* wide eyed and clearly well beyond his comfort zone (this is his first Frontier posting), but coping and with hidden reserves of resolve.

Outpost 19 Personnel—Research Team

Generic Stats:

STR 13	CON 12	SIZ 13	DEX 14
INT 16	POW 12	APP 10	THP 25
DB +1D4	EXP +8	MOVE 8	
HEAD -/9	ARMS -/7	LEGS -/9	
TORSO -/10	ABDOMEN -/9		

Skills (Cmb +8) (Com +7) (Man +8) (Men +6) (Per +8) (Phy +3) Persuade 35, Research 40, Status 30, Technical (Computer Use) 35, Knowledge (Precursor Archaeology) 45, Chemistry 45, Mathematics 45, Physics 45, Planetology 45, Teach 30, Listen 30, Spot 45, First Aid 25, Climb 30, Drive 30, Jump 30, Swim 30, Throw 30

- *Senior Researcher Carol Decker, 39:* Deceased.
- *Senior Researcher Camille Sienta Cortez, 34:* entomologist (Biology 60, Zoology 60), attractive (App 14), chatty, coping well with the situation. Not currently in a relationship and finding Dominic Perletti’s attentions irritating.
- *Senior Researcher Michael Montagny, 33:* pompous and longwinded archaeologist, hates Dominic Perletti (Knowledge [Precursor Archaeology] 60)—hiding his stress (as always) behind bluster.
- *Senior Researcher Karl Schwarz, 48:* Infected.
- *Researcher Brigid Torvel, 29:* linguistics specialist, fussy and detailed orientated. Currently in a relationship with Ahmed Hussein (Knowledge [Linguistics] 55).
- *Researcher Ingrid Yevcolovitch, 27:* Infected.
- *Researcher Ahmed Hussein, 25:* intense, driven biochemist, currently in a relationship with Brigid Torvel. Science (Biology) 65, Science (Chemistry) 65.
- *Researcher Dominic Perletti, 30:* a field archaeologist and Precursor structures expert. Obsessed with Camille Sienta Cortez, frequently argues with Michael Montagny. Knowledge [Precursor Archaeology] 55.
- *Researcher Theresa Ligotti, 26:* Infected.

Outpost 19 Personnel—Technical Support Team

Generic stats

STR 13	CON 11	SIZ 11	DEX 12
INT 14	POW 15	APP 9	THP 22
DB 0	EXP +7	MOVE 8	
HEAD -/8	ARMS -/6	LEGS -/8	



TORSO -9 ABDOMEN -8

Skills (Cmb +5) (Com +6) (Man +5) (Men +4) (Per +6) (Phy +2) Persuade 35, Research 30, Status 30, Technical (Computer Use) 45, Knowledge (Precursor Archaeology) 35, Chemistry 45, Mathematics 45, Physics 45, Biology 45, Teach 30, Listen 30, Spot 45, First Aid 40, Climb 40, Drive 40, Jump 30, Swim 25, Throw 30, Technical (Electronics, Mechanical, Communications, Computers) 55.

- Technician Takuma Ide, 26, some combat experience, survived the predator attack. Attracted to Catherine Chaubrette but normally too reserved to act. Electronics and communications specialist. Technical (Electronics) 60, Technical (Communications) 60.
- Technician Anton Bulato, 36, DECEASED.

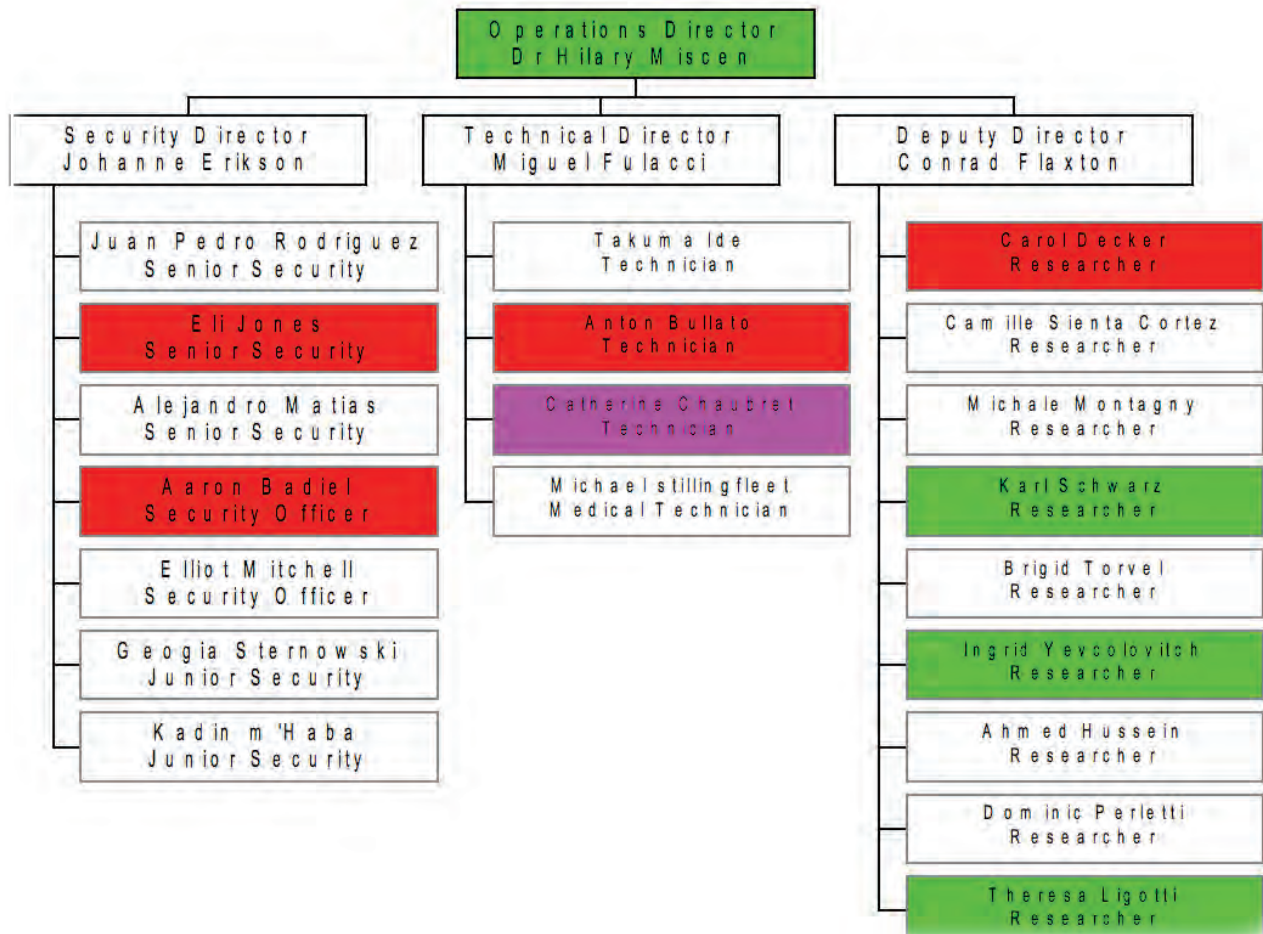
- Technician Catherine Chaubrette, 26, laboratory technician with a qualification in Pharmacology (Optional complication: she is a spy for a rival multi-corp). Science (Pharmacy) 60.
- Medical Technician Michael Stillingfleet, 36, a survivor of a Quertzl invasion on the other side of the Human Sphere. Laconic, bordering on the sarcastic. Medicine 45, First Aid 60.

There are many NPCs in this scenario, so don't let them swamp you. They all have names and a brief note as to their personality and behavior, and some idea of their statistics and skills. Use these details to make them believable personalities to the PCs, but don't worry about making them fully realized characters.

These people are all extras; the PCs are the stars. For the drama to work, the players must believe in the extras so it matters when one dies, or when a

Outpost 19 Organizational Tree

Green indicates an infected person, red indicates a deceased person, and purple indicates the spy (optional complication).



PC forms a friendship with or is betrayed by one, but if getting the details right is soaking too much GM time, the game will suffer.

Many of the NPCs will remain just huddled, stressed faces in the mess hall of Main Lab, and that's fine, but it's also worth giving a little color to the NPCs the players will interact with a lot. If Camille Cortez flirts with Marcus Berent, or Michael Stillingfleet trades deadpan jokes with Alexander Schmitt, the situation will feel richer and more engaging for everyone, and the players will care more if Camille is cornered by the mutated native predator or if Stillingfleet breaks down when he sees the Quertzl-like native species.

Non-Human Presences

The Pilot's Presence

STR	30	CON	30	SIZ	13
DEX	20	INT	16	POW	10
APP	10	THP	43	DB	+2D6
EXP	+8	MOVE	10/25		
HEAD	10/15	ARMS	10/11	LEGS	10/15
TORSO	10/18	ABDOMEN	10/15		

Skills (Cmb +23) (Com +6) (Man +23) (Men +6) (Per +16) (Phy +27) Assume the Presence has any reasonable skill at 75.

Armor In addition to its 10 points of physical armor, the presence can generate a Field technology based force-field of up to 20 points: damage directed at the Presence must overcome this force field on the resistance table or be deflected entirely. Each such deflection drains the Presence's energy stores (see below) by an amount equal to the damage deflected, and if overcome will require a full round to re-establish.

The Pilot's Presence is matte gray featureless humanoid figure exactly 1.75 meters high and massing 65.238kg. It is an artifact of ShipTech, essentially a remote-controlled robot being directed by the Pilot from his FTL ship in orbit. The Pilot can directly experience the Presence's full sensorium, not only what it sees and hears in the conventional sense but also its awareness of ambient pressure, electromagnetic fields, and radiant energy incident upon the Presence's surface. Equally, the Pilot can put filters and blocks in the data stream from a Presence so that all data is displayed on read outs and interpreted

from there, rather than experienced directly. The Robot body has an effectively inexhaustible power supply (100 power points available per round) and is immensely strong and tough. It is also vulnerable to the Precursor nano-tech and field effects, and it will avoid exposure to either, keeping at least 80 meters from the nano-factory.

The Pilot of the Pride of Antioch, the entity the PCs will actually be conversing with if they speak to the Presence, is a guarded individual. One of the eldest of the surviving Pilots, and thus a near-immortal cyborg whose memory stretches back to before The Fall, he also knows he has stepped beyond the boundaries his fellow Pilots have set for themselves and agreed with the Gate Wardens regarding the degree of involvement Pilots can have with normal humans. He is a shrewd intellect, however, and has a vast storehouse of information and artifacts from Old Earth and worlds across the human sphere. He also genuinely cares for Dr. Miscen and will do an awful lot to try and save her; the effect of his actions on others around her doesn't immediately impinge on his awareness, as they aren't his direct descendants. He does, however, have sufficient perspective to sterilize the site from orbit if all hope is lost, albeit he will ensure he has a sufficiently good scan of Dr. Miscen before then so that the computers on the Pride of Antioch can simulate her personality. Whether this counts as a resurrection is a philosophical debate for another occasion; it is certainly a breach of the technology restriction clauses of the Accords.

The Native Predator (after infection)

The original native species is a hexapedal saurian common to the coastal margins of Jeterieff V. Like Earth's crocodiles and other reptiles, it is low to the ground and walks with a sinusoidal motion of its backbone, rippling the limbs on each side. It has heavily scaled hide dappled to camouflage it in the rivers and swamps that are its normal habitat. Usually solitary, the species normally subsists on smaller animals common to its environment: other reptiles and lizards, plus amphibian and fish analogues. A typical specimen is some three meters long, with its flat triangular head a meter above the ground, raised by its prodigious forelimbs, with its body tapering toward the rear and lowering until its tail, itself nearly a meter in length, drags on the ground behind.

Since its infection by the nano-tech, the

creature has become increasingly uncomfortable in the margins of the river, hence moving inland. It has also acquired weird mottled striations across its torso, and two extra limbs have grown from its upper back near its existing “front” shoulders. In contrast to the scaled appearance of the rest of the creature, these extra limbs are covered in a glossy blue-black chitinous material and end in serrated sword like spikes. These “exoskeletal” limbs are remarkably tough given their slender appearance. The mutating effect of the nano-tech has also made the creature aggressive and bad tempered, but it remains fundamentally a wild animal and thus easily startled.

STR 26 CON 16 SIZ 26
 DEX 9 INT 3 POW 10
 APP 10 THP 42 DB +2D6
 EXP +2 MOVE 7/6 SWIMMING 8/8 (13)

Hit Location Chart		
L	5/14(19–20)	R
5/11(15–16)		5/11(17–18)
8/8(14)	5/17(10–12)	8/8(14)
5/11(09)	5/14(05–07)	5/11(08)
5/11(04)		5/11(03)
	5/11(01–02)	

Skills (Cmb +8) (Com –7) (Man +8) (Men –7)
 (Per –4) (Phy +2)
 Hide 62, Stealth 42, Dodge 30

Weapons Bite: Att 50+8, Dam 1D10 + 2D6
 Tail Lash: Att 30+8, Dam 2D6 + knockdown
 Limb Slash x2: Att 40+8, Dam 1D8 + 2D6

The creature can use its two Limb Slash attacks on a creature in front of it or Bite or attempt a Tail Lash in any round, but it may use only one such attack mode. The Limb Slashes can be launched at adjacent targets in front of the creature, and this counts as a single attack for the purposes of combat sequencing. Treat the bite as a crocodile’s in the unlikely event it makes a bite while swimming.

The Quertzl-like native species

For ease of reference this species will be referred to as “bugs.” Their shape is vaguely insect-like, and they are equipped with a hive-mind in which every

member of the hive participates via pheromones and electromagnetic communication, in effect a form of biological radio. Further investigation (beyond the scope of this scenario) reveals a vestigial telepathic capability, further reinforcing the suggestion that this species is related to the true Quertzl. A given Hive has a roughly circular range of typically several hundred kilometers in diameter, and in normal circumstances Hives assiduously avoid infringing each other’s territory. Each hive is a single, multiplexed individual consciousness that can subdivide itself and a split off a portion of itself to perform tasks that require traveling beyond the tens of kilometers over which the hive-personality can maintain coherence. These sub-individuals can later be re-absorbed in to the parent hive and their experience re-integrated in to the main consciousness. Adventurous GMs might want to consider the possibility that the “scout” hive present near Outpost 19 has actually been taken over by the alien nano-tech, and that the mother hive from which it originates might send another child-hive to attempt friendly contact with the outpost to resolve the situation.

Three typical body forms, again very reminiscent of the three commonly encountered types of Quertzl, can eventually be identified for the Jeterieff V bugs. These are scouts, tanks, and drones.

Scouts have small, vaguely wasp-like bodies with four wings and ten segmented limbs, all of which end in manipulative -organs. They can fly and have large compound eye structures that give them excellent night vision and motion sensing. They have shearing mandibles and a venomous sting. Scouts are small, fast, and agile.

Tanks are low, broad creatures with eight segmented limbs ending in clawed feet that give them excellent grip, but only the front two pairs of limbs end in appendages that have any facility for fine manipulation and they are not well adapted to such tasks. They do not fly and are quite slow moving but they are strong, durable, and can climb and carry with prodigious loads.

Drones are at first glance easy to mistake for tanks, but while they lack the armor and strength of the tanks, they are considerably more dexterous and better suited to varied roles.

About 80% of the time there will be one scout for one tank and two drones. It is up to the GM how to use this complication, so feel free to modify

and adapt these stats, add skills or other abilities as necessary, and determine the degree of intelligence and autonomy individual bugs display.

Scout

STR 6 CON 6 SIZ 4 DEX 17
 INT 13 POW 10 APP 10 THP 10
 DB -1D6 EXP +7 MOVE 14 FLYING

Hit Location Chart		
L	3/5(20)	R
1/2(18)	3/6(13-15)	1/2(19)
1/2(16)	3/5 (11-12)	1/2(17)
3/3(10)		3/3(09)
3/3(08)		3/3(07)
3/3(06)		3/3(05)
3/3(04)		3/3(03)
3/3(02)		3/3(01)

Skills (Cmb +8) (Com +3) (Man +8) (Men +3)
 (Per +1) (Phy +6) Dodge 30, Spot 45, Search
 45, Fly 55
 Weapons Bite: Att 35, dam 1D4
 Sting: Att 70, dam 1D8, 1D6+POT 6 Poison

Tank

STR 19 CON 13 SIZ 17 DEX 7
 INT 10 POW 10 APP 10 THP 30
 DB +1D6 EXP +5 MOVE 6 WALKING

Hit Location Chart		
L	6/10(19-20)	R
6/8(17)	6/12(10-14)	6/8(18)
6/8(15)	6/10(05-09)	6/8(16)
6/8(04)		6/8(03)
6/8(02)		6/8(01)

Skills (Cmb +8) (Com +3) (Man +8) (Men +3) (Per
 +1) (Phy +6) Dodge 10
 Weapons Bite: Att 35, dam 1D8

Drone

STR 13 CON 10 SIZ 10 DEX 17
 INT 12 POW 10 APP 10 THP 20
 DB N/A EXP +6 MOVE 9 WALKING

Hit Location Chart		
L	4/7(19-20)	R
4/5(17)	4/8(10-14)	4/5(18)
4/5(15)	4/7(05-09)	4/5(16)
4/5(04)		4/5(03)
4/5(02)		4/5(01)

Skills (Cmb +8) (Com +3) (Man +8) (Men +3)
 (Per +1) (Phy +6) Dodge 35, Spot 35, Search
 35, Climb 40, Jump 35
 Weapons Bite: Att 35, dam 1D8



BRP VARIATIONS AND OPTIONS

BRP Options

The following optional rules are used in the stats in this scenario:

- Total Hit Points = SIZ + CON
- Hit Locations
- Skill categories and modifiers
- Combat sequencing by DEX Rank
- Minimal Powers

New Rules

The following new or variant BRP rules are used for the pre-rolled characters supplied with this scenario:

Load and fatigue

Characters can carry up to their STR in ENCumbrance and expect to operate “normally” (walk for 8 hours at a sensible pace, with reasonable breaks), but any load significantly impairs the characters’ capacity for exertion, and no character can cope for long with an excessive load. Hence, there is a notional operating maximum of STR x 3 to ENC, although most characters can directly lift (and possibly even stagger short distances with) heavier loads. To emphasize, this “Maximum Encumbrance” limit does not represent what characters can bench press but what they can carry and still attempt to move or fight. Aids (wheel barrows, hand carts, stretchers, and so on) obviously significantly impact the amount a character can carry. As ever, GMs should apply common sense.

All characters have a fatigue level, as defined below:

Fresh	no penalty (a rested characters normal fatigue level)
Winded	all d% targets have –5 penalty
Tired	all d% targets have –10 penalty
Weary	all d% targets have –25 penalty
Exhausted	all d% targets have –25 penalty, difficulties may increase one step (EASY becomes NORMAL, NORMAL become HARD, HARD become impossible)
Prostrated	all d% targets have –25 penalty, difficulties may increase two steps (EASY becomes HARD, NORMAL and HARD become impossible).
Unconscious	no actions possible.

Fatigue level changes as adjudicated by the GM, usually caused by characters exerting themselves or exposing themselves to environmental factors that will tire them. The GM uses Stamina Rolls (CON x 5) to adjudicate when or if Characters lose stamina levels.

Casual Exertion is equivalent to strolling 100m. *Typical Exertion* can be described as jogging 100m. *Exceptional exertion* compares to sprinting 100m. Exceptional exertion always expends at least one Fatigue level, and loading adds cumulative fatigue; thus, strolling 100m carrying 2.25STR in Encumbrance is another example of Exceptional Exertion. GMs might also be willing to consider allowing PCs to enhance their performance by deliberately expending an additional fatigue level—sticking with the hundred meters, finishing the race TIREd rather than WINDED.



Levels of Encumbrance can be defined as follows:

Unloaded (up to 0.5 STR in ENC)

Stamina Rolls only required for typical (or greater) exertion at GM discretion and even then such rolls are EASY.

Light Load (up to 1.0 STR)

EASY Stamina Rolls only required for typical (or greater) exertion.

Moderate Load (up to 1.5 STR)

NORMAL Stamina Rolls required for typical (or greater) exertion.

Heavy Load (up to 2.0 STR)

Stamina rolls required for casual exertion but are EASY. HARD Stamina Rolls required for typical (or greater) exertion.

Extreme Load (up to 2.5 STR)

NORMAL Stamina rolls required for casual exertion. Typical exertion automatically fatigues character one step. Exceptional exertion only allowed at GM's discretion, and costs multiple fatigue levels.

Maximum Load (up to 3 STR)

HARD Stamina rolls required for casual exertion. Typical exertion automatically fatigues character one step. Exceptional exertion only allowed at GM's discretion, and costs multiple fatigue levels.

The aim with these rules is to set reasonable common sense limits that are easy for players to grasp and easy for GMs to administer.

While load can seriously impact a character's state of fatigue, so can environment (even Unloaded characters may find themselves Winded or even Tired for the first few days on a tropical world as they adapt to the heat and humidity). Fatigue levels worse than Fresh impose a penalty on the target for all d% rolls (so also reducing, but not necessarily eliminating, the possibilities of specials and criticals, and increasing the chance of fumbles), to represent the drop in facility that occurs as a result of fatigue. Again, the intent is to provide a simple set of common sense limits, easy for Players and GMs to follow and administer. GM's should only assess changes in Fatigue level when they become immediately relevant—don't keep fiddling with character fatigue levels whilst they are crossing the desert (albeit use of Stamina rolls to drive the tension and drama of the situation would seem in order), but when the

characters are ambushed by a Sand Cat, consider if anyone's clearly coped poorly (and drop them a fatigue level immediately), and then have everyone roll a suitable Stamina check (determined by how prepared they were for the trek, how cautious they've been etc.) to avoid losing ANOTHER Fatigue level.

Consider further Fatigue drops for extended combats or in the immediate aftermath of intense fights (adrenaline often carries one through much of a fight, but when the threat is gone, fatigue can hit like a hammer blow) or other substantive physical (and in some cases, mental) effort.

Fatigue levels can be recovered quite rapidly. In general don't try to represent pervasive environmental factors by splitting fatigue in to "long term" and "short term." Rather, simply impose caps to recovery (for example, until adapted to a High G world, all PCs default fatigue level is Winded, not Fresh). In general, one can shift up one level of fatigue in the immediate aftermath of having lost Fatigue by spending a few turns (5–15 minutes) "catching one's breath"—think of athletes after a sprint, or warriors after a combat. Several hours rest will recover two fatigue levels, as will rough sleeping (camping): a decent night's sleep will recover three or possibly four levels. GM's may also allow a bonus level for suitable Medical/Physiotherapy supervision/practice such as massage, decent hot bath, magic restorative potions etc.

Technological Weapons & Skills

Homeworld Skills: Each character receives three skills, agreed between player and GM, that are appropriate to his Homeworld's Culture and/or Native Tech level. So a character from Jeserion (a core world with a Hydrosphere rating of 91%) might pick Pilot (Water Vessel), Swimming, and Technical (Electronics). But a character from the arid frontier world of Astaren II in the Dominion of Lasteen might choose Ride (Horse), Survival (possibly with a desert specialization), and Knowledge (United One God Catechism).

Weapons and Armor Tables

The Human sphere Sphere has a wide variety of weapons in use, depending on local statute and technology. In general, however, commonly seen and used weapons technology represents a refinement and evolution of weapons technology familiar from pre-Fall Earth. While legends abound of exotic

Banned tech field-based weapons, energy weapons of top secret Macrocorps Multi-corps design, and the like, the simple fact remains that the most effective way humans have yet devised of injuring each other is still accelerating small metal projectiles to high velocity at each other.

All weapons are assumed to be compact high tech, binary propellant, case-less projectile, semi-automatic firearms, some of which are capable of fully automatic fire. Magazines are typically translucent (providing a visual reference to ammunition level), as well as having a simple digital display of remaining rounds.

and combat armors made from ultra-rigid but ultra-light ceramic plating that can be easily made to fit the human form and which has excellent kinetic and thermal deflection properties.

A combat vest is a torso armor made out of adaptive ballistic cloth and kinetically reactive plastics sheets that flex under normal movement but become rigid to high velocity impacts such as firearm projectiles.

Combat armor is a suit of armor made out of kinetically reactive and thermally deflective ceramic plates.

Field Tech force-field units generate a mu-field based force field of up to 20 points around the wearer; damage directed at the wearer must overcome this force field on the resistance table or be deflected entirely. Each such deflection drains the force field's energy

stores by an amount of energy equal to the damage deflected and, if overcome, require a full round to re-establish. Forcefield generators are small belt-mounted items typically powered by a 2 ENC power pack that stores typically 25 power points per ENC, for a normal store of 50 points. Power recovers, if not drained to zero, at 1/10th full capacity (typically 5 points) per round the shield is inactive.

WEAPON	TYPE	BASE	DAMAGE	ROF	CLIP	ENC	RANGE(M)	NOTES
Hideout	derringer	20%	1D8	3	8	0.25	10	a
Handgun	light pistol	20%	1D10	3	20	0.5	20	a
	heavy pistol	20%	2D6	2	16	1	20	a
Rifle	light rifle	20%	2D8	3	64	2	200	a, b
	heavy rifle	20%	2D8+4	2	48	2	300	a, b
Flechette	heavy shotgun	30%	4D8/2D8/1D8	1	8	2.5	10/20/50	c
Support	light assault	20%	4D6	3	128	2.5	300	a, b
	heavy assault	20%	4D6	3	96	3	400	a, b
	semiportable	20%	5D6	3	256	6	500	a, b

a: weapon can Impale

b: weapon can fire 3 shot bursts or fully automatically—see Autofire in Spot Rules

c: Shotgun damage is halved at range as shown

At this point in human history, defensive technology is slightly ahead of weapons technology: many of the lessons learned in previous ages about materials composition have not been lost. While there are fabulously exotic defensive systems possible (Field tech personal force fields, and so on), most commonly deployed defensive equipment takes the form of high technology “improved” variants of pre-Fall items such as flak jackets made of ballistic adaptive mesh

ARMOR	FIXED AP	VARIABLE AP	ENC/BURDEN	FITS SIZ	TIME	LOCATIONS
Combat Vest	10	2D8+2	3 (Lt.)	±2	1	Torso
Combat Armor	14	2D12+2	5 (Mod)	±1	3	All
Force Field	spec	spec	0.25	any	1	All



PILOT'S GUILD OF TERRA

Approved for public release, compliant to Article 7 and STELLAR SURVEY RECORD amendments 13.1, 13.2, and 17 of the Guild Accords

SURVEY EVALUATION, PLANETARY ASSESSMENT Jeterieff V

STAR SYSTEM DESIGNATION JETERIEFF REDCATED
 STELLAR PRIMARY TYPE F7 Main Sequence REDCATED
 PLANETS IN STAR SYSTEM NINE REDCATED

ORBITAL DISTANCE 1.2AU PLANETARY DIAMETER 11200km
 LENGTH OF YEAR 431days MEAN SURFACE GRAVITY 1.09G
 LENGTH OF DAY 26.1hours HYDROSPHERIC RATING 82%
 MEAN DAY TIME TEMPERATURE 310K

ATMOSPHERIC TYPE standard
 COMMENTS ON ATMSOPHERE

High average level of organic particulate matter in ambient atmosphere. All personnel are recommended to use filter masks when operating in areas of heavy exposure until acclimatized and adverse histamine reactions have been ruled out. Due to planetary position (see below), although the world has an intact ozone layer, incident UV at most latitudes is classified as Very High or worse, and all exposed personnel should follow Guild Protocol B in the use of topical UV screens whenever they are likely to face exposure.

COMMENTS Jeterieff V is a Class B Type 7 Jungle World at the Inner Edge of the Viable Life Zone with no significant companion bodies. The planet exhibits an orbital eccentricity of 0.13 and an axial tilt of 14.3 degrees. Illumination and temperatures are higher than Standard. Freestanding water covers 82% of the planetary surface on average and much of the land is low lying. Arms of the shallow seas penetrate far inland, providing ready sources of moisture for precipitation and creating vast areas of salt marsh. Humidity and precipitation levels are considerably higher than Standard. Despite its position at the inner edge of the VLZ, there is some evidence that the planet's climate may be the result of a runaway greenhouse effect, presumably from natural greenhouse emissions from the extensive volcanism. The world has only seasonal ice caps and the equatorial regions are exceptionally hot, with temperatures reaching as high as 338k.

GUILD OF GATE WARDENS

Approved for public release, compliant to Article 8 and
PLANETARY ASSESSMENT RECORD amendments 14.1.,14.2 and 18 of the Guild Accords

PLANET JETERIEFF V

DEMOGRAPHICS

WORLD CLASSIFICATION Colony—Joint Sponsored (see below)

POPULATION LEVEL Two (approx. 50,000), Colony

SOCIAL ORGANISATION Aristocratic / Feudal

SOCIETAL ROBUSTNESS INDEX 6.235

POLITICAL DESCRIPTION

GOVERNMENT TYPE Feudal

MEAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT INDEX 56%

MEAN GOVERNMENT LOYALTY INDEX 56%

MEAN GOVERNMENT REPRESSION INDEX 45%

MEAN CORRUPTION INDEX 17%

COMPARATIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT INDEX Class C / 74%

OFF WORLD ALLIANCES Kingdom of Jedepare, Vascon Corporation

ECONOMICS

TECHNOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION Frontier

MEAN INCOME Cr 1500

CURRENT MEAN TAXATION LEVEL 25%

INDUSTRIAL / AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITY Poor Industrial/Average Agricultural

PILOT'S GUILD FACILITIES Class D

COMMENTS

The Colony currently occupies the most favorable site on world for human occupation, a relatively lightly forested upland plateau of some quarter of a million square kilometers in the higher latitudes. Focused on New Valdrada City (home to approximately 20,000 colonists) the colony has only been established for some twenty years and has yet to spread beyond the plateau. At this stage, primary exports are natural materials: there is an extensive logging industry, (monitored by the Guild) and some progress has been made harvesting pharmaceuticals and food crops from the forests.

Both the King's Reeve and Vascon Corporation are also involved in extensive surveying work, as Jeterieff V's extensive volcanism holds out the promise of useful mineral resources, possibly easily claimed although this has yet to bear fruit.

Vascon Corporation has also applied for and obtained a Writ of First Discovery (per amendment 12 of the Accords) to investigate a possible Precursor site on a low-lying promontory projecting in to the ocean some 600 kilometers southwest of the colony site.





1. Doctor Herbert Wolter: Leader, medical doctor, and qualified pathologist*
2. Amy Erikson: Archaeologist/Support Scientist
3. Gudar Lao Chung: Survival Specialist*
4. Marcus Berent: Security Specialist
5. Alexander Schmitt: Medical Technician*
6. Roberto Malhoney: Survival Specialist

* Indicates an essential role that must be filled; if necessary, include the pre-generated PC as an NPC.





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OUTPOST 19:

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... the designation of Vascon Corporation's archaeological research station on the frontier colony world of Jeterieff V, a site that has been quarantined due to an outbreak of an unidentified disease. Can medical trouble-shooters scrambled via Gate from the Tripoint Facility medical Center contain the outbreak? Or will they discover that something more sinister is behind the crisis?

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