



MONGOOSE & COBRA

A Universe adventure which appeared in Ares 17

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I. Introduction

Mongoose and Cobra is an adventure scenario designed for the UNIVERSE science-fiction role playing game. A Gamesmaster (GM) is required to play this adventure; *Mongoose and Cobra* cannot readily be used as a solitaire adventure, and works best with four to seven players (not including the GM). More than seven players can participate in the adventure, but the number of characters that will be able to travel in one group will necessarily be limited by the capacities of the vehicles used, forcing some players to sit out parts of the adventure. Fewer than four players can attempt the scenario, though they might have trouble dealing with the more dangerous situations presented.

II. The Adventure

Mongoose and Cobra takes a much freer approach to scenario construction than most pre-packaged adventures, giving the players more "strategic" choices to consider and giving the GM more latitude in injecting his own ideas. Even the mission itself is not rigidly defined; depending on the courage and ingenuity of the players it could be anything from a simple quest to gather information to an armed assault.

A number of suggestions for introducing the adventure and mission to the characters are provided in Section 1. The GM should read over the section, and select whatever ideas presented there (or of his own devising) he feels best meet the needs of his campaign.

Before beginning play the GM should read through the entire adventure to familiarize himself with the main characters, and to get a feeling for the flavour of the situation. Play may begin by presenting the material in Section 2, which contains the background information available to the players. The GM should modify or add to the briefing as seen fit. A more detailed overview of the situation is provided for the GM in Section 3.

1. Introducing the Scenario

Rather than restrict the GM to one method of introducing the adventure, a number of possibilities are provided in this section for motivations to travel to the Chara system, where the adventure takes place, and the reasons that the characters undertake the mission described in this module.

The Chara system is at the fringes of explored space, and has only recently been colonized. The settlements are expanding and need persons skilled in just about any fields.

Stellar Prospecting, Inc. the company sponsoring the colonization of the system will pay standard fare for any reasonably respectable character seeking employment.

Characters who are skilled with weapons or in unarmed combat, who also have relatively clean criminal records, could apply for positions as security personnel in the system. Characters who have had trouble with the authorities of their world might find themselves deported to Chara.

If the GM is running a continuous campaign, the characters might receive word from a friendly non-player character detailing the opportunities available in the system. This idea is especially recommended if there aren't very many player characters, as the NPC then becomes a potential companion.

The characters could also become involved with Stellar Prospecting, Inc., better known as StellarPro, through any business connections they might have. The company has a lot of radioactives to be transported and sold, and needs supplies to expand operations in the Chara system. If any of the characters is particularly wealthy, another possibility is that StellarPro has offered a block of stock to him, and the character may wish to examine the company's operations firsthand.

If the group of characters includes any ex-military personnel, they might be hired by the Federation of Planets to scout out the Chara system as a location for a military base.

The Federation might also send the characters to Chara to observe the behaviour of company officials there, and report on any violations of Federation law.

Finally, some friends or relatives of the player characters might live in the Chara system, providing an additional reason for the journey there. Other possible reasons for adventuring may be developed as desired.

2. Briefing for the Players

The characters are travelling to Gardenia, a size 4 world in the Chara system (-22, -3, +20). Gardenia was first colonized as a scientific colony because of the abundance and variety of flora and fauna there. A few years ago a substantial lode of high quality radioactive ore was discovered, and exploitation of the world's mineral resources began.

More than 500 people now inhabit Gardenia, most of them at Oceanus, near the radioactives mine. Oceanus is a bubble-city underwater near the continental shelf of one of Gardenia's land masses. The radioactives mine itself is dug into a nearby sea-cliff. A landing strip for air vehicles and streamlined spacecraft floats on pontoons above the city.

The second largest settlement on the planet (called "Southcap" because it is located on Gardenia's south pole) is an agricultural station, growing food for all of the colonies. In addition to Oceanus and Southcap, three outbases exist.

Each camp is the centre of operations for scientists and prospectors exploring the unvisited hinterlands of the planet.

The air on Gardenia is thin, but rich in oxygen because of the density of the planet's plant life. The air pressure is two-thirds earth normal, while the oxygen content is slightly higher than Earth's. The air unfortunately is contaminated by aerial plankton, which float in

clouds throughout the planet's atmosphere. If the plankton are inhaled, the immediate effect is that the inhaler begins to hallucinate; in the long term, breathing the plankton causes serious respiratory diseases.

All exploration and colonization on Gardenia is done under the sponsorship of StellarPro, which has purchased a 99-year title to the world's mineral resources. StellarPro is a known and reputable firm which has explored and colonized four other worlds before Gardenia.

Aside from Gardenia, the Chara system has two asteroid belts, a gas giant called Aegaron, and one other planet with a moon. The asteroid belts contain refineable silicon and metals, but have not been exploited because of Chara's extreme distance from the heavily settled parts of space.

The other planet, Magrito, is out at the periphery of the system. No resources have been discovered on it or its moon, Kelm, although extensive exploration has yet to be conducted.

.Since the colony was founded on Gardenia, supply and ore ship[^] coming in and out have been hounded by space raiders. These pirates have harassed shipping for over a decade in a large volume of space, of which the Chara system forms only a part. Apparently the system's distance from heavily travelled space and the absence of an Astroguard base in the system make it attractive for the buccaneers.

As a result of the frequent attacks, StellarPro now sends ships in less frequently but with better protection. The ship on which the characters will enter the Chara system is the Flute-class *Marcus Aurelius*, which is believed to be fast enough to escape pirate attacks.

The characters have been provided with passage aboard the *Aurelius*, although accommodations will be tight as the ship is not very large. Each character can bring a maximum of 80 kg baggage with him (additional baggage, robots, etc., can be brought at a cost of 10 mil/kg).

3. GM's Outline

The material presented in Section 2 is basically accurate, but it does omit two important details. The first is the true nature of the *Marcus Aurelius*. The *Aurelius* is not just a well-defended transport vehicle, but is actually a cruiser in the Federation Navy, the *Conqueror*. The officials of StellarPro responsible for the Gardenia colony have become alarmed by the frequent pirate raids on shipping to and from the Chara system. They requested a military escort for the company freighter that was scheduled to be going to the system, but the Navy commodore receiving the request decided to lay a trap for the pirates. The raiders would almost surely ignore a known Navy ship, but they might attack a Flute-class ship with company markings.

The *Conqueror* was therefore camouflaged and repainted with company symbols to become the *Aurelius*, the "mongoose" to the pirate's "cobra." Complete secrecy has been maintained for fear that the pirates would get word of the plan; only the Navy commodore, the captain and crew of the *Aurelius/Conqueror*, and three company executives know about the ship's mission. To prevent rumours from spreading in the company as to why the scheduled transport vessel is not going to Chara, the *Aurelius* is carrying both cargo and a limited number of passengers; word has been given out that the *Aurelius* was hired from another firm as the most secure way of getting the vital cargo through to Gardenia.

The second important bit of information absent from the characters' briefing is that the pirates are *based* in the Chara system. The Chara system was selected by the pirates nearly a decade before it was first visited by any other party as a system unlikely ever to be colonized. The only marketable resources the pirates found in their survey of the system were radioactives on Kelm, Magrito's moon.

The radioactives on Gardenia itself were overlooked, and the planet's contaminated atmosphere weighed against its being colonized given the absence of any mineral wealth.

The pirates shielded Kelm's radioactives with lead to prevent their being discovered by prospectors, and settled into the system under the assumption that they would remain undisturbed there.

Even after the radioactives were discovered on Gardenia and the planet began to be colonized, the pirates remained relatively isolated on Kelm. The moon was so far outside the rest of the system that, after a few resource hunters' visits failed to turn up any significant minerals, the moon was left untouched by the flow of people into the system.

When it became clear that Gardenia was to be settled, the pirates managed to infiltrate the colony with a number of their own people. With these spies, the pirates have kept informed of activities on Gardenia and have been able to acquire the schedule for supply and ore ships travelling to and from the system.

One post of particular importance in the colony administration, which is held by a pirate agent, is that of colony communications officer. This position is more vital on Gardenia than on most colony worlds, because of the dense aerial plankton described in the players' briefing. The plankton makes radio communication between distant points on the planet's surface impossible. The communications officer on Gardenia maintains contact with the outlying bases through his psionic powers. All information and orders going between the main colony at Oceanus and the other settlements on the planet have to go by messenger or through the communications officer, who is privy to much confidential news.

This access to secret information has recently paid the pirates well. An expedition operating out of Outpost Gamma (one of the colony's outbases in Gardenia's northern hemisphere) stumbled across a heavy magnetic flux while on a zoological mission in the hills a few hundred kilometres north of the base. After careful investigation, the scientists discovered that the source of the flux was a substantial deposit of lodestone, interspersed with veins of invaluable magnetic monopoles. The discovery was reported in the outpost's next communication with Oceanus, but the pirate communications officer did not transmit the message to the colony commander. Instead, news of the find was relayed to the pirate's base on Kelm.

The opportunity to seize the monopolies was too valuable for the pirates to pass up. Flying in from Kelm, they descended on Outpost Gamma. The base was seized without a fight and its occupants were either shot or taken prisoner. The pirates then began mining the monopolies, using equipment brought from their base and the slave labour of captives they had taken from the outpost camp.

Oceanus, the main base, remained ignorant of what was going on. The pirate communications officer continued to give regular and unexciting reports on the status of the outpost, and the pirates mined the monopolies without being molested.

This situation could not be maintained forever, though. Outpost personnel on Gardenia are subject to a regular biannual rotation. The next rotation is scheduled to occur about one week (earth-time) after the day the characters touch ground on Gardenia. The pirate communications officer, anticipating the rotation and realizing that some ploy was necessary before the rotation was due, has decided to inform the colony commander that he cannot make contact with the outbase. The pirates have plans to fix the outbase to make it appear as though it had been attacked and destroyed by one of Gardenia's larger animal predators, concealing the pirates' attack on the base and taking suspicion off the shoulders of the communications officer.

When the colony commander is told of the base's "silence," she will send a reconnaissance party out to the base in one colony's ornithopters to find out what happened. This recon party could easily be the player characters themselves. Besides these two omissions, Section 2 does leave out a number of finer details about Gardenia and the Chara system. More information should be available to the characters if they search around for it. The GM should answer any reasonable questions if the characters conduct research on the system. The Star System Log for Chara and the World Log Sheets for the planets in the system may be examined by the players upon request. The players should not be shown the smaller-scale maps, however. Before the characters embark for Chara, they may make any purchases or sales they desire at the world that they are currently on. The *Marcus Aurelius* should depart for Chara shortly thereafter.

III. The Voyage to Chara

The trips to and from the jump-points on the way to Gardenia will be fairly uncomfortable. Due to energy limitations, the *Marcus Aurelius* will not employ constant acceleration for the duration of the journey. Instead, she will build up speed during the first part of the trip, coast for the majority of the voyage, and only decelerate as she nears her destination. Using this plan, the formula for travel time is 85 times the square root of d hours, where d is the length of the journey in astronomical units (AUs). Two Energy Blocks will be consumed for every five days of travel (averaging the energy used at the beginning and end of the trip out over the entire trip-time). See the box on Energy Expenditure for more details.

An unpleasant consequence of this energy-saving manoeuvre is that the middle three-fifths of each leg before and after the hyperjump will be weightless. There is a (50 [10 "NW Gravity Skill Level])% chance that a character will experience bouts of extreme discomfort during these parts of the trip (roll once each week of weightlessness).

Quarters for the *Marcus Aurelius*'s passengers will be rather cramped. The ship is a military vessel, and the only accommodations available are crew-grade bunkrooms. The passengers will be provided with decent food and entertainment, and the ship's crew will make every effort to alleviate the discomfort of the quarters, but passengers accustomed to first-class or even standard-fare cabins will still find the bunkrooms a bit unpleasant.

Other passengers will be going with the characters to Chara for their own reasons, and may be generated by the GM as desired. In order to keep secret the fact that the *Aurelius* is a military ship, the passengers will not be permitted to leave the passenger pod. Captain Chavez will apologize for the crowding, but says this is necessary to keep the passengers out of the crew's way. The door from the pod to the main hull of the ship will be kept locked.

The GM may roll normally for accidents or deep space encounters, but the success of the hyperjump should be automatic if the adventure is to get underway.

4. The Marcus Aurelius

The *Aurelius* has a Flute-class hull carrying an arsenal pod, an augmented jump pod, an energy pod, and a crew pod; half of the crew pod has been stripped and given over to cargo space. All of the pods are Armour Class 2.

The *Aurelius*'s main hull is standard, as per the specifications in UNIVERSE™ game Section 31.0 and DELTAVEE™ game case 4.9, except that the cargo hold of the main hull has undergone some modification and now contains a reserve energy supply (30 units) for the ship. The *Aurelius*'s hull can no longer carry any cargo except for items small enough to be stowed in the corridors and bunkrooms.

The *Aurelius* (as the *Conqueror*) has been in service as a military ship for 15 years, and has seen a good amount of action. Her exterior is marred in places from battle damage, but has been repaired. None of her scars are more than superficial, however; the ship is fully functional.

The crew pod in which the *Aurelius*'s passengers will be passing the voyage contains one 6-man room, three 4-man rooms, and one 2-man room. One of the doubles will be occupied by the stewards serving the passengers (see Section 5). The characters and the other passengers will have to decide how the remaining rooms are divided up.

Other facilities available in the pod include: a kitchen, well stocked with edible but bland food. A common room with comfortable furniture, card tables, and a movie projector and screen; a common study, with a few books and three video-terminals connected to the main ship's computer; a unisex restroom with facilities for six people; and a first-aid station.

The half of the crew pod given over to cargo (as noted above) contains spare parts for the colony's air circulation equipment and ornithopters, pressure sealant for joints in Oceanus's dome, a crated mining robot, light-weight mouldable radiation shielding, diamond-crusted drill-bits, and a variety of other equipment. The cargo hold can only be entered from the exterior of the ship.

5. Captain Chavez and Crew

The *Marcus Aurelius* has a crew of 15, counting all officers and sailors. The crew is standard complement for a Federation light cruiser. All personnel are career Navy men.

The commander of the *Aurelius* is Captain Martin Chavez, a short, stout man in his late thirties. Captain Chavez's physical appearance is not very impressive. He has curly black hair, over-large ears, and a smile that seems glued to his face. He cultivates an image of naive and unworldly simpleness that disarms potential adversaries and makes his true ability the more noteworthy when it shines through. The *Aurelius*'s crew know their captain well, and have a deep respect for him.

His characteristics are as follows:

ST: 3 **EN:** 5 **DX:** 7 **AY:** 8 **IN:** 10 **MP:** 3 **LD:** 12 **EM:** 5 **AG:** 6

SS: Skilled Tech Family **Environ:** Deep Space (All environs 4)

Urban: 4 **Gravity:** NW 4; LT 1; HY 2; EX 5 **Temp:** NL

Skills: Astronomy 3; Asteroid Mining 2; Pilot 3; EVA 2; Gunnery 1; Space Tactics 7.

Captain Chavez's orders regarding the voyage to Chara are as follows: he is to transport the materials and passengers aboard his ship safely to Oceanus and return with whatever cargo or passengers are requested by the colony commander there. If engaged by pirate raiders, he is to fight back, but not to risk his ship if he is outgunned. At his discretion he may remain in the system for up to three months, patrolling near the jump points and looking for clues concerning the pirates; this he will do. The code-name for this anti-pirate operation is "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi," named after a storybook mongoose described by Rudyard Kipling.

The *Aurelius*'s First Officer is Jim Stuart, a tall, handsome man in his mid-twenties.

First Officer Stuart's characteristics are:

ST: 8 **EN:** 5 **DX:** 8 **AY:** 5 **IN:** 7 **MP:** 2 **LD:** 9 **EM:** 8 **AG:** 8

SS: Local Establishment **Environ:** FL/LV 2

Urban: 1 **Gravity:** NW 3; LT 2; HY 0; EX 2 **Temp:** NL

Skills: Pilot 4; Gunnery 2; Missile Guidance 3; Spaceship Tech V, Energy Tech 1; EVA 1; Space Tactics 4.

The other two members of the crew that the characters may deal with on the trip to Gardenia are Ivan Marichev and Maxim Dynepe, the stewards serving the passenger pod.

Although both speak Universal, throughout the voyage they will communicate with each other entirely in their native Russian and will pretend to have minimal comprehension of other languages, to discourage detailed conversation with the passengers that might lead to an accidental revelation of the *Aurelius*'s true mission in the Chara system.

The *Aurelius*'s psionic navigator is Sharon Ilia, a dark Egyptian lady of surpassing skill in her profession. If she or another psionic has occasion to employ psionic communication with the pirate communications officer at Oceanus, she will have a vague feeling of treachery about him.

Relevant characteristics are:

IN 10; **MP** 4;

Skills: Life Sense 1; Navigation 9; Psionic Boost 2; Psionic Communication 3; Laser/Stun Pistol 1.

Other crew members aboard the vessel (and their Skill Level in the task of their profession) are: two technicians (4 and 7), a pilot (6), two gunners (2 and 8), one spaceship technician (9), and four missile guidance personnel (2, 4, 5, and 7).

Another member of the crew is Alf, a robot with a Brummagen II chassis and spaceship tech system. He is kept in a locker on the underside of the ship's hull and will only come out if needed to conduct external repairs while the ship is in deep space.

When the *Aurelius* makes her jump safely to the Chara system, she will be beset by two pirate vessels, the Sword-class *Condor*, and the Piccolo-class *Kite*. The raiders will be waiting 1,000,000 km (50 DELTAVEE game hexes) inside the nearest jump point to Gardenia, and will attempt to intercept the *Aurelius* when she passes by at a moderate speed. The pirates will pursue the ship at high acceleration, thinking she can be caught.

Both Captain Chavez and Karag Machar, the pirate commander, will be very cautious when an engagement occurs. Both will quickly realize that their ships are evenly matched and that a victory could only be achieved at the cost of unacceptable damage to his own ship. The two commanders will spar about at long range without really coming to grips. Karag Machar will then dock the *Kite* to the *Condor* and break off for Gardenia and the monopole mine (See Part VII) at high speed. Captain Chavez will pursue only slowly because of energy limitations and the inability of his passengers to sustain lengthy periods of high acceleration.

Limited patchwork repairs can be performed at Oceanus if any damage is done to the *Aurelius*. If the *Condor* or *Kite* are damaged, they can either be repaired at the moonbase on Kelm (See Part VIII), or by the theft of supplies from Oceanus.

IV. The Chara System

Chara is a GO sunlike star located 30 light years from Sol at coordinates -2Z,-A*20 on the UNIVERSE game's Interstellar Display. Because of Chara's extreme distance from most colonized worlds, the system remained unexplored and uncharted until the arrival of Karag Machar and his raiders (See Section 3 and Part VIII). The first exploration of the system by people other than the pirates was conducted by a survey vessel owned and commanded by a wealthy and eccentric naturalist, ten years before the events of this adventure.

A cursory examination of Magrito, Aegaron, and the two asteroid belts revealed little of value there. No mineral wealth was found on Gardenia during the preliminary survey, but Boris Tyshenko, the naturalist, was intrigued by the animal and botanical specimens he found there.

A biological exploration of the planet was begun and a small scientific colony was founded on the world's south pole.

For six years, exploration of the planet continued at a low level of intensity. Then radioactives were discovered by a party of scientists circumnavigating the Tyshenko Sea (of which environ n10 is a part). The scientists were moving north along the coastline in an amphibious vehicle when a huge spout of water erupted several miles offshore. Scientists tracked down the cause of the sudden geyser in the hopes of finding some huge marine leviathan.

The scientists instead discovered the water in the area of the geyser was tinged with radioactivity. Undersea exploration was conducted, and it was found that the geyser was caused by the sudden release of boiling water trapped in subterranean chambers heated by a vast lode of radioactive minerals. Boris Tyshenko sold the mineral rights to the planet to StellarPro (retaining the right to engage in further biological exploration) and the exploitation and colonization of Gardenia was begun.

The other planets in the Chara system include Vertiprox, Gardenia's small and lifeless moon; Aegaron a huge (size 9) hydrogen/ammonia gas giant with 15 satellites of assorted sizes; Magrito, a small world at the icy fringe of the system; Kelm, Magrito's volcanic moon; and two asteroid belts. Aegaron, its moons, and the asteroids are not described in detail here, and are believed to be of little value. Future adventures (See Part X) may occur there, however.

In addition, the Chara system is wreathed in a glowing halo of cometary bodies torn from the system's asteroid fields in Aegaron's monstrous gravitational force. Several comets will be visible in Gardenia's night-time sky on almost any evening (atmospheric conditions permitting), and shooting stars are common. Vertiprox's pitted surface is largely a result of the density of comets and meteors in the system.

6. Gardenia

Gardenia is a small, green world, 0.8 AUs from Chara. The single most noticeable feature about Gardenia is the amount of vegetation on the planet. Undergrowth and larger plants cover the world's landmasses, algae fill its seas, and even its air is permeated with minute organisms, plankton. The chief factors underlying the vigour with which plant life prospers on Gardenia are the planet's warmth and its humidity.

Temperatures on Gardenia range from a high of 65 degrees to a low of 10 degrees Celsius, depending on the time of day. Seasonal variations are fairly moderate, and rainfall is heavy across most of the world.

Regardless of the variability of the planet's temperature, on the average Gardenia is hot. One result of this is that the moisture content of the planet's atmosphere is very high. The warmer regions of the planet feel like a steam bath to the naked skin, and a thick mist hangs in the air. Gardenia's plants love the tropical heat and humidity, and grow to gigantic proportions with amazing rapidity.

Characteristics common to most of Gardenia's plant life include brilliantly-coloured flowers, large, pale leaves, and extremely long, thin stalks. In Gardenia's murky air, a plant's leaves have to be large and set high above the mists to capture as much sunlight as possible.

Another distinctive feature of Gardenian plants is a high degree of mobility and responsiveness to the environment. Many plants have sensory organs permitting them to hear or smell and fibrous muscles that allow them to react to potential danger. Several species have the ability to shoot stinging quills at predators; others "sweat" acidic or bad-tasting chemicals in the presence of natural enemies, while some merely fold their leaves and flowers to attract as little attention as possible.

Gardenia's aerial plankton (mentioned in Sections 2 and 3) thrive on the sunlight and moisture of the upper air, and form dense clouds that sometimes shadow the land beneath them. Most of the time, the plankton form a smog-like, omnipresent haze, but on occasion (15% chance per 60-hour day) their thickness will cause the air to become opaque for 2-12 hours.

Although the plankton are not parasitic, and Gardenian creatures do not suffer when the plankton grows thick, some of the chemicals composing the micro organisms are unhealthy to man, and have the hallucinogenic and respiratory effects described in Section 2. GMs may arbitrate the hallucinogenic effects as desired. In addition, skin exposed to the Gardenian atmosphere for more than an hour will develop a greenish tinge only removable by surgical skin-grafting or exposure to high levels of radiation.

Many of the colonists in Oceanus and the other bases will have "Gardenian suntans" of this type.

Another effect of the plankton cover is that long-range radio communication is rendered impossible. Short-range communication (less than 400 km) has a chance of malfunctioning equal to $(d/4)\%$ (where d is the range of the transmission in km). Vehicles orbiting the planet may still exchange signals with the hemisphere facing them, because the broadcast only travels through a narrow thickness of plankton when going to (or from) a point outside the planet's atmosphere.

In addition to Gardenia's abundance of plant life, the world has a large assortment of animals. Most are vegetarian, but the planet has its share of meat-eaters, some of which are dangerous to man. The murkiness of the atmosphere makes vision a less than dependable asset, so most of Gardenia's animal-life have highly-developed senses of smell and hearing. A few of the species observed are almost blind. Some of Gardenia's more common creatures are described in Part IX.

Gardenia has few natural resources, though those present are extremely valuable. Many Gardenian plants and a few animals are edible. A root or fruit chosen at random has a 60% chance of being safe to eat, and a 30% chance of providing some nutrition if the first roll is made. The corresponding percentages for animal meat are 20% and 70%.

A variety of Gardenian plants are useful in other ways besides as food. A number of vines have fibres suitable for the manufacture of rope, and the long, straight Gardenian trees grow perfect lumber for furniture or construction. None of the planet's vegetable resources are profitable enough to exploit at this stage in the colony's development, though experiments with hybrids are in progress at Southcap (see Section 11). The mineral resources available on the planet are described in Section 10 and Part VII.

Gardenia has one small (size 0) moon called Vertiprox. Vertiprox is a heavily cratered moon orbiting 100,000 km from the planet's surface. As a result of the moon's nearness, Gardenia's oceans have unusually variable tides; the difference in sea-level between high and low tide can be as much as ten meters.

No life may be found on Vertiprox, but frozen subterranean moisture is present. The moon has few other resources of note. Temperature on Vertiprox varies between the sunny side's 150° C, and the night side's -70° C.

7. Magrito and Kelm

Magrito is the outermost and smallest world of the Chara system. Chara is far away and dim, and Magrito and its satellite Kelm are very cold and dark. With only each other and an occasional comet for company, they drift through space some six billion km from their sun. Magrito's surface is rugged and *appears* lifeless (see Part IX). Water exists in a frozen state mixed with ammonia ice. At -100° C, water and liquid ammonia bubbling up from the planet's molten interior freeze instantly to dirty ice. Much of the planet's surface is covered by glacial formations.

Magrito has a thin and poisonous atmosphere of methane, sulphurous compounds, and inert gases; the planet's volcanoes emit a steady flow of noxious fumes, maintaining an atmospheric pressure of 5 pounds per square inch. Local temperatures will prove a strain on standard expedition suits unless they have been specifically modified for the extreme cold. The GM should roll once every two hours a character is in the open on the planet's surface; there is a 15% chance each check that the suit's heaters will break down. Characters will die and freeze solid in seconds without heat.

Magrito's mineral resources (lay environ) are: n03-Phosphorous; n05-Titanium; s01-Phosphorous; s02-Silicon; s03-Phosphorous; s05-Silicon, Titanium. The only substance potentially worth mining on the world is the titanium, but even this is impure and inaccessible, making it unlikely that mining operations will be begun for a long time to come.

Kelm orbits Magrito at a distance of 800,000 km (40 DELTA-VEE game hexes). Kelm's surface is even more rugged than that of Magrito. In several large areas, whole sections of the moon's crust have collapsed upon caverns once filled with volcanic gas. Without any atmosphere to wear them down, huge slabs of jagged rock lie end on end. In other sections of the moon's surface, immense crevasses can be seen (where the crust has not yet fallen in). Any detonations of nuclear weapons in the vicinity of these faults (environ n05) could result in a wide-area collapse and "moonquakes."

Although Kelm and Magrito are equally far from Chara, the greater volcanic activity on Kelm makes it warmer than its companion. Another consequence of the moon's volcanic nature is a tenuous atmosphere of 1 pound per square inch (with about the same composition as Magrito's). Kelm's gravity is too weak to hold air for long, but its atmosphere is constantly replenished by fumes leaking from the interior.

Kelm's resources (by environ) are: n0Z-Chromium; n03-Aluminum; n05-Chromium, Aluminium; s01-Aluminum. Environ s01 also has radioactives, which are the only resources on the moon currently worth exploiting. The radioactives are being mined in limited quantities by the pirates, who use them to fuel their spacecraft and to provide energy for their base, located a few kilometres from the mine and accessible by vehicle trains.

It should be noted that the presence of radioactives is not marked on Kelm's world log. This and other omissions related to the moon's settlement status were made so that the World Logs can be shown to players without giving away important information. For the same reason, no mention of monopolies is made on Gardenia's log.

V. The Settlements

The colonization and exploration of Gardenia is organized by two groups: Stellar Prospecting, Inc., and Boris Tyshenko's company, Tyshenko Scientific Research, Incorporated (better known as Tyshenko Research). Although StellarPro is responsible for almost all of the colonization of the planet, nearly half of the scientific exploration of Gardenia is conducted under Boris Tyshenko's sponsorship.

The five permanent settlements on Gardenia include Oceanus, Southcap, and three outbases ("Alpha," "Beta," and "Gamma" respectively). Oceanus is by far the largest colony, with a population of slightly more than 350. Southcap is the next largest, with quarters for 60 StellarPro employees and the twenty-odd members of Tyshenko Research. Each of the outbases is staffed by 15 to 20 scientists and support personnel, one-third of whom will be away on scientific expeditions at any given moment. Tyshenko Research organizes similar exploration parties, although all are based at the Tyshenko Research headquarters at Southcap.

8. Oceanus

Oceanus is located on the ocean floor, 12 km offshore in the Tyshenko Sea (on the world log it is the settlement on the coast of environment 06). The facilities at Oceanus consist of the colony dome, the radioactives mine, and a floating installation on the surface above the dome.

When StellarPro made the decision to mine the radioactives on Gardenia, a consensus was reached that it made more sense to have the miners' quarters on the sea bottom near the mine than to base the colony on land and ferry the miners to and from the shaft. A pressurized dome would be needed in any event because of the contamination in Gardenia's atmosphere, and having support personnel and equipment close to the mine was judged the safest and most economical way of establishing the colony.

Oceanus's dome is composed of three watertight layers of high-tensile sheet plastic, built onto an alloy frame well capable of withstanding the enormous pressure exerted by the three-kilometre depth. Each layer of the dome is reinforced to prevent implosion even if the other two shells should fail. The dome's sheet plastic has a projectile armour rating of 6 and a beam armour strength of 4.

Two airlocks lead out of the dome: one on the ocean floor for the entry and exit of the colony's two bathyscaphe submarines (equipped with reef-walker type extendable legs); and the other at the apex of the dome, where a gondola arrangement is connected to Oceanus's surface installations. No airlocks for individual divers lead out from the dome, since no diver could survive the water pressure three kilometres beneath the surface.

The interior of the dome is spacious and well-lit. Twenty large structures serve as living quarters for the colony's 150 miners and 200 auxiliary personnel, and another fifteen buildings house administrative offices, technical shops, laboratories, mess halls, and recreational facilities. Much of the interior of the dome remains empty, as the colony is not yet near its projected size. A football field has been marked on the plastic floor in part of the unoccupied space.

In the centre of the dome is a large, cylindrical building rising all the way to the ceiling. An underground railway from the mine leads to an elevator shaft beneath the base of the building. Miners go to and from the mine via this elevator and the railway, and processed radioactives (carefully shielded) are transported to the gondola at the top of the dome and to the surface in the same way. The mine itself is a kilometre and a half distant from the dome, dug into the side of a cliff that climbs abruptly to within a half a kilometre of the surface. The bubble was built far from the mine because the water in the immediate vicinity of the radioactives is heated to such high temperatures that it would weaken the material of the dome.

The mining operation is more than an extraction shaft. Interstellar shipping is expensive enough to make it necessary to refine the radioactives before transporting them. The ore dug from the mine is ground, purified, and converted to high-grade fuel before it ever leaves Oceanus.

The actual digging of ore from the earth is done almost entirely by machines; the radiation at the core of the mine is too intense for even a well-protected man to dig for long.

The mining operation produces one metric ton of fuel every three and a half hours, working around the clock; full-capacity production is expected to be nearly four times that rate in the future. Once the fuel has been processed, it is shipped to the surface to await the freighter that arrives every 12 Gardenian days (about one Earth month) from Lelande 25372 (-14,-7,*4).

Spacious storage facilities for the colony's produce are available on the surface installation floating above the dome. The facilities on the surface are large, including an 800-meter landing strip capable of handling the largest streamlined spacecraft. Sophisticated tracking and computer guidance systems are located near the strip to make up for the poor visibility afforded by Gardenia's atmosphere.

The floating installation also has hangars and maintenance facilities for two Terwillicker 5000 landing craft and four ornithopters. The Terwillickers are used as scouting vehicles and low-pay load shuttles; they are the modified (non-burster) model. The ornithopters are a smaller and slower version of the machine described in the UNIVERSE game.

The landing strip and other facilities are suspended on the surface by pontoons and are kept in place by several hundred cables running down to the ocean floor. The facility is not rigidly held against storms or the tide, but reacts flexibly to changing weather patterns and sea currents. A computer system monitors the pressure exerted on each of the installation's cables, and adjusts their length and the buoyancy of the pontoons as necessary to maintain stability.

Oceanus is basically peaceful and well-run. Nevertheless, there is some discontent among the employees working at the colony, who are upset by the frequent interception of supply ships and the consequent hardships and shortages imposed. One factor which the miners are particularly unhappy about is the shortage of radiation shielding in the shaft. Geiger counts are made at frequent intervals and all have been well within safety limits, but if anything were to go wrong in the mines there is almost no backup shielding available.

The colonists working at Oceanus are moderately well-behaved and law-abiding. There is little crime in the colony, and consequently the settlement has only a small security force. Ten men and a six robots have proved more than sufficient to maintain order in the colony. All security personnel and robots are armed only with stun-pistols and cudgels; no beam or projectile weapons of any sort are permitted inside the colony dome for fear of a puncture.

The chief administrator at Oceanus and commander of StellarPro's employees and the resources on Gardenia is Kim Li, who has been the colony's chief executive since its construction. She is very sharp and has a talent for organization; she gets along well with all the senior and intermediate level administrators, and is well liked by most other employees. She knows everyone in the colony by sight, if not personally.

Commander Li deals with people in a simple and direct manner. Sometimes she is a bit blunt, but she always gets her point across. Her characteristics are:

ST: 4 EN: 5 DX: 5 AY: 2 IN: 9 MP: 3 LD: 10 EM: 9 AG: 8

SS: Skilled Tech Family

Urban: 4 Grav: Lt 1 **Temp:** NL; **Environ:** FL/LV 2

Skills: Chemistry 2; Programming 3; Geology 1; Planetology 2; Biology 4; Compu/ Robot Tech 1; Ground Vehicles 1; Diplomacy 3; Economics 1; Law 3; Recruiting 4; Streetwise 2.

A constant attendant of Commander Li is Bruno, her secretarial robot. Bruno has a Manner 51sdf chassis equipped with creative thought, valet/secretary, recorder, and anti-bio systems. Bruno handles a lot of the minor administrative details of running the base and can frequently be seen delivering papers or gathering information for her. When duties do not call, Bruno works on his chess, a game that he finds fascinating and is already very good at.

When Oceanus was founded, five pirates worked their way onto the colony's staff so as to keep tabs on goings-on there, and to try to minimize exploratory surveys of Magrito and Kelm that might lead to the discovery of the pirate base. The pirates have kept a low profile, doing their jobs well but not outstandingly, and associate little with the other colonists at Oceanus. Two of the spies work as miners, one is a low-level supply manager, one is a deputy in the colony's security forces, while the fifth, Yasu Aman, is the colony's chief communications officer.

Yasu Aman is a powerful psion, once the master of a psionic institute at Eta Cassiopeia more than 40 years ago. A power struggle for control of the institute developed; Yasu Aman lost, was stripped of his rank and authority and expelled.

Soon after his expulsion, Yasu heard of Karag Machar's band of raiders (See Part VIII). Bitter, defiant, and uprooted, he joined the group, which was more than glad to accommodate a capable psionic navigator.

Once he joined the pirates, Yasu soon became a powerful lieutenant and seemed to become a close friend of Karag Machar. The psion cultivated the relationship and worked his way into Karag's trust. Yasu is now a constant adviser to the pirate leader, who has come to depend on the thinker's cleverness and insight. Yasu has gradually emerged as the real leader of the pirates, able to get Karag to do almost anything he wants by applying subtle psychological manipulation.

Yasu is not overly moralistic about the damage and violence wreaked by the pirates and makes no attempt to restrain them. Like many Psions, he is ambivalent towards humans without psionic powers, whom he regards as inferior.

Since he joined Oceanus as the colony's comm officer, Yasu has filtered the information passing through him and reported selected tidbits to the pirates, whom he contacts daily by psionic communication. Although the duties of his position bring him into frequent interaction with Kim Li, she has no suspicions of him. Yasu is very clever, and is careful to cover his espionage well.

Yasu's activities on behalf of the pirates go beyond simple information gathering. He is accomplished at psionic mind-control, and on several occasions has used this ability to make people do what we wants them to around the base. People are aware that once in a while someone will report doing things he hadn't intended, but no lives have been lost.

Yasu uses the standard light jumpsuit issued to base personnel and also wears a turban. Yasu is 67 years old but looks to be in his early fifties. His hair is greying and his face is slightly wrinkled, but he is still vigorous and alert. His characteristics are as follows:

ST: 3 EN: 2 DX: 5 AY: 4 IN: 12 MP: 6 LD: 9 EM: 3 AG: 4

SS: Communal Colony

Urban: 4; Grav: NW (-3), LT 4; HY 1; Ex -1; **Temp:** HO

Environ: FL/LV 6

Skills: Mind Control 9; Life Sense 6; Navigation 5; Psionic Boost 7; Psionic Communication 8; Psychokinesis 9; Psion Tech 1; Blades 5.

Psionic rigs are available to Yasu at the colony, the pirate moonbase, and aboard the *Condor*. Yasu keeps aloof from the rest of the colony, doing his job but not interacting socially with any of the other personnel. Hindustani is his native tongue; when he speaks Universal he has a heavy accent.

9. Southcap

The first settlement at Gardenia's south pole was established by Boris Tyshenko soon after he first arrived at the planet. Southcap still serves as the head quarters for Tyshenko Research's exploration of Gardenia, though the colony has been largely taken over by StellarPro personnel. Members of the foundation are still legally independent of the company, but all aspects of the day-to-day management of the colony are handled by company officials. The south pole was selected as the site for a colony because of its extraordinary flora, even more varied and exotic than elsewhere. Dangerous animal predators are rare around the colony site, due to careful hunting and the colony's placement.

StellarPro's facilities at Southcap are entirely agricultural and botanical. Sixty acres of fields and a dozen hothouses grow food for Oceanus and for Southcap's own consumption. By reducing the colony's need for imported foodstuffs, valuable cargo space on freighters travelling to the planet is open for materials that cannot be produced on Gardenia.

StellarPro also conducts botanical experiments at Southcap. A number of Gardenian plants are potential exports for the colony, so experiments are being performed with hybrids and grafts of various kinds. Other research tests plants from foreign worlds in Gardenia's soil and sunlight.

Tyshenko Research conducts similar botanical experiments, although potential profits are emphasized less. The majority of Tyshenko Research's facilities at Southcap are devoted to supporting the exploratory and zoological expeditions based at the colony. Holding cages, bio-labs, maintenance shops, and homes for expedition personnel are the main concerns of Tyshenko Research at the colony.

The facilities at Southcap are housed in some thirty-odd buildings, each individually pressurized and air-conditioned. Half of the colony's buildings are dwellings for five to ten people each, while the other half are scientific facilities, agricultural processing plants, and storerooms.

Southcap has its own landing pad, though it is much smaller than the one at Oceanus. It can accommodate ornithopters of the type based at Oceanus, and is also suitable for Terwillicker landing craft and other vehicles requiring only a short runway. Transports from Oceanus arrive every seven days (420 hours) to pick up food and transfer personnel. Boris Tyshenko's private residence is located at Southcap.

Though the wealthy naturalist is willing to put up with the hardships of the camp when on an expedition into the wilds of the planet, at home he likes to be comfortable and he succeeds admirably. His private yacht, the *Integral*, makes occasional runs to Lelande 25372, carrying the most interesting new zoological specimens, and returns with supplies for the foundation and luxury items for him.

The *Integral* has a Corco Mu hull with a jump pod, light weapons pod, 3 energy pods, a Lander pod with modified Terwillicker 5000, a buffered cargo pod, a living cargo pod, a bio-research pod, a medical pod, a cargo pod, and a luxury cabin.

An amphibian, two mobile labs, and three crawlers are based at Southcap. Most will be away on Tyshenko Research expeditions at any given moment, except for the amphibian, which is owned by StellarPro and kept near the base.

10. The Exploration Camps

Three small, permanent camps are the bases for StellarPro's exploration of Gardenia. Except for a regular bi-annual supply shipment and rotation of personnel, the camps operate independently of Oceanus. Each camp has full scientific facilities, vehicles, and a mix of specialists to make up its expedition teams. The primary purpose of the camps' exploration is the discovery of mineral deposits, but some attention is also given to unusual or potentially valuable animal and plant life.

The first of the camps to be established, Outbase Alpha, is located in environ s02. The base is at the bottom of a valley in the middle of a large mountain range. Huge, deep canyons and sheer, cutaway cliff sides expose layers of rock to direct observation and geological interpretation. A variety of semi-precious rocks have been found, though no veins large enough to mine have been discovered.

Outbase Beta, the second camp, is located on the rocky shore of environ n12. The base was built there because a coral-like creature inhabits the waters along the coast. Unlike its earthly counterpart, however, this coral's reefs are composed of metals instead of bony rock. No particular metal seems to be used; the creature extracts whatever metals are in the surrounding water and deposits them in the reef. A large number of the camp's geological missions are underwater, following the reef and sampling it at regular intervals in the hope that the composition of the reef will reflect any nearby undersea deposits of precious metals. No substantial finds have been made yet, although a number of exotic sea creatures have been captured for study.

Outbase Gamma is located in environ n06, at the hilly source of the tributaries feeding a large river running to the sea. Samples of the river's water contained a wide abundance of minerals, so exploration of the hills from which it flowed was begun. Though none of the resources that the base was established to look for have been found, a lode of monoples far more valuable than all the radioactives at Oceanus was discovered, leading to the pirate raid described in Part VI.

VI. Outbase Gamma

Outbase Gamma consists of a central camp, two outlying structures, and a small airstrip. The main camp includes the living quarters and scientific facilities of the base, while the outlying buildings (set a safe distance away from the camp and each other) are a nuclear reactor and fuel depository.

The main camp consists of eleven structures built closely together. The buildings are pro-fabricated, airtight, and windowless. A pressurised plastic corridor connects the buildings to allow transit between them without an expedition suit. Each building has its own airlock, however, as protection against leaks in other parts of the settlement.

No humans will be seen in the vicinity of the camp. All evidence indicates that the camp has been abandoned for some time, though the remains of some outpost personnel may be discovered (see below).

Although the area in which the base is located is heavily infested with undergrowth and tall, thin trees, the ground is cleared for a 25-meter radius around the camp and around the airstrip and the outlying buildings. The soil in these areas has been treated with a powerful defoliant to keep Gardenia's plants from infiltrating the structures of the settlement. The main camp (though not the other installations) is also protected from animal predators by a charged fence encircling it at a 100-meter distance.

What follows is a brief description of the individual buildings in the main camp. Only those details judged particularly significant have been included, so the GM should feel free to elaborate on the descriptions provided. Parenthesised numbers refer to specific rooms in the structure being described, as indicated on the map of the base.

Crawler Garage: A large, high-ceilinged room (1) that contains a standard crawler. Cabinets containing fuel cells line the side walls. A second room (2) contains vehicle maintenance equipment equivalent to a Civ Level 8 Vehicle Kit. Enough spare parts are available to repair up to "partially destroyed" grade damage. Six expedition suits hang on hooks near the airlock leading outside. A third room (3) contains additional spare parts, a Civ 7 suit kit, a library of the crawler's computer log tapes, and records of the expeditions it has been on since the base was established.

The Bunkhouses: Rooms 1-6 are bedrooms, each with one bed, a closet, a chest, two chairs, and a variety of personal possessions. Each bunkhouse also contains a bathroom (7), and a living room (8) equipped with comfortable chairs, video screens (with an assortment of movie tapes), sound equipment, and tables. The three bunkhouses (A, B, and C) are identical, except that rooms 2 and 4 in bunkhouse C are empty of possessions and furniture.

Air-Circulation Plant: The outer room (1) contains maintenance equipment, spare filters, and other materials to keep the air-processing plant in room 2 running smoothly. There are also monitors of the base's water, electric, refrigeration, and sanitation facilities here. Room 2 contains filtered compressors that draw in air from the outside, purify it, and pump it to the buildings of the base through underground circulation tubes. An auxiliary oxygen synthesizer is also hooked up to the system as a backup when the main system is being repaired.

Geology Lab: Rooms 1-4 are offices for the base's four geologists. Each contains a desk, chair, small collection of technical books, papers, and personal items. Room 5 is a latrine. The main lab part of the building (6) contains Civ Level 8 geoscanners, chemicals, tools, and other equipment permitting rapid analysis of geological samples.

Use of this equipment effectively doubles a character's geology skill level when attempting geology tasks in the lab. Room 7 contains samples of rocks picked up during exploration, all carefully labelled and catalogued for type and area obtained. Room 8 is a storeroom containing spare tools and chemicals. Room 9 contains geologic charts of the planets crust for a radius of 1200 km, and maps of surface contours for a radius of 800 km.

Base Commander's Lodge: Room 1 is the living quarters for the commander of the outbase, including a bed, chest of drawers, footlocker, easy-chair, table, and a small shelf of books. There is also a combination safe containing important papers, powerful drugs, and a small vial of monopole dust. The magnetic emanation of the monopoles are detectable (with instruments) from outside the safe, though it cannot be determined that the emanations are from monopoles rather than standard lodestone. Room 2 is the base commander's office, with a large desk, several chairs, and a video terminal hooked up to the computer in the sciences building. Room 3 is a bathroom.

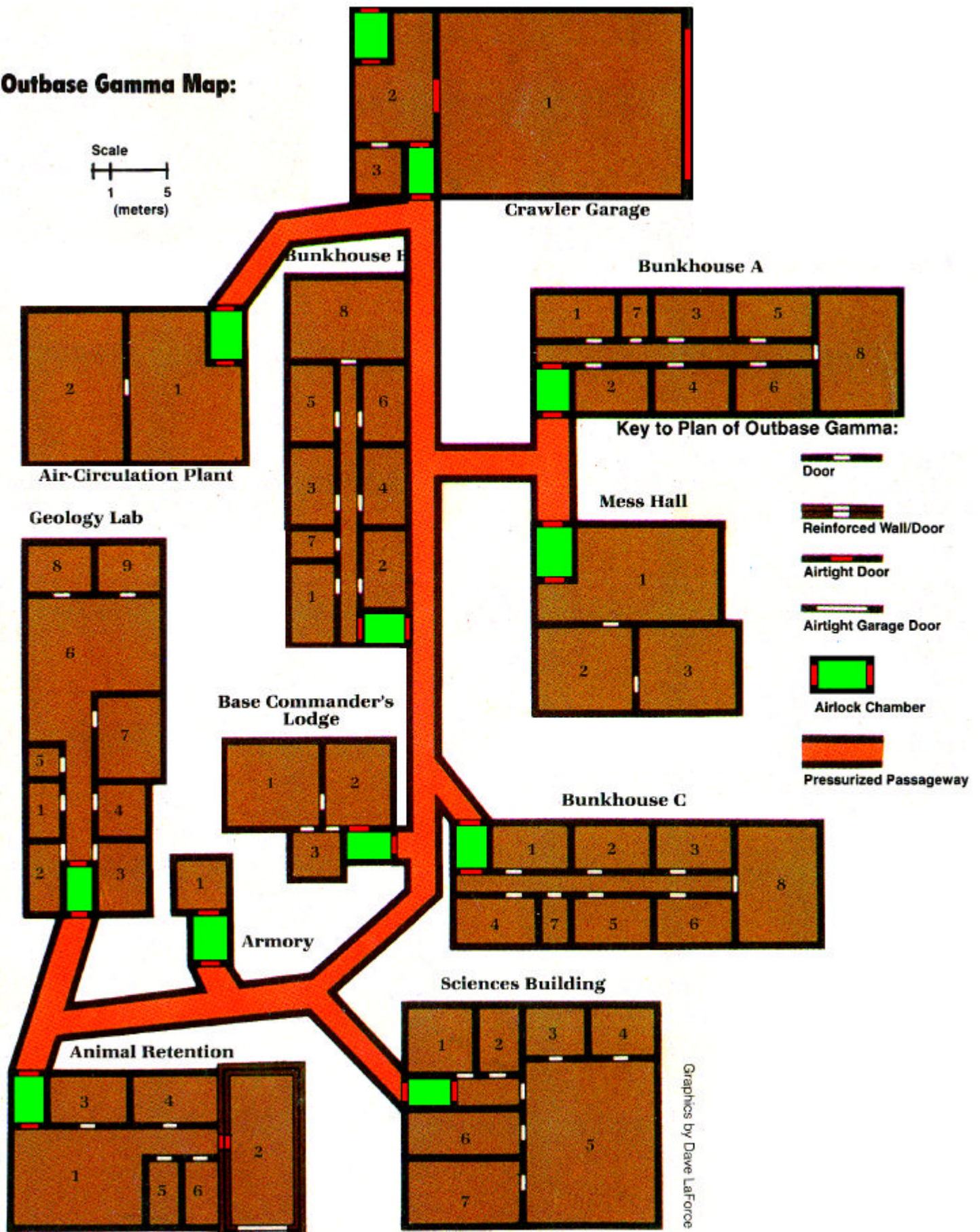
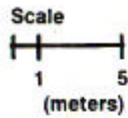
Armoury: The inner airlock door is locked by combination. The armoury itself contains two Civ 8 paint guns, two Civ 6 paint guns, an arc gun, three pistols, five needle pistols, two Civ 8 laser pistols, six Civ 8 stun pistols, two carbines, four Civ 7 needle rifles, eight gas grenades (various toxins), two pounds of plastic explosive (with blasting equipment), and ammunition and power packs for all the weapons. There are three armoured vests, one portable force field, and a Civ 8 weapon kit.

Animal Retention: A large room (1) contains metal and force cages in a variety of sizes. A number of bins contain food substances native to Gardenia. There is a chemsynthesizer (Civ Level 6) on a workbench stocked with a variety of organic chemicals. A needle pistol hangs on the wall nearby. A large, heavily reinforced cage (2) is available for very big creatures that might be brought in, while two smaller but still substantial cells (3 and 4) are capable of handling creatures several meters long. A functioning (though currently switched-off) Brummagen I robot with an anti-bio system is stored in room 5, while room 6 contains a robot kit and spare parts for both it and the sentry robot (see below).

Sciences Building: Rooms 1, 3, and 4 and the offices of the camp biologist and chemists, respectively. Room 2 is a bathroom. There is a large bio-chemical laboratory (5), containing a Civ 8 bio scanner, a neuroscanner, a Civ 7 Chemlab, a Civ 8 chemsynthesizer, a Civ 7 energy scanner, and a Civ 5 basic repair kit. Add two to a character's biology and chemistry skill levels when performing related tasks in the lab (in addition to the bonuses for the kits). Room 6 houses the base computer. The room also contains a library of all programs and printouts produced by the computer since the base was established. Room 7 is the base doctor's office, equipped with a Civ 8 Mediscanner, a variety of medicines, and two sick beds in sterile isolation tents.

Mess Hall: A large dining-room (1) contains two long and one square tables, 20 chairs, and a cabinet with silverware and other dining utensils. Room 2 is a fully equipped kitchen. A storeroom (3), is filled with crates of food and a large walk-in closet. The mess hall is badly damaged; the outer walls of the dining room and storeroom are ruptured, and there are human skeletons strewn in and about the building.

Outbase Gamma Map:



The base's full complement of personnel included the base commander, four geologists, two chemists, a biologist, a doctor, a driver, three maintenance men, two handymen, a cook, and an energy tech specialist, for a total of seventeen people. The base has been unoccupied for more than four months (earth-time). All but seven of the men that were at the camp are dead, and those seven are currently captives of the pirates at the monopole mine to the north.

The skeletal remains of the other ten men may be tentatively identified by certain remarks in their medical records at the base, as well as by their clothing (matching it to clothing kept in bunkrooms). Though the pirates have tried to disguise the murder of the personnel as the act of wild predators, careful medical examination will show that some of the bodies were shot by laser weapons.

After the monopole vein was found and the discovering expedition returned to the outbase with a report of its find, news of the monopoles was sent to Oceanus. Yasu Aman received the information, but relayed it to Karag Machar, rather than to the colony commander. The pirates decided that the monopoles were too valuable an opportunity to pass up, and so the *Condor*, which had been waiting near Gardenia's jump point, departed for the planet at high acceleration.

Once the pirates were in orbit, a raiding party descended in the *Kite*. The ship landed in the brush nearly a kilometre from the camp, using quiet, levitator-type anti-gravity generators for her landing so as not to alert the base. The raiders crept into the camp, passing through the electrified fence by a small, non-charged door. A patrolling sentry robot was shut down easily because, under the assumption that all humans in the area were friendly, the 'bot had only been programmed to defend against non-human intruders.

The raiders then waited at the periphery of the camp until the base personnel were all gathered in the mess hall for a meal. They then entered the building, lasers ready, and ordered the assembled diners to surrender. Though outnumbering the raiders nearly 3 to 1, the base personnel had only their silverware to use as weapons, while the pirates had body armour and paint guns. The outpost commander gave the order to surrender without a fight.

One of the base's seventeen men was not at the meal, however. Crawler-driver Jostud Hoime came into the mess hall late, after finishing up some repairs on the crawler. Seeing the armed strangers and the glum faces of his comrades, Jostud turned and fled back to the garage before the raiders could stop him, and locked its airtight doors behind him.

Although he had no idea who the strangers were, Jostud rightly concluded that the recent monopole find was the reason for their visit. Acting impulsively, he fixed the crawler's engine so that it would break down after an hour or two of travel. While the pirates shouted curses and threats from outside, he recorded what had happened to the base in the crawler's log tape and hid the tape in the vehicle's engine where it would be found when the crawler was repaired. With no means of contacting Oceanus directly, this was the best way that Jostud saw of helping future investigators from the main colony.

Jostud then put on one of the expedition suits in the maintenance shop, and tried to flee from the exterior airlock. A pirate waiting outside gunned him down.

The raiders had sixteen captives, and complete control of the base. Though the prisoners would be useful to work the monopole mine, the *Kite*'s passenger capacity was already fully utilized. Seven could fit in the cargo hold, protected by expedition suits for the short hop up to the *Condor*. The rest Karag ordered killed by laser fire.

Rather than loot the camp for its scientific equipment, Karag conceived a plan to disguise what had happened to the base. He knew from Yasu Aman that, aside from the pirates and the seven remaining captives, no one was aware of the existence of the monopoles. A careful search was made of the camp for evidence of the monopoles and records of the expedition on which they were found, and all were destroyed (or so he thought). The computer disc with the relevant sections of the camp log was de-magnetized, and the computer left on to overheat, so that the scrambling would seem accidental to anyone checking the computer.

Notebooks with written records were burned, and all samples of the monopoles and the ore in which they were found were taken. Two clues were missed by the pirates, however. One was the crawler log hidden by Jostud Holme. The second was a small vial of monopole dust in a safe in the base commander's quarters. The raiders did detect the monopoles' magnetic radiation, but there was no way of getting into the safe without doing it very noticeable damage (the base commander was one of the captives who had been slain). Karag contented himself with the knowledge that probably nobody at Oceanus could open the safe either. Even if the monopoles were found, their presence would be a mystery in the absence of any other information about the mine.

The pirates then set about to conceal their part in what had happened to the base. The camp had been conquered without a battle, so there were no visible signs of a struggle to give away the fact that humans were involved. The sighting of a large and seemingly ferocious predator close by the camp gave Karag the idea to make it seem as though the base had fallen to an unlucky raid by one of Gardenia's carnivores. On the surface a clever plan, it was carried out clumsily.

A number of beasts of a suitable species (the "Rhinosaur"; see Part IX) were rounded up and led into the camp. After some goading by the raiders, the creatures tore open the side of the mess hall with their long and powerful horns, ate vast quantities of the food in the storeroom, and mauled the corpses of the dead personnel who were left in and around the dining room. After tracking up the area near the mess hall and damaging some of the other nearby buildings, all the creatures save one were driven away, trampling the (tuned-off) electric fence as they went. The last beast was killed by the machine-gun bullets of the sentry-robot (which the pirates reprogrammed), and left on the ground near the mess hall. The pirates then tried to wipe away any remaining evidence of their own presence, and went back to the *Condor*.

At present the camp is very run-down. The interiors of the buildings are dusty, and the air circulation and temperature control systems have long since broken down, though the camp's nuclear reactor is still operating. The plastic passages connecting the buildings' airlocks were torn by the Rhinosaurs' horns, and have deflated. The corpses of the base personnel and the dead beast have decayed, so that all that remains is their bones. Bones and withered plants are also all that is left of several specimens (including another Rhinosaur) kept in the animal retention centre.

Some traces of the pirates' passing remain, however. A boot-print that does not match the boots worn by the base personnel may be found in the outpost commander's office, hidden from immediate view behind a desk. Laser marks, though covered with dirt and paint, may still be seen in some areas of the base, particularly along the mess hall walls where the personnel were shot down. The GM should determine how likely it is that clues will be found, allowing for the PCs skills and actions.

The sentry robot, a Manner 44 chassis with self-activation, anti-bio, weapons targeting, machine-gun, and force field systems, has been positioned near the airstrip, with instructions to fire at landing vehicles and "defend against" any people that arrive at the camp.

Its memory banks have been falsified to include a record of "the Rhinosaurs' attack," and superficial damage was done to its interior circuits to make it seem as though its current hostile behaviour is the result of a malfunction. Such tampering may be detected after careful examination by the appropriate technicians.

An aerial survey of the area may reveal a crushed patch of vegetation near the camp (see maps) that has not been overgrown recently. It is the size of a small starship hull.

VII. The Monopole Mine

The monopole mine is nestled into the base of a cliff a little over 600 km north-by-northwest of Outbase Gamma. In addition to the mineshaft itself, the pirates have constructed a small hydroponics plant nearby. The plant and the entrance to the mine are both well camouflaged against aerial observation, blending in well with the surrounding vegetation. However, the concentration of monopoles is so great as to make the site detectable from orbit with the proper instruments.

Ore storage areas, refining equipment, and living quarters for the prisoners mining the monopoles and their guards are all underground, near the entrance to the shaft. Only three pirates are usually stationed at the mine, though more will often come down in the *Kite* when the *Condor* is in orbit around Gardenia. Though the pirates are expecting no intruders at the mine, an armed rover is parked nearby in case a quick getaway seems necessary. A neuroscanner set to humans is hooked up to an alarm bell at the entrance to the shaft, to provide advanced warning of visitors. Yasu Aman contacts the pirates at the mine daily to relay orders from Karag Machar, to pass on any important information about goings on at Oceanus, and to check up on the progress of the monopoles' extraction.

The mineshaft burrows into the rock of the cliff side for a distance of 750 meters, following a thin streak of monopoles buried in a vein of lodestone. The shaft slopes downward at a 15 degree angle, but is fairly straight and has no branches. The section of the shaft near the surface is broken up by two airtight doors, one at the mouth of the shaft, the other 20 meters further in. A large (300 cubic meter) cavern has been hollowed from the rock between the two doors; the three pirate guards live in this space, and this is where extracted ore is purified and the final product stored.

The refining of the mined ore is done by a Brummagen II robot with miner and chem systems. The purification done by the robot is very imperfect, however. The ratio of waste rock to monopoles even in comparatively rich ore is very high; quality extraction requires equipment not included in the robot's systems.

Forty-thousand kilograms of semi-refined ore have been mined to date, and the mine produces 400 kilograms of new ore every 24 hours. As the ore is produced, it is packed in 1000 kilogram crates (each 1/10 cubic meter large), and stacked at one side of the cavern near the mouth of the shaft.

The actual mining of ore is done by the seven prisoners taken in the raid on Outbase Gamma. Equipped with digger/ scoopers, they quarry the ore and carry it to the miner-robot, under the supervision of the pirates. Living facilities (crude but adequate) for the prisoners are provided in a small hollow behind the second airtight door.

The shaft has no air filtration system. A refrigeration unit keeps temperatures bearable, while the robot synthesizes oxygen when needed to freshen the atmosphere.

A small hydroponic garden is located just outside the shaft. A five-meter radius prefab dome (with airlock) contains planting tubs, chemicals, and atmosphere and temperature control equipment. Foods of a variety of types are grown, including vegetables, high-yield grain hybrids, and an unappetizing but healthy yeast-base protein substitute. The garden was built near the mine as an emergency food source in case the *Condor* was ever prevented from making a supply run. Karag Machar wanted to be sure that he wouldn't be forced to come to Gardenia when it was potentially dangerous just to keep his men from starving. The pirates augment the produce of the garden with the meat of a common Gardenian herd animal.

The seven prisoners from the raid on Outbase Gamma who survived are now slaves in the monopole mine. Though the captives do not work willingly, there is little alternative. On two occasions they tried refusing to mine, and each time one of them was taken out and tortured until all consented to continue to dig.

The prisoners consist of two of the outpost's geologists, two maintenance men, the driver, cook, and biologist. The statistics for each may be developed by the GM as desired; if rescued, they will certainly be well-disposed toward the saviours and will do all they can to have them rewarded. There is a 20% chance that a particular prisoner will want to leave the planet once rescued.

The prisoners are provided with enough food and water for their needs, though they are allowed only six hours' sleep out of every twenty-four hour working "day." The rest of the time they are hard at work, deepening the shaft.

The pirate guards do not go out of their way to make life unpleasant for the captives, but they are intolerant of any misbehaviour, and are willing to be very cruel if they feel it is needed. The pirates are careful to avoid friendly relationships with their prisoners which might put them off their guard; they interact with the captives only when necessary for the operation of the mine.

VIII. The Raiders of Kelm

The origin of the raiders of Kelm goes back twenty years before the events of this scenario, to a brief war fought between the Federation of Planets and the colonists of a world in the Eta Cassiopeiae system. The colony wanted independence from federal regulation of trade and objected to the presence of a federal military force in their system. Tensions built, culminating in the expulsion of federal officials in the system. The Federation could not allow this to occur, and determined to reassert its influence, by force.

One of the Federation vessels sent to the colony was the Sword-class *Condor*, carrying a platoon of Space Troopers commanded by Karag Machar. Karag was and is a talented leader, inventive, cunning, and possessed of an innate magnetism that inspired loyalty among his platoon. He even attracted the admiration of the crew of the *Condor*. The commander of that vessel was a petty, vain fellow, upset by the control this trooper had over the crew.

Tempers flared between the two leaders, and the *Condor's* commander became increasingly cruel to his own men. Finally words turned to blows, and Karag led a mutiny aboard ship with his own troopers. Knowing that the penalties for mutiny were imprisonment or death, the platoon commander and his men, joined by many from the ship's crew, decided to flee.

One crew member who did not join Karag's revolt was the ship's psionic navigator, who valued her position in the Navy too much to become a refugee. After failing to Psionically contact the leader of the federal expedition against the colony and psionic acquaintances on other ships nearby, she contacted Yasu Aman, whom she had heard to be the master of a psionic institute on the colony below. Yasu, unbeknownst to the navigator, had just been expelled from the institute (see Section 8).

Instead of seeing to the punishment of the mutineers, Yasu decided to join them; making contact with Karag, he made his intentions known. Though suspicious of Yasu's offer, Karag needed a navigator. The *Kite* was sent down to the surface with those few troopers and crewmen who had not joined the mutiny; on the return voyage it carried Yasu Aman.

Once safely away from the Eta Cassiopeiae system, Karag searched about for a base for the *Condor*. Many systems were investigated over the years until a suitable one, Chara, was finally discovered.

For nearly twelve years the pirates have operated out of their base on Kelm, gathering materials to improve their base and accumulating wealth that they sell on the black market in other systems. Their raids were concentrated away from Chara at first, to avoid putting their base in jeopardy. However, with the settlement of the world, the pirates have begun hitting Chara's shipping as well (though not at a great rate). Most of their strikes have been around the Xi Bootis system (-16,-14,+7).

Initially, the pirates avoided unnecessary bloodshed and focused their attentions on gaining valuable cargoes. With time's passage, however, they have become more callous and have acquired new and less disciplined men. The crew is responsible for a number of senseless atrocities now, and is wanted by most major planetary and Federation law-enforcement and military organisations.

Despite his barbarity, Karag is still an excellent leader of men, and has led them well over the years. He avoids unnecessary risks with his crews and materials.

Karag's statistics are as follows:

ST: 9 EN: 8 DX: 8 AY: 10 IN: 9 MP: 2 LD: 12 EM: 7 AG: 11

SS: Poor colonist family.

Urban: 1 Grav: NW 6; LT 3; HY 1; EX 0 **Temp:** HT

Environ: FL/IC

Skills: 3; Body Armour 4; Paint Gun 5; Arc Gun 2; Artillery 2; Ambush 2; Battlefield 4; Unarmed Combat 3; Space Tactics 6; Disguise 4; Forgery/ Counterfeiting 4; EVA 2; Spaceship Tech 2; Survival 3.

The *Condor* is a Sword-class ship with two Energy pods, a heavy weapons pod, an augmented jump pod, and a Lander pod with an attached Piccolo-class craft, the *Kite*, which has a light weapons pod of its own. Both ships are fully crewed.

The main pirate base at Kelm (located in environ s01) is fully equipped and basically independent so long as occasional spare parts and raw materials are brought in by raids. The base has its own source of energy in a nearby radioactive mine, and thus access to almost unlimited fuel for itself and for the spacecraft. Full docking and repair facilities for the *Condor* and *Kite* as well as for two Terwillicker-X Battlecraft are available at the base. A powerful force screen (treat as a class 2 spaceship force field) covers the pirate settlement against missile bombardment, should it be discovered. The base is also capable of defending itself with its own missile and burster systems. Treat the base's system as a fully stocked arsenal pod capable of two burster fires and two battle commands each friendly fire phase (using the DELTAVEE game rules). About twenty men manage the base when the *Condor* is away. The pirates also have a minor installation concealed in a crater on Vertiprox, Gardenia's moon. The installation is simply a fuel depot, with a stockpile of 500 energy units as an emergency supply for the *Condor*. No men are stationed there.

IX. Random Encounters

The GM should roll for random encounters regularly, as per the UNIVERSE game Case 27.1. Gardenia's Danger Level is 2, while the danger levels for Magrito and Kelm are only 0. If the Encounter Table indicates an NPC encounter while the party is travelling the wilds, the GM should make a second roll; if the second roll is 15% or less an exploration party or some other group of NPCs has indeed been encountered. On a 16% or higher, treat the roll as "No Effect." If the Encounter Table indicates a creature encounter, the GM may use one of the creatures described in this chapter, a standard creature from the UNIVERSE game's Adventure Guide, or a creature of his own devising.

Creatures

RHINOSAUR: 1 Hex

Restrictions: Light vegetation, woods, or forest on Gardenia.

Combat: 12-14, AY: 6-8, AG: 11-12, IN: na

Initiative: 20%

Composition: Protein

Powers: Camouflage, Heightened Hearing and Smelling and Chitinous Carapace

- **Warning:** A large, lumbering hulk is pushing its way through the undergrowth towards you.
- **Sight:** Big, 6-legged lizard, 5 meters long; has a ½meter-long sharp horn growing from its snout. Creature has no visible eyes.
- **Perception:** Creature is carnivorous and very pugnacious. It is building up speed to charge.
- **Examination:** The creature has very sensitive powers of smell and hearing; tiny eyes may be found as well, of poor quality in vision.

FENWICKBATS: Small

Restrictions: Within 10 km of caves on Gardenia.

Combat: 6-9, AY: 10-12, AG: 3-6, IN: na

Initiative: 4%

Composition: Protein

Powers: Flight, Dart Shooting, Poison Attack, Radar Sense.

- **Warning:** You hear a flapping of wings close by.
- **Sight:** 5-10 one-meter long two-headed lizards. Sharp teeth, pointed tail, and quills radiating from its trunk.
- **Perception:** Entity is hunting insects. Will ignore party unless attacked.
- **Examination:** The quills and tail are coated in a toxic nerve agent. The creature has an internal echolocation organ allowing it to judge distances to nearby objects.

HEAT PLASMS: Small

Restrictions: Anywhere on Magrito or Kelm

Combat: na, AY: 5-8, AG: 7-10, IN: na

Initiative: 15%

Composition: Non-carbon

Powers: Energy Absorption

- **Warning:** Dozens of amorphous white blobs are coming towards you.
- **Sight:** They are each ½meter in diameter. They move by rolling; no limbs or orifices are visible.
- **Perception:** The creatures crave the party's body heat and the energy produced by their equipment. The entities will attempt to surround any source of heat. They cannot be scared away.
- **Note:** The pirates have only recently discovered these creatures (and vice versa). The heat plasms have slain two pirates so far, and few of the raiders dare travel overland on foot now, preferring to use tracked vehicles.

CARPETEER: Large

Restrictions: Jungle or forest on Gardenia

Combat: 3-5, AY: 1-2, AG: 5-7, IN: na

Initiative: 15%

Composition: Carbon

Powers: Heightened Hearing and Smell, Acidic Secretions; Camouflage

- **Warning:** A large, red, leafy mat is draped over a nearby tree limb.
- **Perception:** The entity drops on unsuspecting passerbys beneath it and digests them with acidic secretions.
- **Examination:** The creature has some features of a plant, and some of an animal. It has leaves and engages in photosynthesis, but is also mobile and consumes animal protein.

TUNNELERS: Miniscule

Restrictions: Flat or hilly terrain on Gardenia

Combat: 1, AY: 1-4, AG: 3-6, IN: na

Initiative: 1%

Composition: Carbon

Powers: Swarm mind, Tunnelling

- **Warning:** A ditch blocks your path. 1
- **Sight:** The ditch is 2 meters wide. Four-legged insects with thin, round torsos swarm at the ditch's bottom.
- **Perception:** The insects are carrying bits of vegetable matter. They will ignore the party unless something enters the ditch, in which case they will swarm around it and attack with, their mandibles. The ground in the vicinity of the ditch is permeated with tunnels dug by the insects. Any heavy or poorly distributed weight has a chance (weight in kg/10)% of falling through into a nest.

X. Further Adventures at Chara

The GM may feel free to develop further adventures in the Chara system as the UNIVERSE game campaign progresses. Often it will be discovered that keeping an adventuring grasp within one system can make for detailed and cohesive scenarios with an overall background in mind. Only the GM's imagination is necessary.

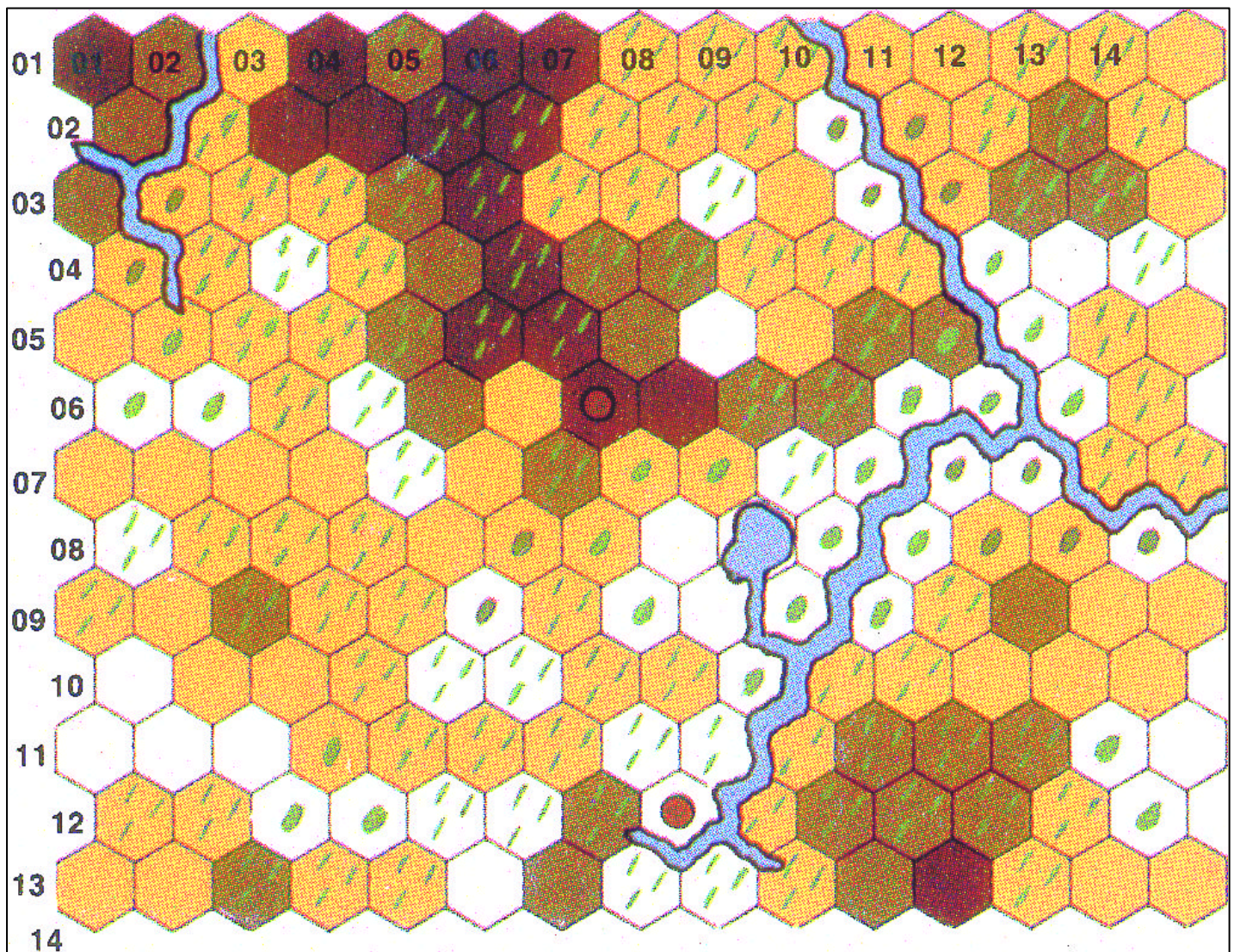
Some of the possible adventures that may appear could include the following ones:

1. Capture and exploration of the pirate base on Kelm, with meetings with the heat plasms that live there.
2. Exploration of the moons of Aegaron, and the discovery of an alien artefact in a cave system on one of the larger moons.
3. Cross-country journeys on Gardenia, in search of new animal specimens.
4. Asteroid prospecting in the two belts.
5. Identification and capture of "hidden" pirate operatives at Oceanus; some of them may attempt to shoot their way to freedom or hold the base hostage by seizing the power plant.

MONGOOSE & COBRA Maps and Charts

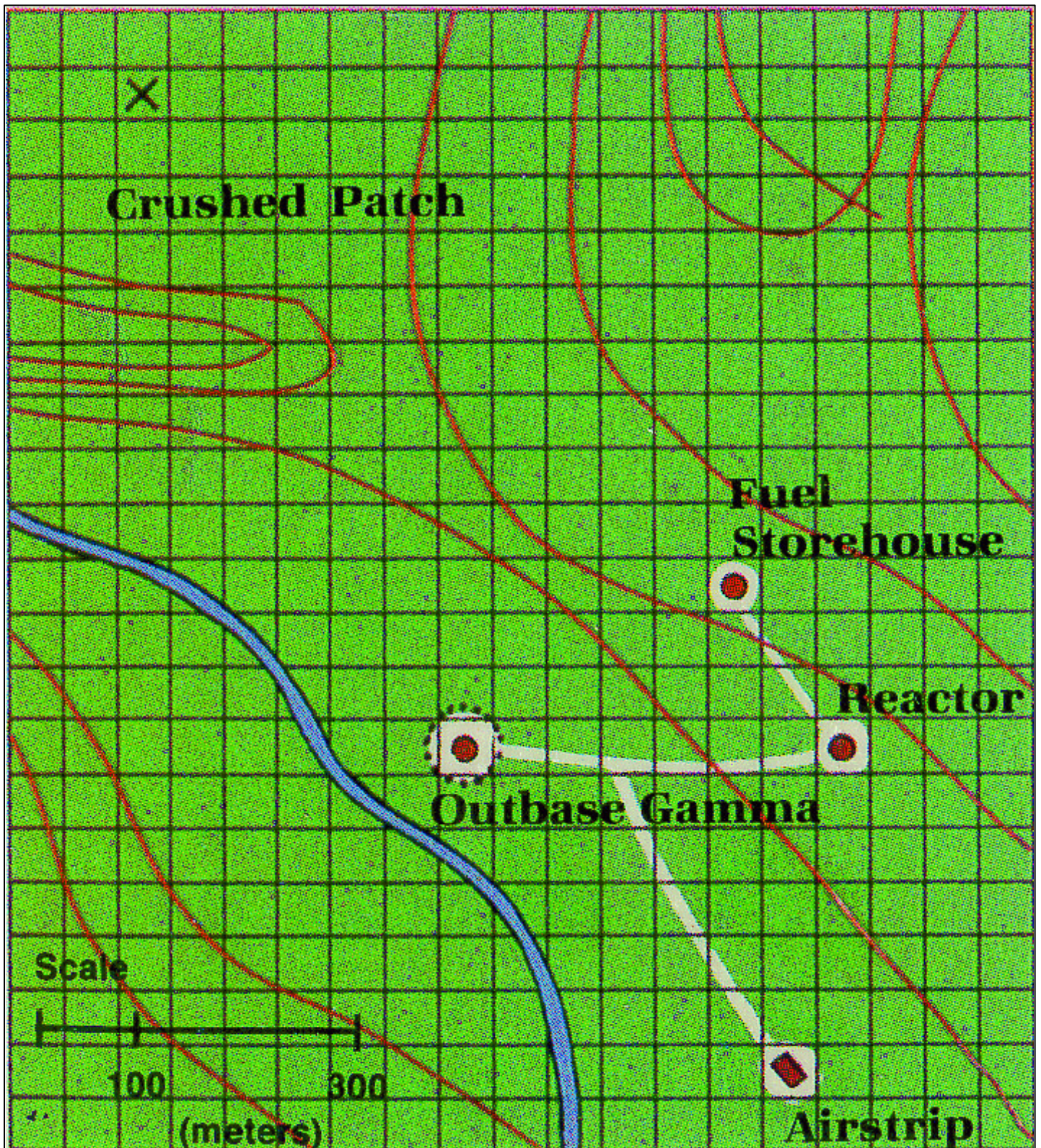
1300 by 1400 Km Area of Environ n06: Gardenia

The map depicts Outpost Gamma (red dot), the monopole mine, (hex 06-10), and the surrounding area. Scale = 100Km/hex.



Map of Outpost Gamma Area:

Note that light vegetation covers the entire area depicted except for the crushed patch and the 25 meter wide defoliated zones enclosing the camp, the outbuildings, and the airstrip.



STAR SYSTEM LOG

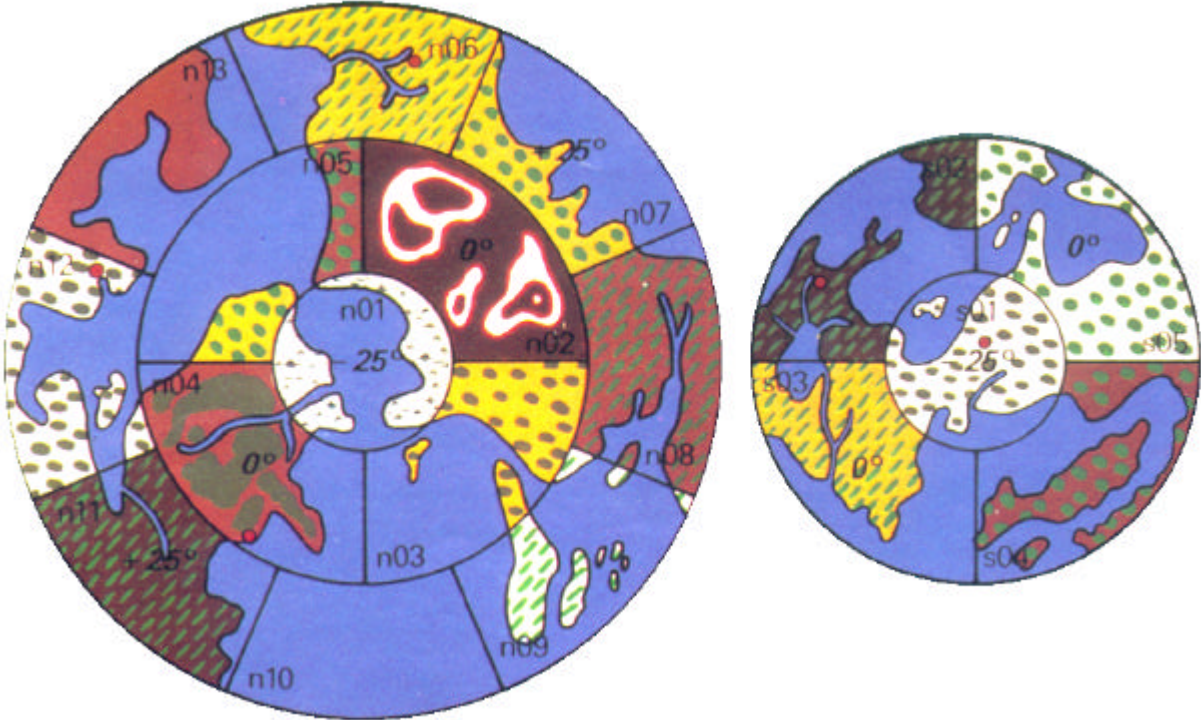
STAR SYSTEM: CHARA

SPECRTRAL TYPE: G0 DISTANCE FROM SOL: 30LY COORDINATES: -22, +3, +20

Orbit (AU)	Name	Size	Type	Resources	Moons
0.5	Corona Proxima	Asteroid Belt	Hostile	Poor (?)	None
1.0	Gardenia	4	Tolerable	Poor	1
2.0	Aegaron	9	Gas Giant	None (?)	15
2.5	Corona Longior	Asteroid Belt	Hostile	Poor (?)	None
40.0	Magrito	3	Hostile	Poor (?)	1

CAPTIAL WORLD: Gardenia FEDERAL FLEET: None STARPORT: ½at Gardenia
INTERSTELLAR ROUTES GREEN: None AMBER: None RED: Lelande 25372 SC: -14, -7, +4

WORLD LOG: Size 4
Gravity: 0.7 (LT) Action Round Movement: +2

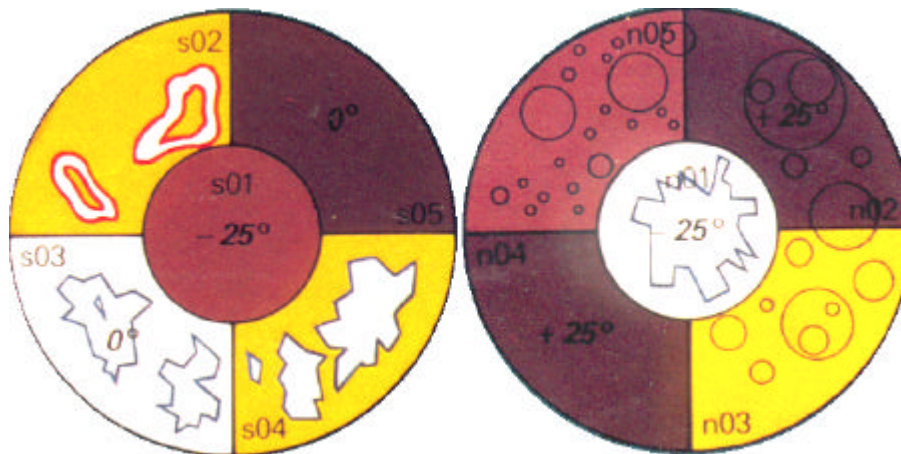


NAME: Gardenia
TYPE: Tolerable MOONS: 1 (Vertiprox) DISTANCE FROM STAR: 0.8AU ATMOSPHERE: Thin Contaminated
MEAN TEMP: 37°C HYDROGRAPH: 55% DAY LENGTH: 60 Hours HUMAN POPULATION: 500+
SETTLEMENT STATUS: Active Exploration LAW LEVEL: 1 CIV LEVEL: 4 SPACEPORT CLASS: ½
RESOURCES: Unknown

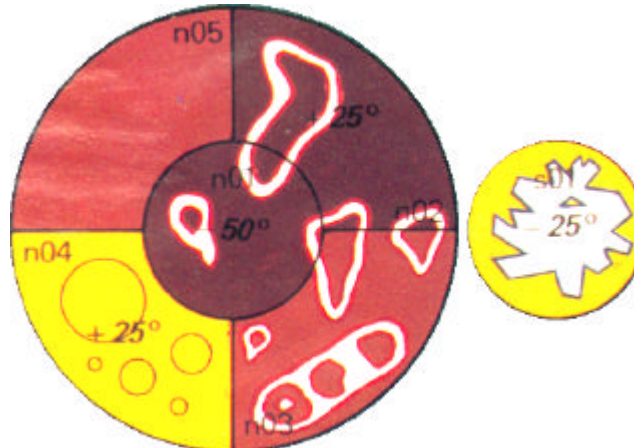
WORLD LOG: Size 0
Gravity: None (NW) Action Round Movement: +8



NAME: Vertiprox
TYPE: Hostile MOONS: None DISTANCE FROM STAR: 0.8AU ATMOSPHERE: None
MEAN TEMP: 150°C (Day) HYDROGRAPH: 0% DAY LENGTH: 4 hours HUMAN POPULATION: None
SETTLEMENT STATUS: None LAW LEVEL: None CIV LEVEL: None SPACEPORT CLASS: None
RESOURCES: None

WORLD LOG: Size 3**Gravity:** 0.4 (NW) **Action Round Movement:** +4**NAME:** Magrito

TYPE: Hostile **MOONS:** 1 (Kelm) **DISTANCE FROM STAR:** 40.0AU **ATMOSPHERE:** Poison
MEAN TEMP: -100°C **HYDROGRAPH:** 0% **DAY LENGTH:** 96 Hours **HUMAN POPULATION:** None
SETTLEMENT STATUS: None **LAW LEVEL:** None **CIV LEVEL:** None **SPACEPORT CLASS:** None
RESOURCES: Titanium, Phosphorus

WORLD LOG: Size 2**Gravity:** 0.2 (NW) **Action Round Movement:** +8**NAME:** Kelm

TYPE: Hostile **MOONS:** None **DISTANCE FROM STAR:** 40.0AU **ATMOSPHERE:** None
MEAN TEMP: -80°C **HYDROGRAPH:** 0% **DAY LENGTH:** None **HUMAN POPULATION:** None
SETTLEMENT STATUS: None **LAW LEVEL:** None **CIV LEVEL:** None **SPACEPORT CLASS:** None
RESOURCES: Chromium, Aluminium