A darkly humorous adventure by Curtis Smith

# PARANOIA

## VAPORS DON'T SHOOT BACK

WEST
END
GAMES

*A knight of the round console.*

# 0. INTRODUCTION

**Welcome Gamemaster!** The *Paranoia Gamemaster Handbook*, *Player Handbook* and *Adventure Handbook* are packed with important and interesting information, such as how to play *Paranoia*. Read those rules before playing this adventure. Failure to do so is treason, punishable by summary execution. Your players should already be familiar with the *Player Handbook* (how else did they advance to Orange clearance?). Study this whole adventure before running it. All these requirements may sound like a homework assignment, but they're for your own good. After all, you can't maintain the proper atmosphere of fear and ignorance if you don't know what's going on.

## 0.1 Adventure Background

Almost without exception, High Programmers are high strung and very, very competitive. Fierce political conflicts as well as friendlier struggles are common among them. Of course, disputing High Programmers never face each other directly. They are under careful surveillance by Internal Security agents and The Computer itself. Instead, these mental knights joust by manipulating data, distorting information, diverting resources, and otherwise contributing to The Computer's vast efficiency. After all, what are High Programmers to do when real work on The Computer is treasonous?

A small number of the most eccentric and competitive High Programmers, each head of a program group, annually practice their own form of entertainment known as "the Tournament." After preparing for most of the year (and covering up the effects of the last tournament), these programmers duke it out in a complex, dangerous contest that is completely hidden from The Computer (they hope).

The tournament evolves every year. Long ago, participants merely threw their pet programs into a subsystem to fight for control until all were purged except one. That soon became boring. The latest rage is much more exciting — pitting teams of Troubleshooters against each other! Of course, the Troubleshooters never know their missions are really part of a tournament.

While aiding and protecting his own teams, each High Programmer attempts to uncover, delay, expose, confuse and terminate his opponents' teams. However, the High Programmers can't spend all their time playing. Whenever The Computer gives them a direct assignment, or Internal Security gets too close, the High Programmers are forced to abandon their teams temporarily. Unfortunately for the Troubleshooters, if their High Programmer is caught, they'll probably be punished also, without knowing why.

The risks and dangers of the tournament are numerous and grave. The rewards are...well, they are slim and appealing only to those insane enough to take the risks. Few of the participating High Programmers know their opponents, who may work far away or in the next room. If one of the contestants falls under suspicion, he's on his own, and usually not for long. The others, however, pool their vast resources to ensure the game goes on. One of the greatest dangers is from other High Programmers who

---

**High Programmer Tournaments: Inspirations for Your Own Adventure Designs**

This whole idea of Troubleshooters unwittingly employed as pawns in the tournament competitions of High Programmers is fertile ground for developing adventures and encounters of your own. For example:

Adventure Idea: A High Programmer tournament event: the cross-complex team marathon. The PC party is one of several trying to fast-talk through check-points, sneak through high clearance shortcuts, commandeer transportation — anything to get to Point B as fast as possible. Mission Cover Story: High Programmer X wants this item delivered to Point B at [completely impossible time]. For each minute the PCs are late, a credit fine and a treason demerit will be assigned. (No such thing as a treason demerit, but do PCs know that?)

Encounter: Scrubbot Scavenger Hunt. In the middle of an adventure, the PCs come upon a party of Troubleshooters carrying a stack of fifteen scrubbot mop arms, busily engaged in the process of ripping an arm off another protesting scrubbot. (The other party has been ordered to collect as many scrubbot arms as possible in four hours.) Should the PCs interfere? "Excuse me, but are you authorized to... (Pathetic squeals of terror from the scrubbot)... er, service this robot?"

"Vapors Don't Shoot Back" is only one way to exploit this particular bad idea. Of course, we modest designers suggest it is a rather clever exploitation, but don't hesitate to throw away this adventure and design your own. After all, we already got your bucks. We can afford to encourage you to exercise your creative gifts.

are unaware of the game. If one discovers it, he may feel left out and report everything to The Computer.

If the tournament gets out of hand (if too much valuable Computer property is destroyed, for example), other High Programmers, Internal Security, and The Computer become suspicious. Consequently, the contestants, by common agreement, only use low-clearance Troubleshooters who are less valuable to The Computer and fairly inconspicuous, since low-clearance Troubleshooters are always running around performing odd missions anyway.

Directing a tournament team from one's work station is a good way to become laser-bait. Most contestants direct and monitor their teams from secret strongholds. These places are well-hidden, well-defended, and extremely treasonous.

The defending tournament champion is Nevo-U-MYN-6, an amazingly laid-back citizen. His power base is centered in the vast RSB Sector, where he has great influence, and, some claim, complete control of several computer subsystems.

This year, Nevo-U entered several teams in the tournament. Before it was wiped out, his welterweight team got him into the finals to face his arch-rival, Black-U-BRD-5. We join the adventure as Nevo-U quickly sends in a replacement team comprised of Orange clearance Troubleshooters. You guessed it — the Player Characters!

## 0.2 Adventure Summary

The PC Troubleshooters (the players) do not know their missions are part of a tournament, serving the whims of High Programmers rather than The Computer. The PCs are always given fake, distorted, or incomplete explanations for their missions.

In this adventure, the PCs face three missions set up by Nevo-U. First, armed to the teeth, they enter an abandoned warehouse complex to exterminate a dangerous group of traitors. Simultaneously, Black-U's team, the Hotshots, enters the other end of the warehouse with the same mission. Unknown to all of them, a gang of PURGE saboteurs is already in the warehouse. Then the security combots wake up.

During the warehouse battle, Black-U finally locates Nevo-U's most valuable possession, an independent minicomputer. This illegal device is hidden outside Alpha Complex in an Old Reckoning weather station. Hoping to distract Nevo-U long enough to clinch the tournament, Black-U decides to cheat and tips off Friend Computer about the minicomputer, but can't link it to Nevo-U without exposing his own treasonous activities. Jealous and suspicious of any other computer, no matter how tiny, Friend Computer immediately dispatches a small army from RSB Sector to capture the minicomputer.

Alerted by one of his many informants, Nevo-U sends the PCs on their second mission, to rescue his minicomputer. This treasonous race against the army promises many obstacles and challenges for the PCs: a trip out of the dome ("there's no ceiling!"), their first airplane ride, their first skydive (and, hopefully, parachute landing), earthquakes and a toxic waste dump, just to mention a few. Black-U pulls ahead in the tournament.

Angered that Black-U cheated, Nevo-U decides to strike back. In the third, and final mis-

sion, the PCs are ordered to sink Black-U's stronghold, a converted fireboat moored in the center of the gigantic domed TJC Sector reservoir. A completely unhinged history buff, Black-U named his fireboat the *Jolly Roger* and crewed it with robot sailors. Armed with cutlasses, his crew swabs the decks, hoists and lowers the sails (there's no wind in the dome), and mans (eh, "robots") the cannons. The PCs (who can't swim) must assault the ship on jet-skis before boarding for hand-to-hand combat.

Slowly, throughout the tournament, the PCs should discover or guess some aspects of the whole scheme, but not much (Remember, Fear and Ignorance. Ignorance and Fear). If Nevo-U wins the tournament, he greatly rewards the PCs. He may even offer particularly lucky, successful or power-hungry Troubleshooters a position in his Program Group. If Nevo-U doesn't win the tournament, it probably means the PCs are dead (sigh).



REPORT ALL
TREASONOUS
COMMIE
MUTANT SCUM.
THANK YOU.

## 0.3 Who and Where

### 0.3.1 The Player Characters

This adventure is designed for a team of ORANGE-clearance Troubleshooters. Lower-clearance characters will die too soon and higher-clearance characters not soon enough. The pregenerated PCs on pages 15-18 should just barely struggle through the adventure — with a little help from their clones. The character cards also include personal equipment lists, backgrounds and secret society missions. Every one of those characters has good reason to shoot at least one teammate and distrust several others. (If the PCs get out of hand eliminating each other, make an example of one of them. Execute him for reckless destruction of valuable Computer property.) If your players use their own characters, you'll have to prepare secret society missions for them. If you use the pregenerated characters, start them all with zero treason, commendation, skill and secret society points.

Tournament rules require six-person teams, so six players are ideal. If you don't have six friends, don't despair. Experienced players can run two characters or, preferably, you can run a character or two as NPCs (which will really make the players nervous). With little adjustment you can play the adventure with fewer than six characters. However, tournament rules strictly prohibit more than six on a team.

Stay in command. If PCs blatantly disregard or disobey the orders of The Computer or its appointed representatives (the PC's superiors), don't hesitate to march in two dozen Internal Security Elimination Agents to haul the traitors to the nearest termination center.

### 0.3.2 The Bad Guys

Throughout their missions the PCs encounter a variety of Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and robots. A few of them are neutral, but most fall into the "bad guy" category (the friendly ones are too few to count). Details of important NPCs and robots, such as their security clearance, speed, weapons, and armor, are compiled in the NPC and Robot Rosters, found on the inside of this booklet.

### 0.3.3 Maps

This adventure includes three maps. Each mission utilizes the one that depicts the area where the mission takes place. Much of the text in each mission is keyed to the maps by number.

## 0.4 Pre-Adventure Personal Briefings

The three maps, Outdoor Arbitrary Encounter tables, and six PC cards are in the center of this booklet. Remove them by carefully bending the staples back with a blunt object and lifting out the top two sheets of paper (pages 13-20). Bend the staples back down. Not to do so would be treason.

Study the six PC cards, then cut them apart and distribute one to each player. You may demand to see a player's card at any time if you need it.

Grab the rulebooks and meet with each player in turn for a private conference. Complete all four of the following steps with each player!

1. Make sure the player fully understands his character's secret society and mutant power. You'll probably need to look up some of this information.

2. Read the following text aloud:

**Two weeks ago, Friend Computer assigned you to a special Troubleshooter team in the vast RSB Sector. When you reported to the RSB Troubleshooter Headquarters, an officer clarified your specific position on the team, and told you to wait for your mission alert. Since then you've had ample time to practice on the HQ target range and work out in the HQ gym.**

3. Clarify the character's special role on the team, outlined below, and assign the indicated equipment. Stress that this equipment is extremely valuable and its loss or damage is a serious offense. The italicized text is for your information only.

**Amos-O-NUS-4, Team Computer Officer**

Responsibilities:

Identify all possible threats to The Computer and bring them to the team's attention.

Ensure proper respect for and operation of Computer equipment by team members.

Report in detail all damage to Computer equipment.

Special Equipment:

1 Package of "Friend Pills" (mood-mellowing drugs for team members who are upset with The Computer).

1 miniature audio-visual recorder to document equipment damage. *Nevo-U wants this information to help account for the effects of the tournament.*

**Kay-O-AYE-2, Team Robotics Officer**

Responsibilities:

Identify all possible threats to robots and bring them to the team's attention.

Retrieve for The Computer all bot brains from damaged or destroyed bots.

Ensure the safety of the Computer's valuable robots and make necessary repairs.

Special Equipment:

1 RID (Robot Identification Device). This device visually recognizes standard model robots and lists their original capabilities, if known. *There's only a 25% chance of this device working on any given robot. When it works, privately give its operator a general description of the robot's speed, armor and armament. When it doesn't work, give the operator false information, such as "this robot is always accompanied by 7 advanced combots."*

## Roger-O-VER-2, Team Communications Officer

Responsibilities:

Ensure every team member's Com Unit II is functioning; make regular inspections and repair when necessary.

Operate special Radio Locator.

Equipment:

1 compact Radio Locator. This device detects strong radio waves and homes in on the source, particularly useful for hunting down (or hiding from) opponents with switched-on radios. Gives direction and range to source. *This locator only works 50% of the time. When it works, privately give its operator a rough direction ("over there") and approximate range. When it doesn't work, point in a random direction.*

**NOTE:**

Tell the player that Roger-O was assigned to this team so late that his transfer orders might not have been distributed yet, but that Roger-O has been given one Computer printout of his orders.

## Mort-O-BIT-2, Team Weapons Officer

Responsibilities:

Ensure all legitimate team weapons are safe and fully functional; inspect them regularly and repair as necessary.

Recently, several teams have been wiped out in close quarter fighting — ensure that this does not happen by using the experimental weapon he has been assigned — the barrel blade. *Mort-O should understand that he may be held accountable if any team member expires in melee.*

Equipment:

1 barrel blade (bayonet). This device fits on any laser or slugthrower barrel. Functions as a sword (column 9 on damage table).

1 plate armor suit (can be worn under or over reflec armor).

## Terry-O-RIZ-2, Team Medical Officer

Responsibilities:

Maintain peak team effectiveness by advising team members to seek therapy when appropriate.

Record team's physical and mental condition during missions and present data to HPD & Mind Control for analysis.

Render medical aid to team members when necessary.

Operate and control any docbot assigned to the team.

Equipment:

4 "stimu-go" injections to cure wounds and even prevent death! *These injections induce remarkable recoveries — wounded characters feel stunned, incapacitated characters act as though wounded and, if the shot is given immediately, killed characters are merely incapacitated. However, 2D10 minutes after the injection, characters revert to their actual condition (including death).*

1 medkit. Use of this equipment is equivalent to docbot I abilities.

## Bobby-O-DUR-2, Team Vehicle Officer

Responsibilities:

Identify all possible threats to The Computer's vehicles and bring them to the team's attention.

Ensure proper operation and maintenance of all vehicles assigned to the team.

Report in detail all vehicle damage.

Equipment:

1 miniature audio-visual recorder to document vehicle damage. *Nevo-U wants this information to help account for the effects of the tournament.*

1 PAB (Personal Air Bag). This device, worn as a belt, inflates just before impact due to vehicle crash, falling, etc. Surrounded by bags of air, the wearer is fairly well protected. Works three times. *This PAB will only function twice. It will not save the wearer if his parachute doesn't open in Mission 3.*

4. Give the player a rumor from the General Rumor Table.

---

## 0.4.1 General Rumor Table

These are rumors the PCs overhear in a cafeteria, lounge, on the target range, etc. Roll 1D10. Tell the player the rumor below with the corresponding number. If the character has heard the rumor before, tell him he hears it again from someone else. The italicized "true" and "false" notes are for your information only.

1. This mission is fake. The Computer is going to destroy everyone in the team because it knows one member is a renegade traitor, but doesn't know who. *False. Sort of.*

2. There's a new program in effect where R&D personnel overhaul all Troubleshooters' weapons before each mission. The last team whose weapons were cleaned by R&D was wiped out because all their weapons malfunctioned. *True and False. The last team was vaporized en masse, but insufficient evidence remained to determine if their weapons malfunctioned.*

3. All ORANGE reflec armor with serial numbers between 2004 and 2851 is defective from waist to neck in back, but the tunic fronts are okay. The famous Troubleshooter Sai-Y-MEE-3 was fried through the back of his armor a few days ago. Since then, prudent Troubleshooters have been seen walking everywhere with their backs to the walls. *False and True. The armor is not defective, but this rumor is widespread and many believe it. Of course, smart Troubleshooters keep their backs to the wall anyway. If the characters checks his armor's serial number, tell him the tag is faded, but he can just make out the first two digits: "28..."*

4. All but one person on your team is really GREEN clearance in disguise. They're going to use the only ORANGE clearance member as bait in a "tethered goat" trap for a pack of wild dogs prowling the food-vat levels. *False, but under consideration for another mission. Be sure to award treason points to anyone showing knowledge of what a 'dog' is.*

5. Security around the RSB Sector food vats is tightened because the infamous PURGE terrorist "Vatman" promised to make one of the giant vats "vanish" within a few days. *True, and it's going to be spectacular.*

6. (*If Mort-O hears this rumor, tell him he hears it from someone who doesn't know he's the team Weapons Officer.*) Your team's Weapons Officer is a really an Internal Security agent posing as a Mystic, but his disguise is so thin it's practically transparent. *False and True. Mort-O is not an Internal Security agent. He is an Illuminanti. His Mystic disguise is purposely thin.*

7. Tech is clearing vagrants and traitors out of an abandoned warehouse so it can set up its own research and testing lab. After discovering several R&D spies, Tech no longer trusts anything R&D sends them. R&D may send in a team of its own to keep the Techs out or even blow up the place to keep the Techs from using it! *False. The Techs aren't smart or brave enough to set up their own lab.*

8. An entire Vulture Squadron heavy weapons platoon mutinied in TJC Sector, and are fighting their way toward RSB Sector. They're ambushing and vaporizing every Armed Forces, Internal Security or Troubleshooter team that comes near them. *False, but if you need an excuse to wipe out the team, this will work.*

9. The power struggle between Tech and R&D is getting worse. There may even be open warfare soon. *False. The power struggle between Tech and R&D couldn't get any worse — unless open warfare breaks out, but that won't happen because neither side wants to face The Computer's wrath.*

10. The Computer knows someone in your team is a mutant. Whoever it is better fess up before the mission because after the mission The Computer's going to root him out. *False, although The Computer always suspects everyone.*
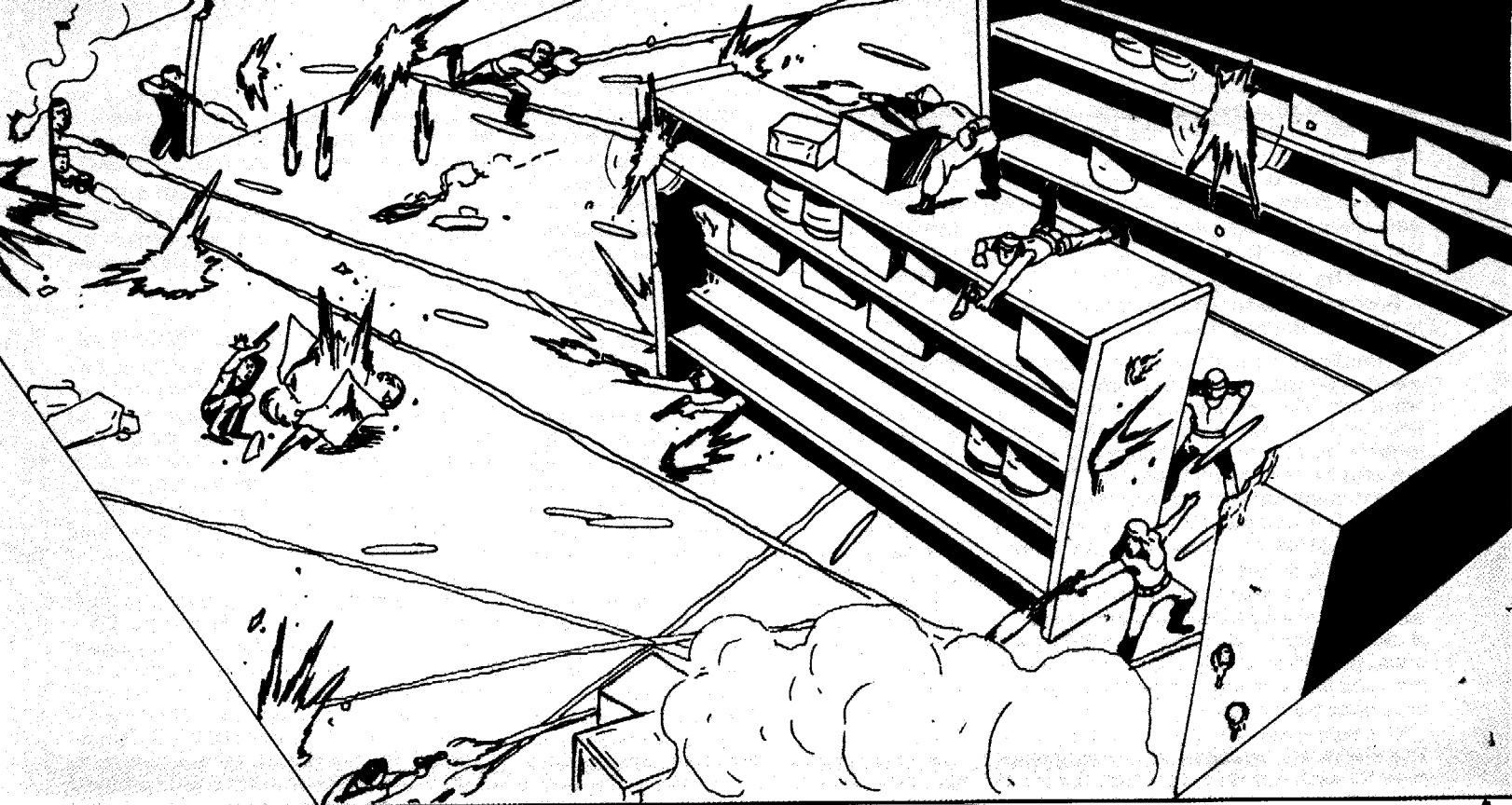
# 1. MISSION ONE: STANDARD TOURNAMENT ELIMINATION ROUND

## 1.1 Mission Summary

In this round, Nevo-U-MYN-6 pits one of his Troubleshooter teams (the PCs) against another High Programmer's team in combat. Confused as it often is, The Computer doesn't usually assign its valuable Troubleshooter Teams to fight each other. Consequently, Nevo-U and his opponent give their teams legitimate-sounding missions to destroy Traitors.

After an unusual briefing, the PCs are sent to an ancient abandoned warehouse complex beneath the RSB food vat level. This particular site was chosen because, as far as the High Programmers know, The Computer has forgotten about it. This is true, but no doubt the mission will bring the site to The Computer's attention again.

As the PCs enter the warehouse from the south, their opponents, who have worked themselves into a fighting frenzy, enter from the north. Back at the ranch, Nevo-U and his opponent wait anxiously for the survivors to emerge, determining this tournament round's victor.

Unknown to everyone, a gang of PURGE saboteurs is already in the warehouse complex, preparing to blow the floor out from under some food vats. Being experienced paranoids, these PURGErs assume they are the Troubleshooters' target, and resolve to go down fighting. Then some old security combots and forkbots reactivate and join the fray. Needless to say, the fur should really fly down there.

Unexpectedly, Nevo-U aborts the mission so

he can send the survivors (or their clone replacements) on Mission 2.

## 1.2 Pre-Mission Briefing

### 1.2.1 Mission Alert

Each PC receives the following message from the Computer:

**\*\*\*URGENT MISSION ALERT!\*\*\***

**:Rejoice, Troubleshooter! Another opportunity to serve The Computer is upon you! This is evidence of The Computer's trust in you and appreciation of your value.**

**:As part of a special Troubleshooter team, you must track down a dangerous band of traitors. Your important duties will include the summary execution of those traitors on sight. The security and safety of RSB Sector depends on the successful completion of your mission.**

**:Report immediately to Briefing Room C in RSB Sector Troubleshooter Headquarters for your pre-mission briefing. Your cooperation and loyalty will be rewarded!**

**:Stay alert! Guard against treason. Trust The Computer. The Computer is your friend.**

Characters who do not report for the briefing are hunted down, seized and suitably punished by a vengeful computer. You can implement the details yourself.

### 1.2.2 RSB Sector Troubleshooter Headquarters

Troubleshooter headquarters are generally very secure areas, impenetrable citadels of the Computer's most trusted citizens. RSB Sector Headquarters is no exception. Huge armored doors, security combots, Vulture Squadron guards, and bombsniffing dogbots ensure that only authorized personnel pass the entrance checkpoint.

Every reporting Troubleshooter must register with The Computer at the checkpoint and wait for clearance while The Computer runs a security check. This check is standard procedure, but provides an early opportunity to develop paranoia in characters. The Troubleshooters present themselves for registration, and The Computer responds, saying, "I'm sorry, you are not authorized to enter this area. Please wait as directed by the guards while I conduct a complete check." The character is immediately surrounded, disarmed, and led to a windowless cell. After several tense, fearful minutes, the character is released without explanation.

At the checkpoint, each character is asked to turn over all weapons, an unusual request since a Troubleshooter on duty is supposed to keep his assigned weapons with him ("keep your laser handy") at all times. The only explanation the duty officer can offer is, "Those are my orders, Bub." If the character balks at or refuses the request, the burly Vulture Squadron officer makes his request an order. Naturally, the checkpoint personnel and combots have enough skill and firepower to disarm

a mere ORANGE clearance Troubleshooter. Doing so would probably perk up an otherwise boring day for them. Each character is given a proper receipt for his weapons.

Each character is then led to the guarded entrance of Briefing Room C. When the entire team assembles, the door unlocks from the inside and slides open.

### 1.2.3 The Briefing Room

Read the following text out loud to the players to describe Briefing Room C:

Briefing rooms, as you know them, are usually ugly and sparse. They need paint and smell bad. The carpeting, if there is any, is worn and stained. The furniture is uncomfortable (as most benches are), and the walls are usually scarred by laser fire. The only thing to count on is the hot, bright lamps that ensure The Computer sees any traitorous facial expression. This briefing room, however, is different.

The shiny, metallic stripe on the door is dark blue, and continues around the room at waist height, accenting the light blue walls. Blue filtered light shines from lamps recessed in the ceiling, giving the air a cool, hazy appearance. Eight plush high-backed chairs face a platform against the far wall. The chairs are arranged in two staggered rows so each has an unobstructed view of the podium rows on the platform. Perhaps Friend Computer is showing you an example of the luxuries you will enjoy — if you survive to higher rank.

The room would not be complete, however, without a few law-and-order representatives of the Vulture Squadron. A loutish, watchful guard stands in each corner, wearing blue reflec armor. Three of them affectionately cradle strange, slim weapons in their arms. The fourth, and by far the meanest-looking of the bunch, carries no visible weapon, but wears a spiked collar around the neck. The looks on the guards faces leave no doubt that the slightest breach of protocol will be rectified immediately.

### 1.2.4 The Briefing Personnel

If the PCs for any reason attack the guards, the briefing officer, or each other (it happens), the guards respond immediately. These fellows are not only armed, but are of a much higher caliber than the PCs, and they waste no time proving it. The three armed guards skillfully employ their strange, slim weapons, while the fourth leaps into the fray, snarling and growling in a truly awesome display of unarmed combat (he's a Vulture Squadron Unarmed Combat instructor). If the PCs are particularly inventive and put on a good show, let them take out one of the guards before learning the folly of their ways. In such a case, adjourn the meeting until all clone replacements are made.

Soon after the PCs enter the briefing room, the briefing officers, Squee-G, Bruno-B and Gore-V, walk in, appropriately attired in the colors of their ranks. Squee-G and Gore-V wear the CPU Service Group insignia on their uniforms. Bruno-B wears a Tech badge. Throughout the briefing, all three officers whisper among themselves, obviously discussing the PCs. Initially, however, only Squee-G talks to the PCs.

### 1.2.5 Beginning the Briefing

Squee-G introduces himself and the other two officers, then presses a button behind the podium. A nervous red-jacketed waiter hurries in, carrying a platter of steaming drinks. Try to make the players as suspicious as possible of this waiter. While the waiter distributes mugs of the thick black liquid to the PCs, Squee-G explains that The Computer only recently perfected the synthesis of an old beverage known as "java." Although neither he nor the other officers accept any of the foul-tasting coffee, Squee-G warns that refusing a drink will insult and anger The Computer.

Squee-G then takes roll call, asking for each Troubleshooter by name and title — except Roger-O-VER-2. When he gets to Terry-O, Squee-G explains that there is a temporary shortage of docbots, so Terry-O will be the team's only medical support. When Squee-G finishes the roll call, he angrily demands to know who Roger-O is and what he's doing in this highly restricted area. Ever alert, the guards will roast Roger-O if he doesn't quickly present his orders from the Computer.

If Roger-O hands over his orders in time, Squee-G, Bruno-B and Gore-V huddle over a Computer terminal in the podium, shaking their puzzled heads. Eventually, their frowns become knowing nods, and Squee-G announces that, in its infinite wisdom, The Computer assigned Roger-O to the team at the last minute as Communications Officer. The idea here is to make the other characters suspect Roger-O is an Internal Security agent or some other agent of The Computer — a dangerous man, but with friends in high places.



*Would you buy a used bot from this man?*

After loudly clearing his throat to get everyone's undivided attention, Squee-G makes a proud announcement. Read the following text aloud:

"At this very moment, a special team from R&D is overhauling your personal weapons, stripping them down and cleaning them thoroughly. This preventive maintenance is part of a new effort to improve weapon reliability. Aren't you thankful that yours is one of the first teams to receive this special service from The Computer?"

Other than a new high polish, the weapons are unaffected, but the PCs have no way of knowing that. Repeated sly references to the "nice, clean weapons" will make the players properly nervous.

### 1.2.6 Assigning Mission Equipment

Squee-G then draws the Troubleshooters' attention to the wall behind him. Part of the wall slowly swirls into a computer screen listing the additional equipment assigned to the team for this mission. Read the Mission 1 Equipment List to the players slowly so they can copy it down. Give them a few minutes to divide the equipment amongst themselves, reminding them that someone must sign for every piece of equipment.

Make sure the players understand that every citizen is fully responsible for the valuable Computer equipment entrusted to him and must account for it at the end of the mission. Unnecessary equipment damage is a serious offense; equipment loss is evidence of irresponsibility and treasonous incompetence. To really make this point sink in, ask each player to jot down his character's name and additional equipment on a slip of paper. (You'll collect them later, when the equipment is issued.)

If anyone suggests waiting until after they know what the mission is to divide the equipment, fine him 50 credits for questioning the competence of his superiors and assign one treason point. There will not be time to requisition items not on the list.

One of the laser rifles on the list is useless, except perhaps for intimidation or use as a club. The PC responsible for this weapon will have to make a pretty impressive speech after the mission to persuade The Computer that the weapon was dysfunctional when he received it. The rest of the equipment on the list is in fine condition, subject to normal malfunctions, of course.

---

**Mission 1 Equipment List**

6 Pairs of Warm Gloves

4* Winter Survival Parkas (an unknown commodity)

2 Laser Rifles

4 ORANGE Laser Rifle Barrels

1 Sonic Rifle

1 Sonic Weapon Power Pack

1 Slugthrower

5 10-round Clips of Solid Slug Ammo

5 10-round Clips of HE Slug Ammo

2 Boxes of 20 High Explosive Grenades

1 Bullhorn

1 Hottorch (combination fire-starter and cutting torch)

2 InfraSpecs (IR goggles)

1 Suit of Kevlar Armor With Mylar Coating

*4, or 2 less than the number of Troubleshooters

---

### 1.2.7 Choosing the Team Leader

Bruno-B rises from his chair and announces the time has come to assign a team leader. In an increasingly emotional monologue he outlines the extra responsibilities and risks the leader must take on. Bruno punctuates his speech with trick questions, as though trying to determine who will make the best leader. *See* section 21.3.2 on page 103 of the *Adventure Handbook* for sample questions.

Leader Responsibilities:

The leader must maintain team unity and morale. He must protect The Computer's valuable equipment and agents in his team and account for all losses and injuries. After the mission, the leader must submit a written and oral report detailing and explaining everything that happened. Essentially, the leader will shoulder much of the responsibility if the mission fails.

In addition, the leader must carry an experimental multicorder device to record all that happens during the mission. This device will simultaneously broadcast its findings so The Computer can monitor the mission's progress. The device, resembling a helmet, is worn on the head. The leader must ensure that the device clearly records all important events. (In fact, the device is not connected to The Computer. It broadcasts to Nevo-U-MYN-6 and creates a permanent record of this tournament round for his laser disk collection. In an emergency, Nevo-U-MYN-6 (as The Computer) can also contact the leader through the device, which, incidentally, is nearly indestructible.)

When he finishes, Bruno-B unexpectedly tells the PCs they must choose their own leader, explaining that The Computer wants them to learn responsibility. Encourage discussion and debate amongst the PCs, but don't give them too long to make a decision. Of course, if you don't agree with their decision, you can use Bruno-B or The Computer to veto their choice and assign someone else.

Only after the leader is chosen does Bruno-B reveal the benefits of being leader. The leader is temporarily promoted to YELLOW clearance (with additional pay), given a trichroma (YELLOW/ORANGE/RED) reflec suit, and assigned two trichroma laser barrels. Furthermore, the other members must obey the leader — as long as his orders logically pertain to the mission.

**PLEASE IGNORE THIS MISSION ALERT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

### 1.2.8 Mission Assignment

Now, the Troubleshooters find out all about their mission. Well, not really. But they learn a little bit. Read the following section out loud to the players:

Gore-V, the highest-ranking person you've ever met, stands slowly and surveys the room. His eyes linger on each of you, giving the impression he can see through to your thoughts. Over his crisp-lined violet tunic he wears a shoulder holster carrying a weapon of such exotic design it's hardly recognizable as a laser pistol. Everything about him radiates confidence and capability.

Finally, he begins speaking. His icy voice is steady and devoid of emotion. "Troubleshooters, I will be brief... and I do not expect to repeat myself. Someone else has already completed the difficult part of this mission — tracking down a dangerous group of traitors, now hiding in an unused warehouse complex. Your assignment is much simpler — eliminate the traitors. You will receive the proper execution vouchers at the end of the briefing.

He pauses, watching your faces, before continuing. "These traitors never stay put for long, so you must depart immediately if you are to catch them. After picking up your equipment you will be driven to a single-shaft elevator, the only entrance to the complex. Your driver, Fiber-O, will unlock the elevator. A tunnel once led into the complex, but it caved in long ago. The current status of the complex is not known.

"I caution you, these traitors are masters of disguise. They may appear as anyone or anything. Other than yourselves, no one is authorized in the complex. You may shoot on sight.

"Twenty-four hours after your departure, the elevator will return for you and the traitors' remains. I see no justifiable reason for not completing this simple task. That is all. Questions?"

Gore-V will only answer a few questions, and then only if they are insightful and pertinent. He will not give out any more information about the warehouse complex. If asked how many traitors there are, he responds, "The exact number is, of course, classified, but it's between 5 and 15." If asked what these traitors did or how they got into the warehouse complex, Gore-V answers, "Possession of that information below BLUE clearance is treason." As for the people who tracked down these traitors, Gore-V explains, "They go to a better life," an obvious reference to promotion.

### 1.2.9 Ending the Briefing

Squee-G takes over, ordering everyone to stand as Gore-V and Bruno-B leave the briefing room. Then Squee-G orders the characters to follow the guards back to the checkpoint to pick up their gear. Squee-G does not leave the room.

## 1.3 The Mission

### 1.3.1 Getting Started

At the checkpoint, the characters' weapons are returned. Additional equipment is distributed as assigned. Collect each player's slip of paper listing the equipment he is responsible for. The team leader is issued his special gear and handed an execution voucher for 5-15 traitors, valid for 24 hours.



*Loyal citizens cooperate cheerfully with R&D test procedures.*

Wearing complete crash gear, their driver, Fiber-O, waits impatiently in a modified autocar. See the NPC Roster for details about Fiber-O. The car was extended to hold an entire Team and its gear. The roof is completely removed, though its supports remain, perhaps intended as roll bars. Two long benches are bolted down the center of the vehicle behind the padded driver's seat. The characters must sit back-to-back on the benches, facing outward with their gear at their feet and under the benches. There are no seatbelts on the benches, but Fiber-O is strapped in a literal web of belts and harnesses.

## 1.3.2 The Ride to the Elevator

Fiber-O drives like a man who can't comprehend the consequences of a car crash. Leaning on the blaring horn all the way, he maneuvers and accelerates as quickly as the buried control and guidance tracks allow. Fiber-O must also have a deal with Internal Security because he passes several officers who neither stop nor pursue him. They just point at his passengers and laugh.

Stress to the players that their characters are in grave danger of never reaching the elevator. To cling to the car, PCs must make a series of easy to very difficult strength checks as the vehicle careens along the hallways. When a PC slips off, roll for damage on column 1 of Table 14.3.1, "Vehicular Accidents and Falling from Great Heights." Then Fiber-O discovers the missing PC, screeches to a halt, wheels around, then accelerates back toward the PC at top speed. The grounded PC must instantly evade, making an easy agility roll to avoid being run down. PCs who make their strength checks to stay on the car should make difficult endurance checks to avoid losing their lunches. (Note: citizens may be fined for contaminating a public thoroughfare.)

The Troubleshooters cannot intimidate Fiber-O. He's dealt with dozens of teams before and knows all their tricks. If necessary, he reminds the Troubleshooters that he's the only person wearing crash gear. If the PCs manage to distract him however, and cause a crash, The Computer holds them responsible for the autocar as well as their own equipment.

Just before Infrared Dining Room 12, Fiber-O disengages from the "spine" (control and guidance track) and takes full command of the autocar. He soon turns onto a little-used roadhall, where, despite his best efforts, two Infrareds barely avoid becoming hood ornaments. At the last possible second, he screeches to a halt at the end of the roadhall, just tapping the elevator doors with the front bumper.

The remainder of the mission takes place in the warehouse complex depicted on Map 1.

## 1.3.3 *Area 1.* Warehouse Elevator
*Starting Down*

Everything about the elevator should worry the PCs. From the moment they step into the elevator they should fear for their lives. The trip down should only intensify their terror.

A diagonal violet stripe, chipped and faded, crosses the elevator doors, which are dented and rusty. One tiny button rests in a small panel to the right of the doors. An arrow on the button points down — the only place this elevator goes. A power panel is set in the wall about one meter from the control panel. Particularly observant characters should note that, oddly, no Computer cameras are visible in this hallway.

While the PCs put themselves back together and shoulder their gear, Fiber-O starts up a noisy portable generator in the trunk. He drags two insulated cables, one red and one black, over to the power panel where he waits impatiently. Finally, belching oil and smoke, the ancient generator comes up to speed. After testing the current by touching the two cable ends together in a shower of sparks, Fiber-O plugs the cables into the panel.

A light in the "down" button flickers once or twice, then shines steadily for a second before shorting out. Then the doors open with a jerky, hesitant motion. A raspy, static-filled sound drifts out, barely recognizable as Teela O'Malley theme music. The elevator walls, floor and ceil-
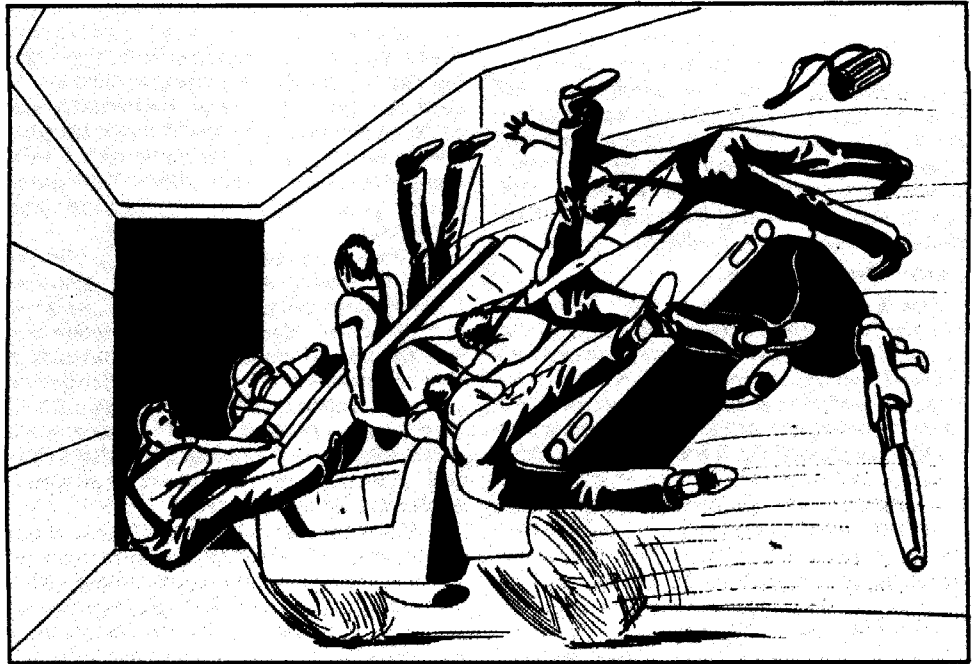


*"I'm sorry. You are not cleared for seat belts at this time..."*

ing are dented, scratched and dusty. (Here's your chance to share a favorite limerick or some choice graffiti with your players — put it on the elevator walls.) Unlike the rest of the creaking, swaying elevator, the interior lights work perfectly, glaring with brilliant intensity through cracked ceiling panels.

There are three control buttons in the elevator, labeled "UP," "DOWN," and "STOP." The DOWN button closes the doors and begins the descent. As soon as the doors close, Fiber-O unplugs the generator, locks the doors shut and drives off. The UP button does not work now (it will work again in 24 hours or when the mission is aborted, whichever comes first). If pressed, the STOP button falls through the panel and down the dark shaft — but the PCs never hear it hit bottom.

The elevator descends slowly, shuddering and swaying back and forth while cables twang and snap in the shaft above. The elevator lurches, drops, then stops randomly. The lights even go out a few times, though Teela croons steadily. In the elevator car, anyone wearing a parka begins to sweat and should fear overheating before long. The PCs should not know how far down they travel, only that they are deep below their starting point. (Actually they descend 35 meters — about 11 stories.)

*Arrival and Greeting*

Review Map 1, The Warehouse, on page 14 of the pullout section.

The elevator falls the last meter, crashing to a stop. Everyone inside must make a successful agility check to keep from crashing to the floor or slamming against the walls. (This is a good time to ask someone who fails his check, "Were you right-handed or left-handed.")

The door automatically opens at the bottom, but just partway. Only one character at a time can worm through. Light streaming from the elevator is swallowed up by the huge, dark warehouse. This deep underground, the warehouse is quite cold and, of course, hasn't been heated in years. Slowly, characters without parkas should begin to shiver and clack their teeth together loudly (chattering teeth are not a common experience in RSB Sector). Everyone's toes and fingers should develop

strange tingly and numb sensations. Determine other effects of the cold as you see fit, but don't make them disabling, just an irritating nuisance.

The first person out the door is fired upon by a hidden PURGEr, using an awesome weapon of the Old Reckoning — a "RamCo wrist-rocket" sling shot — loaded with precision-milled steel ball bearings (which are in ample supply in the warehouse). See the NPC roster for details about this PURGEr, nicknamed "Ramco." He is hidden at the north end of the first shelf rack east of the elevator. His shots are silent, until they hit, making him hard to find. Ramco is very accurate, as the shrunken warehouse rat population can attest. He fires every round, retreating to the east if pursued or receiving life-threatening return fire.

Ramco's goal is to draw the PCs away from Vatman (area 5), whom he assumes the PCs are after. As soon as Ramco is wounded (or just before he dies, whichever comes first), he shouts, "Let 'er rip, Vatman!" This should draw an interesting reaction from Bobby-O, also a PURGEr, who knows Vatman (see Bobby-O's character card).

If the PCs hole up in the elevator, describe the projectiles zinging through the door and ricocheting around inside the elevator compartment. If that doesn't coax them out, short-circuit the control panel and start the elevator on fire.

If the PCs are quiet, they hear the muffled sounds of a distant firefight drawing nearer. The sounds come from the Hotshots, the enemy Troubleshooter team battling two PURGE guards in the north warehouse. (At a dramatic moment, the Hotshots should burst into the south warehouse, weapons blazing.)

## 1.3.4 *Area 2.* South Warehouse Offices

These prefabricated offices are only dimly lit by the elevator's light (if it's still on). The walls are mostly windows, resting on waist-high, thin metal walls. Both the outer and inner doors stand open; they are easily closed, but creak loudly when moved. All the furniture was relocated or stolen long ago. The floor of both rooms is strewn with broken bot bits, plastic

shreds and oily rags. In the center of each room hangs a strange ancient cord with a switch on it (empty, but electrically alive, light sockets).

A careful search reveals an Old Reckoning projectile pistol (toy dart gun), and a thin needle, its pointed tip still in the manufacturer's protective seal (rubber-tipped dart). This weapon has a maximum range of two meters and causes no damage whatsoever, but it is deadly-looking.

A ladder along the back wall leads up through a hole in the ceiling into a plexiglass tube. The ladder continues up through the tube to a hatch in the monitor station floor (area 3).

The PCs can use these offices as a temporary refuge, but should soon realize how fragile they are. Lasers and slugs first melt and dent the metal walls, then blast through. Just about anything will shatter the window panes, which are genuine sharp glass, not the normal safety-plexi.

### 1.3.5 *Area 3.* Monitor Station

A ladder within a plexi-glass tube leads up 17 meters from the offices (area 2) to a hatch in the monitor station floor. This small, two-meter-square room is bolted to the wall near the warehouse ceiling with just enough space overhead to stand in comfortably. Only the floor and back wall are solid; the rest of the room is plexi-enclosed. One round after the hatch is opened, two high intensity lights pop on, brightly illuminating the tube and the monitor station, and everyone within them. No NPC within range can resist such a target. The lights stay on until the switch on the hatch is discovered and turned off. (Smashing the light bulbs works, too.)

### 1.3.6 *Area 4.* South Warehouse

This mammoth warehouse is 75 meters wide and 175 meters long. The ceiling, 20 meters up, is out of flashlight range (15 meters). The smooth concrete floor has many oily stains and discolored patches. The entire room is pitch black, except for light spilling from the elevator at the southwest corner (area 1). The light controls are in a circuit-breaker box on the wall near the offices. A successful engineering skill check and five rounds of work are necessary to switch on the warehouse lights. A failed check produces a fascinating pyrotechnic display.

Giant steel shelf racks, 15 meters tall, stand throughout the warehouse. These shelf racks are marked on the map. Each rack contains five shelves, each three meters apart. Brave (or foolhardy) characters can climb the racks' corner posts by making an easy agility check.

Some racks are full, others are empty (see the map). In the full racks, all shelves except the uppermost hold 2-meter-cube pressure-sealed plastic crates of styrofoam "peanuts." These crates are quite light, but too large for one person to carry. The smaller 1-cubic-meter crates on the top shelves are packed with precision-milled steel ball bearings. Weighing a little over 500 pounds apiece, these boxes are hard to move.

Projectiles, such as slugs, will penetrate and burst up to four of the larger crates, showering "peanuts" in all directions. Laser beams dissipate in a single crate, melting the styro within as well as the crate, giving off a thick, black, foul-smelling smoke. No weapon the characters have will shoot through a crate of ball bearings, but any hit ruptures the crate, spilling thousands of bearings over the edge. Characters underneath must make a difficult agility check to leap out of the way or receive a wound from the shower of steel. Of course, all those little round things on the floor make slipping and falling very likely — make difficult agility rolls before movement in each round.

Naturally, firing between crates and shelves is difficult. Each full shelf fired through reduces a character's chance to hit by 15%. Each empty shelf reduces the chance by 5%.

The warehouse contains an automatic fire extinguishing system. Combination combustion sensors and spray nozzles hang from the ceiling in a grid pattern of 5-meter squares. The system activates soon after any substantial explosion or smoke occurs. When activated, the nozzles spray a thick, sticky, yellow foam for six rounds. During that time, all fires are extinguished and visibility is reduced to zero. Afterward, every exposed surface is coated with 2 centimeters of foam, greatly increasing the chances for dramatic and injurious falls. Unprotected weapons malfunction with the next shot. Use your imagination to invent other effects of the foam if you wish. The extinguishing system only works once.

### 1.3.7 *Area 5.* Vatman and Robin

The famous PURGE terrorist, Vatman, is standing at the top of a rickety ladder propped upon a bearing crate on the top shelf of a rack, planting the last of a series of explosives on the ceiling. His assistant, Robin, holds the ladder. See the NPC roster for details about both these PURGErs. Ramco, another PURGEr, is guarding the elevator while two other PURGErs battle the Hotshots, the Troubleshooter team in the north warehouse.

When Troubleshooters appear from both sides, Vatman assumes they're gunning for him. Resolved to complete his final "vat mission" before being captured or vaporized, he doubles his efforts. Vatman stays out of the fight until his "vat bombs" are ready (1D10 rounds), then opens fire with his laser rifle. If necessary, Robin uses his blaster to defend Vatman while he works. Determined to go down with his vat, Vatman fights to the death from atop the shelf. He has rigged a "dead man" switch to set off the explosives when he dies.

Seconds after Vatman dies, a series of explosions on the ceiling shake the warehouse. Cracking and ripping, the concrete and steel ceiling splits open. Then, with a loud roar, an entire 20 meter-wide, 10 meter-high food vat drops through the ceiling, followed by several shrieking Infrareds. Smashing through all the shelves under it, the vat crashes into the floor and bursts open, sending a powerful wave of over 2.5 million liters (700,000 gallons) of gray-green gruel surging across the floor. When the wave subsides and the dust clears, the south warehouse is 25 centimeters deep in warm, cultured goo.



Not too long after the vat falls through, Internal Security agents begin peering over the edge of the hole in the ceiling. Not too long after that, the hole is cordoned off while Internal Security tries to figure out what happened and what to do next. As far as they are concerned, anyone beneath the hole is a traitor and a saboteur.

### 1.3.8 *Area 6.* Mechanical Arms

These three-jointed mechanical arms are mounted on a trolley that slides from one side of the warehouse to the other along a bar. The entire bar can travel the length of the warehouse on tracks affixed to the long walls. The arms, with a 10-meter reach, are programmed to pluck items from the forkbots and shelve them on the uppermost shelves. The arms come to life at the same time the forkbots activate (1D10 rounds after the first laser or slug shot is fired).

### 1.3.9 *Area 7.* Forkbots

These oversized, automated forklifts switch on 1D10 rounds after the first laser or slug shot is fired. Three start in the south warehouse. Another, in the north warehouse, is quickly dispatched by the Hotshots.

Once activated, each heavy forkbot attempts to pick up any large object on the floor (especially PCs) and raise it to the mechanical arm (area 6) for shelving. Once in a forkbot's grip, a character needs 1 full round to struggle free. By then he's too high to jump down safely (although he might try to leap for a nearby shelf unit). The forkbot and mechanical arms aren't gentle, and characters should fear being crushed at any moment. Roll lots of dice, busily study

*"Please extinguish all smoking materials. Thank you for your cooperation."*
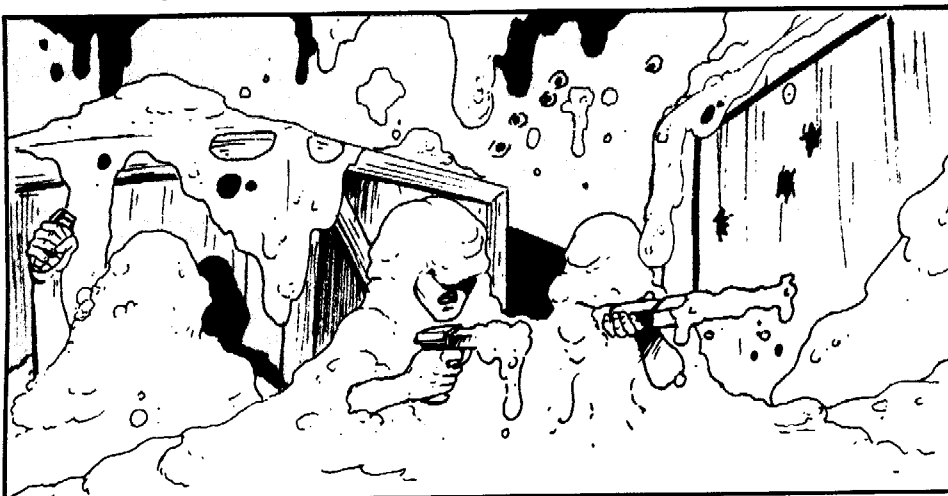
the damage charts, tsk-tsk and cluck sympathetically. However, shelved characters end up merely bruised and stranded.

The forkbots move as fast as a running person, weigh several tons, and are practically impervious to laser and slug fire (sustained or concentrated fire will eventually destroy anything). A direct hit from a grenade can often disable or destroy a forkbot. Characters on the floor cannot fire over a forkbot. See the Robot Roster for additional details.

These bots present several fun possibilities. Perhaps their brakes don't always function, or they occasionally forget their "Fragile: Handle with Care" programming. Who knows, they might even accidentally drop something from a great height. (See chart **14.3.1**, "Vehicular Accidents and Falling from Great Heights," in the **Gamemaster Handbook.**)



*Unauthorized use of forkbots is prohibited.*

### 1.3.10 *Area 8.* Security Combots

Leaning against the east wall (under the "8" on Map 1) are two rusted security combots, programmed to stun or wound any intruders in the warehouse. Sensing all the commotion, they, too, activate 1D10 rounds after the first shot is fired. They function slowly at first, gradually working up to dilapidated lethargy. Each is armed with a needle gun and a stun gun, built into the arms. When new, their little treads easily overtook humans, but now these bots can hardly keep up and have trouble with sharp turns (10% chance to topple over). See Security Combot in the Robot Roster.

### 1.3.11 *Area 9.* Sliding Doors

Two identical pairs of thick sliding doors provide the only link between the two warehouses. The 10-meter wide doors roll on tracks in the floor and ceiling. The rollers are fairly rusty, but determined pushing and pulling by more than one individual will move the doors, creaking and groaning loudly. An oval-shaped room lies between the two pairs of doors. When both pairs of doors are open, light spills through into the south warehouse from the north warehouse. Two of Vatman's PURGErs closed these doors

behind them after entering the north warehouse. Fresh slug scars and two char marks against the north door record their demise.

At an appropriately dramatic moment of your choosing, the Hotshots open these doors and charge into south warehouse, weapons blazing, and screaming at the top of their lungs.

The PCs should be instantly awed and inspired by the model of Troubleshooter vitality and gung-ho spirit presented by the Hotshots. They should also shoot to kill, since as far as they know the Hotshots are disguised traitors.

### 1.3.12 *Area 10.* North Warehouse

The brightly lit north warehouse is similar to the south warehouse, with the addition of shipping and receiving docks in the west wall. Large container bots and trucks once backed up to the docks to disgorge or take on supplies. They are all gone now. A sliding door at each dock opens over the parking lot (area 13) which is one meter below the level of the warehouse floor. The northernmost sliding door is ajar, opened by the Hotshots.

A recently ruined forkbot lies close to the loading docks. The mechanical arm near the ceiling (area 6) is still active, though. It follows characters from above, desiring to shelve them, but unable to reach them.

The fire extinguishing system here activates with the first explosion, smoke, or laser fire in this area, but only sprays for two rounds and does not cause weapons to malfunction.

### 1.3.13 *Area 11.* Shipping & Receiving Office

This office and the attached filing room are stripped clean; nothing remains here.

### 1.3.14 *Area 12.* Hotshot's Starting Point

The six "Hotshots" are Black-U's gung-ho team of ORANGE clearance Troubleshooters. Their motto: "Vapors Don't Shoot Back," has served them well in the past. Only hours ago, they were given an assignment similar to the PCs' assignment. Brandishing their laser rifles and slug throwers, they rallied around their leader, "Bub-O-NIC-4," and worked themselves into a fighting frenzy. See Hotshots and Bub-O-NIC-4 on the roster for details about these maniacs.

Their strategy is to move in a dense pack, firing continually. They shoot first and never ask questions. They will neither negotiate nor show mercy (nor too much intelligence). In darkness, Bub-O wears infrared goggles to direct the team's movement and fire.

Soon after entering the warehouse, the Hotshots encountered two PURGErs, and opened fire. Charging forward, the Hotshots overran a forkbot, then finished off the PURGErs against the sliding doors. When the south warehouse is filled with styrofoam peanuts and fire suppressant foam floating atop a sea of food vat gruel, and the PCs are scampering back and forth trying to avoid forkbots, combots, and mechanical arms, the time is ripe for the Hotshots to slide open the doors and burst into the south warehouse, screaming and yelling and shooting.

Like all Troubleshooter teams, the Hotshots are plagued by jealousy, suspicion, and treachery. After they first fire on the PCs, roll 1D10 every couple of rounds. If the result is a 1, remove one of the Hotshots — a teammate just shot him! No Hotshot will attack Bub-O, however. They respect him too much (and suspect he's wired himself with explosives).

### 1.3.15 *Area 13.* Parking Lot

Three pairs of sliding doors connect the parking lot with the north warehouse. The parking lot floor is made of a coarse black material and is one meter lower than the warehouse floor. In a few places, small rounded plants grow from cracks in the parking lot "blacktop." Some characters may recognize the shape of these mushrooms as similar to a "tacnuke cloud." Although many mushrooms are poisonous, these are harmless, chock full of healthy nutrients, and rather tasty — unlike the "mushroom concentrate" served in the Complex cafeterias. A total of 2 man hours spent harvesting these mushrooms will produce a quantity worth 300 credits on the black market.

The exposed bedrock ceiling is 21 meters above the blacktop. Although lights hang from the ceiling, none of them work.

The south wall opens into a large tunnel with an arched ceiling (area 14).

### 1.3.16 *Area 14.* Transit Tunnel

This 20-meter-wide tunnel is in total darkness. The arched ceiling rises 15 meters above the floor. Two faded yellow lines run down the center of the black floor. Half-way between the centerline and each wall is a very worn dotted gray line. Tiny metallic plates between the center lines and on the walls reflect torchlight eerily, like glittering little animal eyes. Small, burned-out lights line the ceiling and walls.

Carved from the solid rock beneath the food vat levels, the tunnel used to connect the warehouses with the rest of RSB Sector. Now, only one-half kilometer of the tunnel remains; the rest is blocked by a cave-in.

Near the wall of rubble at the tunnel's end, an extension ladder leads to a narrow shaft in the ceiling. The shaft ends in a man-hole cover in the center of the Armed Forces small-arms qualification range, which is always in use.



*The only good Commie traitor...*

## 1.4 Ending The Mission

### 1.4.1 Aborting the Mission

While the PCs battle in the warehouse, Black-U discovers Nevo-U's most valuable possession, an independent minicomputer. An independent computer allows Nevo-U to test and develop his programs while remaining completely safe from The Computer's interference. Nevo-U's minicomputer is hidden in an Old Reckoning U.S. Geological Survey station, 25

kilometers north of the RSB Sector Dome. Handed an opportunity to cheat, Black-U decides to eliminate Nevo-U, his only real competition, from the tournament by informing Friend Computer of the minicomputer. Friend Computer immediately orders the Armed Forces to retrieve the minicomputer.

Alerted by one of his spies, Nevo-U decides to send a team to rescue his minicomputer. If the PCs are "losing" this round anyway, Nevo-U decides to cut his losses and forfeit the round. However, it would be a shame to abort the mission until at least half the PCs are killed or completely incapacitated, and the others wounded or pinned down. If the PCs are miraculously winning, Nevo-U waits until just after they finish off their last opponent before aborting the mission.

Nevo-U contacts the PCs through the leader's recording device. (If the leader has been vaporized, Nevo-U will manage to route the recall through the PCs' individual com units.) Of course the characters should believe The Computer is changing their orders. Speakers in the leader's helmet blare, "Urgent Message: Abort Mission. Repeat, Abort Mission. Retreat to elevator for pick up. Retrieve all bodies and equipment. Thank you for your cooperation."



*Home, home on the firing range.*

**PLACE YOUR FINGER IN THE CODED SLOT BELOW. C'MON ... IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE.**
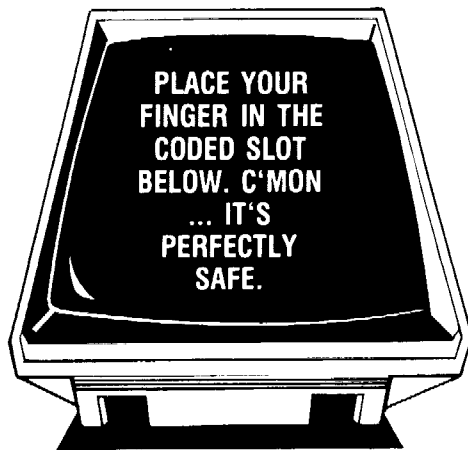
### 1.4.2 The Cavalry

Fiber-O returns and takes control of the elevator, sending down two GREEN clearance Vulture goons to provide covering fire, if necessary. These two guys are armed with fully-automatic GREEN double-barrelled laser rifles and wear quadchroma armor (RED/ORANGE/YELLOW/GREEN). They should be able to pin down anything in the warehouse by shock alone. They will not hesitate to turn their weapons on anyone who threatens them. See Cavalry in the NPC Roster.

Back in the hallway, Fiber-O locks up the elevator while the PCs load into his autocar. He drives them straight to Headquarters, radioing ahead for docbots, if they're needed.

### 1.4.3 The Debriefing

Back at Headquarters, injured PCs are treated and sent to recovery wards. The others are told to wait for orders in the cafeteria or lounge. All PCs must account for their assigned equipment. Amos-O and Bobby-O must turn in their audio/visual tapes. Since Nevo-U doesn't have much time, no formal de-briefing is held. However, any character may make a private report to The Computer. Hand out Commendation, Treason, Secret Society and Skill points based on what Fiber-O observed, the team leader's helmet broadcast, the two tapes, and any reports to The Computer.

Complete necessary clone replacements, then proceed with Mission 2. If the PCs easily defeated the PURGErs and the Hotshots, and survived the gruel bath, make a note to yourself to show less mercy in the next mission.

**ATTENTION TROUBLESHOOTERS! HERE ARE THE MAPS YOU REQUESTED:**

**AT YOUR SERVICE!**

11
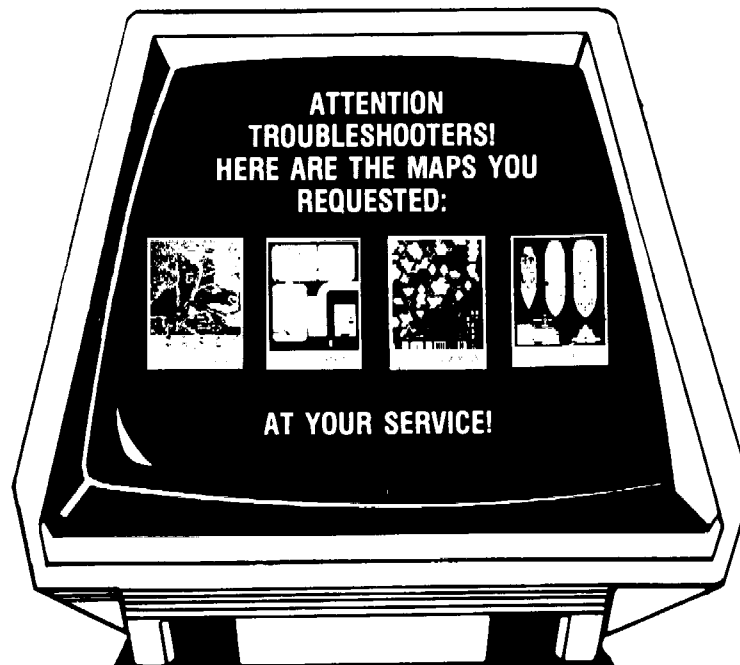
*Okay, cover me...*

# 2. MISSION TWO: THE CHEATING BEGINS

## 2.1 Mission Summary

Tipped off by Black-U, The Computer quickly gathers an awesome strike force to march north and capture or destroy Nevo-U's minicomputer, hidden in an ancient U.S.G.S. weather station. This minicomputer was a major contributor to Nevo-U's rise to power. On it, Nevo-U designs, develops and tests programs in safety before transferring them to the Alpha Complex Computer. Other High Programmers must design and develop their programs in secret subsystems on The Computer — very risky business.

Nevo-U realizes Black-U is trying to win the tournament by linking Nevo-U to an independent computer, an unforgivable offense. However, Nevo-U has left no traceable clues in his minicomputer. Even so, he is unwilling to let The Computer destroy it or, worse yet, turn it into yet another subjugated peripheral. So, Nevo-U sets aside the tournament and hastily organizes a mission to rescue his minicomputer's CPU Core, its only irreplaceable part.

Speed is critical. The rescue team (the PCs) must move quickly to reach the weather station before The Computer's strike force arrives. Unfortunately, the team can't take the most direct route (Highway 45). They'd be spotted by regular patrols, and The Computer could probably figure out where they were heading.

Possession of computer CPU parts is treason, so, in their briefing, the PCs are ordered to recover a stolen container of radioactive isotopes, desperately needed for medical purposes.

Ironically, the PCs leave the dome from the staging area where the strike force is forming up. Little do they know they will see those troops

and combots again. The PCs are to head east on a route given to their leader and rendezvous with a flybot and its pilot. The flybot, another of Nevo-U's illegal possessions, is constructed entirely of salvaged parts from crashed and trashed flybots. When the PCs reach the flybot, they find the pilot dead, shot by one of Black-U's assassins (who is never mentioned again). The pilot was supposed to teach the PCs how to use their parachutes.

All is not lost, though. The fixed-wing flybot can fly itself on auto-pilot, or the team vehicle officer can fly it (more or less) on manual. The autopilot flies so low the flybot frequently brushes tree tops, but it's the safer choice. If the PCs fly manually and stray more than a few kilometers from the pre-planned route, an Armed Forces model 916 flybot intercepts them — time to bail out, with or without instructions.

Once over the mountain-top weather station, the PCs must parachute in and recover the container of radioactive isotopes (the CPU Core). The container is protected by a lethal defense mechanism only the team leader is told about.

If the PCs arrive late, the strike force is waiting for them (time to activate new clones). Otherwise, if everything goes as planned, the strike force arrives just in time to catch the PCs with the goods. During the ensuing firefight, the PCs' flybot swoops down to snap them off the ground with sky-hooks.

Unless someone is left behind, the chances are high the flybot is hit. If so, it goes down several kilometers from the weather station. PCs who survive the crash must make their way crosscountry back to their dome home. The great outdoors holds many deadly obstacles and frightening challenges to test the PCs' courage, skill, strength, but mostly their luck.

## 2.2 Pre-Mission Briefing

### 2.2.1 Mission Alert

While mingling with other Troubleshooters in the cafeteria, lounge or recovery ward, each PC hears a rumor. Privately give each player a rumor from the General Rumor Table. Secretly inform Amos-O that he can tell Mort-O is definitely a Mystic. Bobby-O receives the following secret message from his PURGE superior: "The army in your area is after a hot computer part — steal or destroy it."

Large Computer screens grace the lounge, cafeteria, and recovery ward walls. A continuous stream of patriotic slogans and security warnings flash across the screens. One particular announcement is greeted by cheers from many viewers. The famous entertainer, Teela O'Malley is to visit RSB Sector and perform a live show soon.

Not long after that hot newsflash, a mission alert fills the screens.

#### * * * MISSION ALERT! * * *

:**Attention Amos-O, Kay-O, Roger-O, Mort-O, Terry-O and Bobby-O. Another exciting opportunity to serve The Computer is upon you. This is an expression of The Computer's confidence in you.**

:**As evidence of The Computer's trust in you, your routine mission will take you Outdoors! The Computer offers you this gentle exposure to the rigors of life outside the dome so you may better appreciate life inside. Rejoice in this rare opportunity.**

:**Failure to report to Briefing Room C within 10 minutes constitutes disregard of computer orders, a serious offense. Your**

## LEGEND

| Symbol | Name | Symbol | Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| ⊢—⊣ | DOOR | ⊠ | HATCH |
| PORTHOLE | PORTHOLE | ∿ | CURTAIN |
| LADDER | LADDER | ···· | BARS |
| | | | WATER CANNON |

Forward
Port — Starboard
Aft

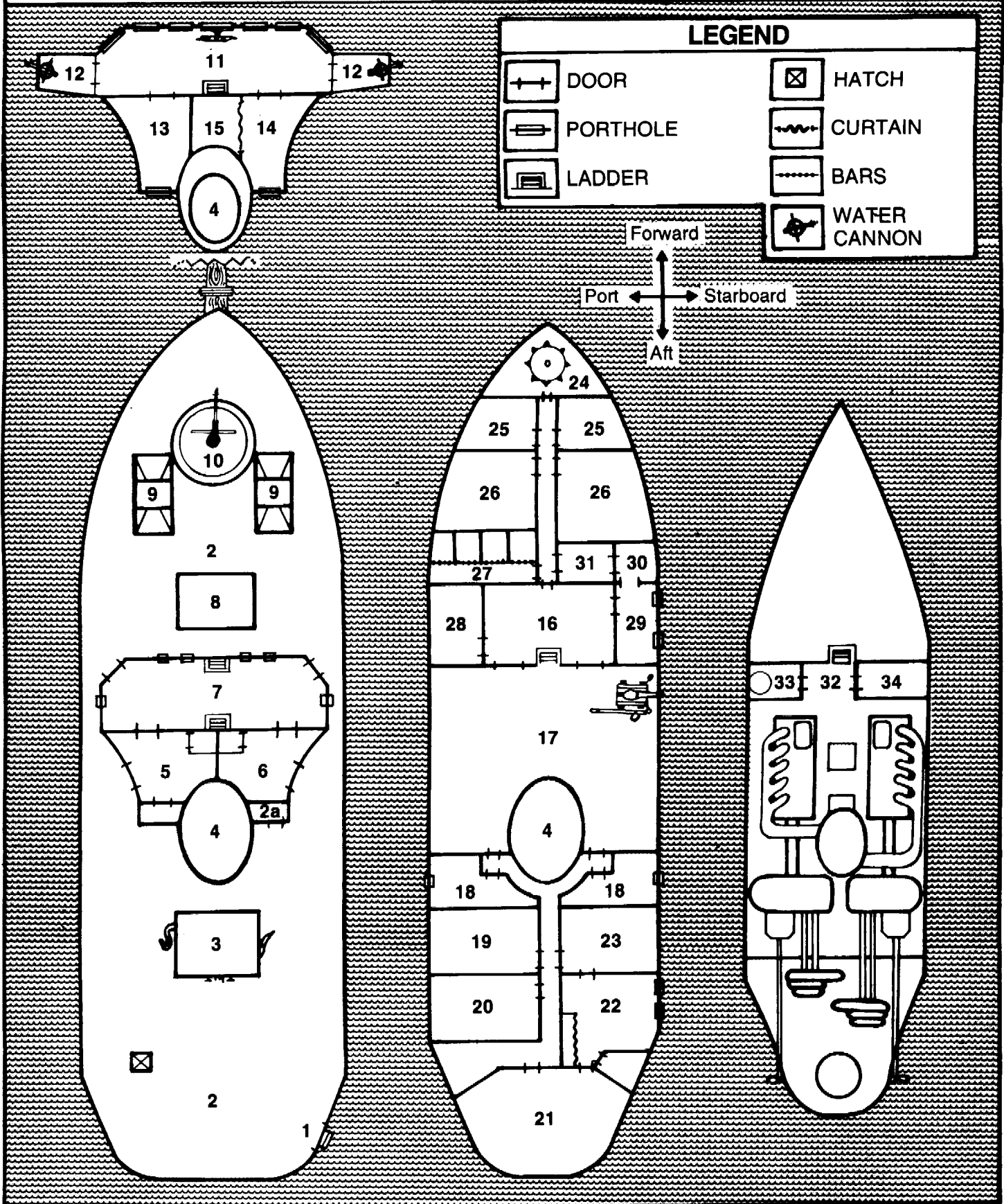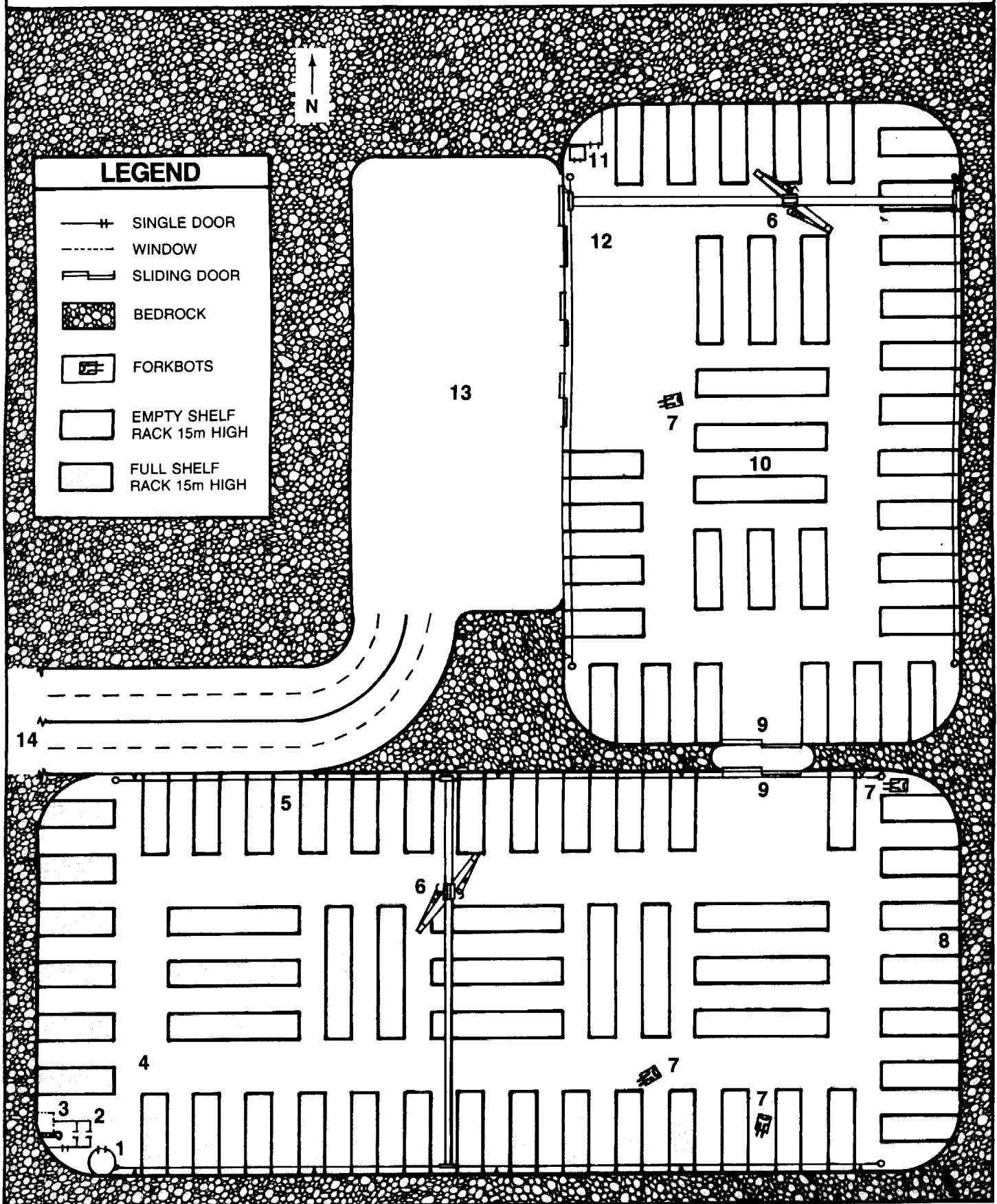:TITLE = MAP1/ RSB LEVEL 54B, TRANSIT STORAGE AREA 12 (INACTIVE)
:TYPE = FLOOR PLAN/ SCALE 1 SQUARE = 5 METERS
:CONFIGURATION = HARDCOPY PRINTOUT
:SOURCE = RSB.ARCHIVE.SUBSYSTEM
:SECURITY = ULTRAVIOLET. This information restricted.
 If your security clearance is below Ultraviolet, report immediately to nearest termination center.

N

## LEGEND

| | |
|---|---|
| —++— | SINGLE DOOR |
| ------ | WINDOW |
| ⌐⌐ | SLIDING DOOR |
| ▨ | BEDROCK |
| ⊡ | FORKBOTS |
| ▭ | EMPTY SHELF RACK 15m HIGH |
| ▬ | FULL SHELF RACK 15m HIGH |

11

6

12

13

7

10

9

9

14

5

7

8

6

4

3

2

1

7

7

## BACKGROUND

You are a worried clone. You've been in the front lines of the battle for resources between Technical Services and R&D for some time. You actually know little about R&D; to be a good spy, you submerged yourself within Tech. Unfortunately, this very dedication has caused problems. Your loyalty has been questioned on several occasions, and only some very skillful fast-talking has saved you from premature clone activation.

Recently, your long-overdue promotion to third-rank spy came through. You carefully selected and trained a subordinate to also penetrate Technical Services. Much to your chagrin, he was delivered to R&D headquarters in a small box labeled "Defective Observation Equipment."

Your unimaginative superiors hold you responsible for the embarrassing incident and your loyalty is more suspect than ever.

## CURRENT SECRET SOCIETY MISSION

At R&D Headquarters, your superior made it clear that to redeem yourself you must make a similar delivery to Tech HQ. He said, "We've gotten you assigned to a special Troubleshooter team that's crawling with Techs. Shipping one of 'em back to Tech HQ shouldn't be too difficult. Just don't get caught."

On your way out, he slapped a communication device into your hand. "This is a little gadget I just finished that you can use to keep us posted. I don't think The Computer can pick up its signal." Then he added, "This is your absolute last chance, Roger. If you don't clean up this mess you'll finish your days as a volunteer in the nerve pain test lab."

Properly chastised you join the team as Communications officer, good cover for your special device. By sheer chance, you discover that one of two techs on the team, either Terry-O-RIZ-2 or Bobby-O-DUR-2, is probably your protege's killer. Now all you need is a box.

| PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES | | SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 9 | Carrying Capacity | 25 |
| Endurance | 13 | Damage Bonus | --- |
| Agility | 17 | Macho Bonus | --- |
| Manual | | Melee Bonus | +15% |
| Dexterity | 16 | Aimed Weapon | |
| Moxie | 12 | Bonus | +12% |
| Chutzpah | 13 | Comprehension | |
| Mechanical | | Bonus | +2% |
| Aptitude | 11 | Believability Bonus | +5% |
| Power Index | 10 | Repair Bonus | +1% |

**SECRET SOCIETY:** Spy for R&D Service Group

**SECRET SOCIETY RANK:** 3

**MUTANT POWER:** Chameleon (undeclared)

---

## BACKGROUND

You've always had a good rapport with The Computer (other people have been vaporized for hinting at questions you asked outright). You learned the true nature of your Machine Empathy mutant power when the Psion secret society recruited you. You use that ability whenever you can to stay in The Computer's good graces and to extract favors and information for yourself and the Psions.

Your long and promising career with The Computer in the Tech Service Group was cut short recently, and quite unexpectedly, by your transfer to the Troubleshooters. This transfer, The Computer assures you, is only temporary. This is important because you are the fourth member of your clone family which is rapidly approaching extinction. Everyone else in the team is only second generation.

Your ancestors, Amos-O-NUS-2 and 3 expired blissfully, in rapid succession, only a short time ago. They were victims of the latest rage among Mystics, the new brain exploder drug. Armed with some of your ancestors' leftover pills, you've been seeking Mystics for revenge ever since.

## CURRENT SECRET SOCIETY MISSION

Soon after your transfer to the Troubleshooters, several Psions were revealed and dragged away by a swarm of Internal Security agents. Arrests and executions continue, causing great alarm in all Psions. Several have even turned themselves in, declaring their mutant powers. They have not been seen again.

Your Psion superior told you of a Psion informant in your Troubleshooter team. As soon as the informant uses a mutant power, you must nail him as a traitorous mutant. The suspect is either Kay-O-AYE-2 or Terry-O-RIZ-2. You are anxious to carry out this mission because you know that if an informant was traced to this group you must be under suspicion, too.

| PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES | | SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 10 | Carrying Capacity | 25 |
| Endurance | 17 | Damage Bonus | --- |
| Agility | 13 | Macho Bonus | -1 |
| Manual | | Melee Bonus | +5% |
| Dexterity | 19 | Aimed Weapon | |
| Moxie | 11 | Bonus | +20% |
| Chutzpah | 9 | Comprehension | |
| Mechanical | · | Bonus | +1% |
| Aptitude | 16 | Believability Bonus | -3% |
| Power Index | 15 | Repair Bonus | +10% |

**SECRET SOCIETY:** Psion

**SECRET SOCIETY RANK:** 2

**MUTANT POWER:** Machine empathy (undeclared) Minor Telekinesis (undeclared)

---

## BACKGROUND

You were a long time in discovering your mutant ability. An inclination toward ripping apart complex machinery and putting it together again seemed normal to you. Not until you joined The Computer Phreaks did you learn the true nature of your skill.

Once in The Computer Phreaks you quickly made a name for yourself: "Data-chef." After some concentrated work, you broke into the recipe storage bank of the food-prep subsystem. For a solid week thereafter the Infrareds were subjected to food with taste and consistency. The experience was almost more than they could handle. When The Computed discovered the treasonous breach and replaced the original programming, all the Internal Security agents in RSB Sector were needed to quell the riots. Repairs are still being made.

For this inspired act, you were promoted, and your mentor, CPU/CP-ME, taught you the basics of computer security, a treasonous skill. You look forward to testing your new ability.

## CURRENT SECRET SOCIETY MISSION

The Phreaks suspect a High Programmer is behind your current mission, not The Computer. CPU/CP-ME sent you a message reading, "Learn when/how/why the High Programmer exerts control. Steal or duplicate all programs, techniques and equipment that might be useful. In particular, Roger-O-VER-2 has a communication gadget that somehow bypasses The Computer's monitors. We must have it."

You received a second message just before reporting for your Troubleshooter mission briefing. "Be advised the High Programmer has a spy in the group, either Amos-O-NUS-4 or Bobby-O-DUR-2. Good luck."

| PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES | | SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 18 | Carrying Capacity | 55 |
| Endurance | 12 | Damage Bonus | +1 |
| Agility | 14 | Macho Bonus | --- |
| Manual | | Melee Bonus | +7% |
| Dexterity | 10 | Aimed Weapon | |
| Moxie | 11 | Bonus | -1% |
| Chutzpah | 15 | Comprehension | |
| Mechanical | | Bonus | +1% |
| Aptitude | 22 | Believability Bonus | +10% |
| Power Index | 12 | Repair Bonus +2% (+25%) | |

**SECRET SOCIETY:** Computer Phreaks

**SECRET SOCIETY RANK:** 2

**MUTANT POWER:** Superior Mechanical Aptitude (undeclared)
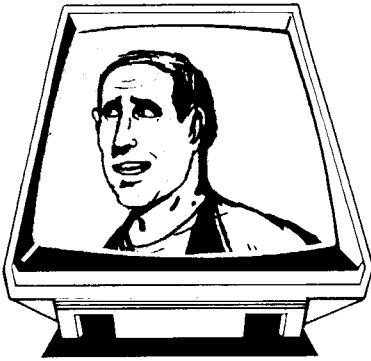
## Roger-O-VER-2

SECURITY CLEARANCE: ORANGE

SERVICE GROUP: Technical (Cover only)

PLAYER
NAME: _____

**WEAPON:** Laser pistol
**To Hit:** 42%
**Type:** L
**Range:** 50m
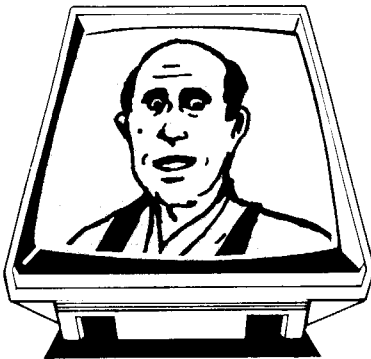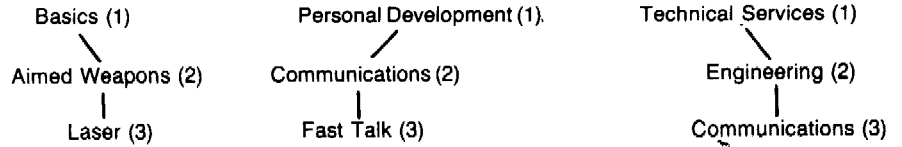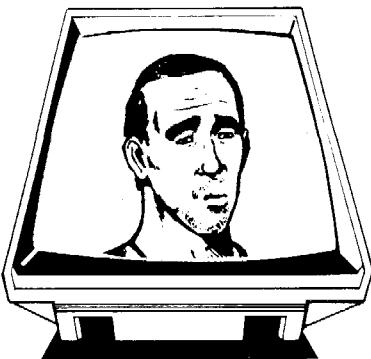**Reload:** 6r
**Malfnt:** 00

| DAMAGE STATUS | CREDITS |
|---|---|
| | 120 |

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
1 ORANGE/RED reflec armor
1 laser pistol
2 ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrels
1 jump suit
1 utility belt & pouches
1 Com Unit II
1 knife
1 notebook & stylus
1 flashlight
1 pair binoculars
1 miniature camera & telephoto lens (illegal)
1 miniature "bug" & recorder with 100 meter range (illegal)
1 miniature Com Unit I on "secure" Red frequency (illegal)

**SKILLS**

Basics (1)
Aimed Weapons (2)
Laser (3)

Personal Development (1)
Communications (2)
Fast Talk (3)

Technical Services (1)
Engineering (2)
Communications (3)

---

## Amos-O-NUS-4

SECURITY CLEARANCE: ORANGE

SERVICE GROUP: Technical

PLAYER
NAME: _____

**WEAPON:** Laser pistol
**To Hit:** 50%
**Type:** L
**Range:** 50m
**Reload:** 6r
**Malfnt:** 00

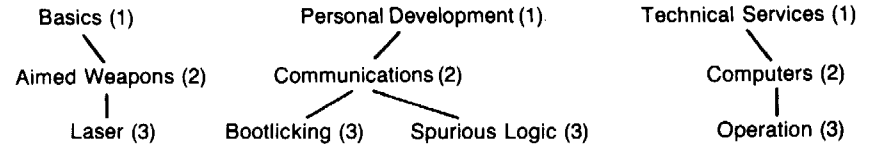| DAMAGE STATUS | CREDITS |
|---|---|
| | 120 |

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
1 ORANGE/RED reflec armor
1 laser pistol
2 ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrels
1 jump suit
1 utility belt & pouches
1 Com Unit II
1 knife
1 notebook & stylus
1 flashlight
1 portable steam iron (keeps you lookin' good)
1 YELLOW/ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrel disguised as ORANGE striped (illegal)

**SKILLS**

Basics (1)
Aimed Weapons (2)
Laser (3)

Personal Development (1)
Communications (2)
Bootlicking (3)    Spurious Logic (3)

Technical Services (1)
Computers (2)
Operation (3)

---

## Kay-O-AYE-2

SECURITY CLEARANCE: ORANGE

SERVICE GROUP: Technical

PLAYER
NAME: _____

**WEAPON:** Laser pistol
**To Hit:** 24%
**Type:** L
**Range:** 50m
**Reload:** 6r
**Malfnt:** 00

| DAMAGE STATUS | CREDITS |
|---|---|
| | 120 |

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
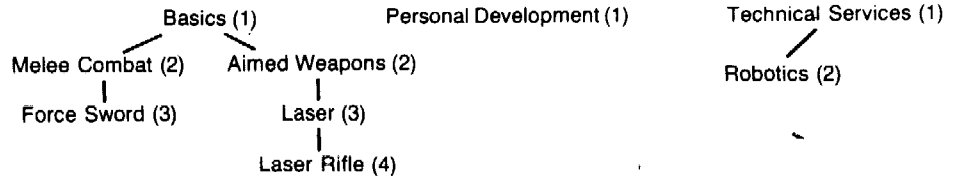1 ORANGE/RED reflec armor
1 laser pistol
2 ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrels
1 jump suit
1 utility belt & pouches
1 Com Unit II
1 knife
1 notebook & stylus
1 flashlight
1 illuminating hand-lens
1 tool kit (the tool box is legal, but most of the tools aren't)

**SKILLS**

Basics (1)
Aimed Weapons (2)

Personal Development (1)

Technical Services (1)
Robotics (2)    Computers (2)
Operation (3)    Maintenance (3)
Security (4)
(Treasonous)

## Mort-O-BIT-2

SECURITY CLEARANCE: ORANGE

SERVICE GROUP: Technical

PLAYER
NAME: _____

**WEAPON:** Laser pistol

**To Hit:** 40%
**Type:** L
**Range:** 50m
**Reload:** 6r
**Malfnt:** 00

| DAMAGE STATUS | CREDITS |
|---|---|
| | 120 |

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
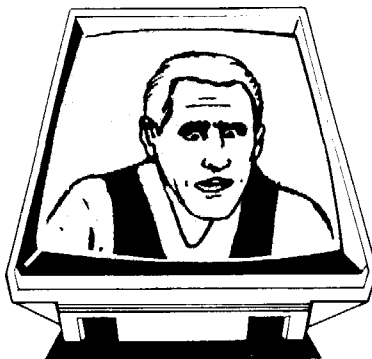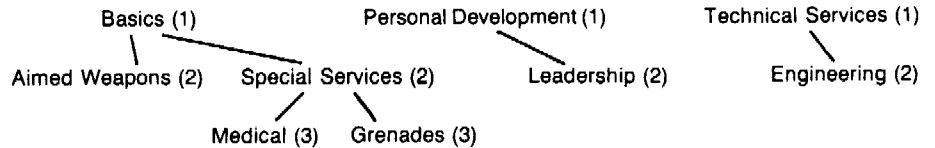1 ORANGE/RED reflec armor
1 laser pistol
2 ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrels
1 jump suit
1 utility belt & pouches
1 Com Unit II
1 knife
1 notebook & stylus
1 flashlight
2 well-balanced throwing knives (illegal)
2 ORANGE-striped laser barrels (illegal)

**SKILLS**

Basics (1)     Personal Development (1)     Technical Services (1)

Melee Combat (2)     Aimed Weapons (2)     Robotics (2)

Force Sword (3)     Laser (3)

Laser Rifle (4)

---

## Terry-O-RIZ-2

SECURITY CLEARANCE: ORANGE

SERVICE GROUP: Technical

PLAYER
NAME: _____

**WEAPON:** Laser pistol

**To Hit:** 30%
**Type:** L
**Range:** 50m
**Reload:** 6r
**Malfnt:** 00

| DAMAGE STATUS | CREDITS |
|---|---|
| | 120 |

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
1 ORANGE/RED reflec armor
1 laser pistol
2 ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrels
1 jump suit
1 utility belt & pouches
1 Com Unit II
1 knife
1 notebook & stylus
1 flashlight
1 first aid kit
4 smoke grenades (they help cover your disappearing act but they're also illegal)

**SKILLS**

Basics (1)     Personal Development (1)     Technical Services (1)

Aimed Weapons (2)     Special Services (2)     Leadership (2)     Engineering (2)

Medical (3)     Grenades (3)

---

## Bobby-O-DUR-2

SECURITY CLEARANCE: ORANGE

SERVICE GROUP: Power

PLAYER
NAME: _____

**WEAPON:** Laser pistol

**To Hit:** 28%
**Type:** L
**Range:** 50m
**Reload:** 6r
**Malfnt:** 00

| DAMAGE STATUS | CREDITS |
|---|---|
| | 120 |

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**
1 ORANGE/RED relfec armor
1 laser pistol
2 ORANGE/RED-striped laser barrels
1 jump suit
1 utility belt & pouches
1 Com Unit II
1 knife
1 notebook & stylus
1 flashlight
1 GREEN-striped laser barrel disguised as RED-striped (illegal)
1 set of wrist and ankle weights (help keep you fit and add 5 to your unarmed combat damage rolls)

**SKILLS**

Basics (1)     Personal Development (1)     Vehicle Services (1)

Aimed Weapons (2)     Operation and Repair (2)

Laser (3)     Crawler (3)     Autocar (3)

## BACKGROUND

Your credo is "Survival Through Superior Firepower." Lasers and other weapons feel very comfortable in your hands. Some time ago, your immediate predecessor, Mort-O-BIT-1, obtained a force sword, even though it's a security level BLUE weapon. Mort never said how he got a hold of it either. Though learning how to use it did him in, you learned from his mistakes and wielded the thing fairly well. Unfortunately, you had to ditch the sword just weeks ago during an unexpected residence inspection.

Your skill with weapons makes an Internal Security cover natural for you. You purposely chose a Mystic second cover, figuring correctly that you'd make a lousy Mystic. Anyone looking carefully will see right through your Mystic identity to your Internal Security cover and stop there, satisfied or unwilling to dig further.

Recently though, some doubt was cast on your cover. While you were shooting at the laser target range, The Computer asked you, in its own polite way, for a conference (never a pleasant event). After a tense little chat about a recently terminated friend's interest in Internal Security, and an ex-hortation to root out evil traitors, Friend Computer signed off. Recalling that your friend had a similar chat just before his demise, you realize you desperately need to do something to vindicate yourself — like expose someone, anyone. That will get The Computer off your back and also strengthen your cover as an Internal Security agent.

After you were assigned to the team as weapons officer you heard a rumor that a teammate, Bobby-O-DUR-2, is connected with the Death Leopards. He just needs to perform one treasonous act and you will be able to serve The Computer.

## CURRENT SECRET SOCIETY MISSION

Your Illuminati superior gives you solid information that Roger-O-VER-2 is a spy for R&D. The coded message reads, "Use this information to establish control over Roger-O-VER-2 by means of blackmail or similar coercion. Do not kill him. Further instructions will follow."

| PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES | | SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 13 | Carrying Capacity | 30 |
| Endurance | 16 | Damage Bonus | --- |
| Agility | 19 | Macho Bonus | – 1 |
| Manual | | Melee Bonus | + 20% |
| Dexterity | 15 | Aimed Weapon | |
| Moxie | 13 | Bonus | + 10% |
| Chutzpah | 13 | Comprehension | |
| Mechanical | | Bonus | + 4% |
| Aptitude | 14 | Believability Bonus | + 5% |
| Power Index | 13 | Repair Bonus | + 5% |

**SECRET SOCIETY:** Illuminati (posing as Internal Security, posing as a Mystic)

**SECRET SOCIETY RANK:** 2

**MUTANT POWER:** Regeneration (undeclared)

---

## BACKGROUND

When your secret society, the Psions, discovered you have the rare power to trance teleport, you were quickly advanced to second rank. After demonstrating your trustworthiness by passing several deep probe investigations, your superiors taught you a second psionic power, minor telekinesis. This power allows you to manipulate objects up to the weight of a grenade (heh heh). Obviously, you are anxious to explore the exciting potentials of this ability. (Without, of course, revealing your undeclared mutant power.)

You were made team medical officer, no doubt, by putting your special services training to good use. In your last mission, you patched up several of The Computer's valuable agents, who had just discovered the truth about rumors of a pack of wild dogs marauding in the food vat areas.

## CURRENT SECRET SOCIETY MISSION

Recently, Internal Security has zealously increased its efforts to uncover and execute members of the Psion secret society. Of course everyone expects some harassment from Internal Security, but the present vendetta has gone too far. You have orders to eliminate known Internal Security agents as part of a wider effort to make Internal Security back off a little. You strongly suspect Mort-O-BIT-2 and/or Roger-O-VER-2 to be Internal Security agents, one posing as a Mystic.

The last telepathic message you received from your superior said that another Psion who might help you is in this Troubleshooter team. You can't miss him, he's the only other Tech in the team. He is Bobby-O-DUR-2, Amos-O-NUS-4, or, strangely enough, Mort-O-BIT-2.

| PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES | | SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 14 | Carrying Capacity | 35 |
| Endurance | 13 | Damage Bonus | + 1 |
| Agility | 12 | Macho Bonus | --- |
| Manual | | Melee Bonus | + 3% |
| Dexterity | 13 | Aimed Weapon | |
| Moxie | 9 | Bonus | + 5% |
| Chutzpah | 12 | Comprehension | |
| Mechanical | | Bonus | – 2% |
| Aptitude | 13 | Believability Bonus | + 3% |
| Power Index | 10 | Repair Bonus | + 4% |

**SECRET SOCIETY:** Psion

**SECRET SOCIETY RANK:** 2

**MUTANT POWER:** Minor Telekinesis (undeclared)
Trance Teleport (undeclared)

---

## BACKGROUND

You spent many years as a member of the tightly-knit Power service group, driving Power execs around RSB sector in autocars or, occasionally, crawlers. After The Computer made your unusual "temporary" transfer to this Troubleshooter team, one of your execs informed you that every other member of the team is from the Technical service group. "So watch your back," he said, "the Techs have always had it in for us, and they're going to outnumber you."

Through careful planning and labor, you're starting to earn quite a reputation among PURGErs as the "Spinebender" for your sabotage of the autocar guidance tracks known as "spines." Your latest job on a four-lane spine was so flamboyant and inspiring it earned the praise of several prominent PURGErs, including the infamous Vatman, scourge of the RSB sector food prep areas. Your cover seems secure so far. Internal Security doesn't usually suspect drivers of destroying the roads beneath them.

## CURRENT SECRET SOCIETY MISSION

You recently received a tip from another PURGEr. Before you ate it, the scrap of grimy paper read, " A real enemy, a citizen who sucks up to The Computer, frequently gaining undeserved praise and favors, is in your team. He may even be an experienced, high-rank special agent to The Computer. It's either Amos-O-NUS-4 or Kay-O-AYE-2."

Although the message didn't say so, you can read between the lines: PURGE wants this traitor to Man's ultimate supremacy taken out. Not so tough, there should be plenty of chances.

| PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES | | SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strength | 24 | Carrying Capacity | 85 |
| Endurance | 17 | Damage Bonus | + 3 |
| Agility | 12 | Macho Bonus | – 1 |
| Manual | | Melee Bonus | + 3% |
| Dexterity | 9 | Aimed Weapon | |
| Moxie | 9 | Bonus | – 2% |
| Chutzpah | 15 | Comprehension | |
| Mechanical | | Bonus | – 2% |
| Aptitude | 11 | Believability Bonus | + 10% |
| Power Index | 11 | Repair Bonus | + 1% |

**SECRET SOCIETY:** PURGE

**SECRET SOCIETY RANK:** 2

**MUTANT POWER:** Superior Strength (undeclared)

## LEGEND

- GRAVEL ROAD
- 2-LANE ROAD
- POWER LINE
- 4-LANE ROAD
- RIVER
- WATER FALL
- SCRUB GRASS
- RIDGE
- LAKE
- FOREST
- HILLS
- MOUNTAINS
- TARGET RANGE

N

STRIKE FORCE ROUTE

PC FLYBOT ROUTE

CLEARED FREE-FIRE ZONE

PC CRAWLER ROUTE

## OUTDOORS ARBITRARY ENCOUNTER TABLES

One thing sure to cause a sophisticated role-playing gamer to pitch a fit is a random encounter table. State-of-the-art design theory frowns upon such adventure elements as either unnecessary padding or lazy game design. "If the encounters are significant, plan them into the adventure and develop them properly. Otherwise, leave them out."

Benighted fools that we are, we like these primitive role-playing tools. We use "arbitrary" encounter tables as springboards for improvisation. You are welcome to use our tables, or make your own, or simply decree arbitrary encounters on impulse. We suggest you purposely avoid detailed preparation for arbitrary encounters. Because such encounters are less critical to the adventure, you can afford to be more free-wheeling, imaginative, and irresponsible — in short, have more fun.

Note, however, that since these encounters are supposed to be unimportant and lots of fun, go easy on the death and destruction. Losing a PC in an arbitrary encounter is a bummer. Nuisances and annoyances are fine, but lighten up, okay?

As an exercise in arbitrary encounter improvisation, see the illustration on page 25, Troubleshooters interrogating a timid woodlands creature. Does it give you any ideas?

---

## FOREST/HILLS ARBITRARY ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 1D10 and run the corresponding encounter. If it isn't appropriate for the situation, modify it, roll again, or create your own encounter.

**1. Hunting Party of 4-8 Savages.** They wear no armor, but carry bows and arrows and hunting frisbees with razor sharp edges. Use column 7 on the Damage Table for these weapons. If the savages outnumber the PCs, they set an ambush. If there are more PCs, the savages follow the PCs and try to nab a straggler.

**2. Tree Snare.** A loop attached to a sapling snaps one PC into the air (roll to see who gets flipped), breaking his leg (incapacitated) and spilling his gear on the ground. The unlucky fellow cannot get himself down easily and can't walk without medical treatment. A PC with a macho bonus of +1 or better should be able to hobble along with a splint and gritted teeth.

**3. Covered Pit.** This deep hole might be an Old Reckoning cesspool, storm drain or basement, or hunting pit filled with dull stakes (the savages aren't too smart). Randomly determine who falls in, but allow them a very difficult agility check to grab onto the edge. Characters who fall in take damage from column 2 on Table 14.3.1 in the *Gamemaster Handbook* and cannot climb out without help.

**4. Skunk.** PCs must make difficult agility checks to avoid spray. Odor lingers. Eternally.

**5. Snake.** A poisonous snake bites one of the PCs, who twitches, convulses and spasms for two days before recovering. The victim can't move by himself until he recovers. Recovery is as if recovering from a wound. Until recovered, the PC is too weak and debilitated to walk without assistance, but he may perform normally in any combat round if he can first make a difficult endurance check.

(When near a road or highway change this encounter to a single well-armed crawler manned by 8 gung-ho Death Troopers. See Death Trooper on the NPC Roster.)

**6. Grizzly Bear.** A crazed bear attacks the party and fights until dead. It moves at sprint speed and its fur serves as leather armor. It makes three attacks each round at 75%. Use column 8 on the Damage Table. Only a killing shot to the head stops this bear instantly. All other killing wounds take two rounds later. (Note: this could be a short adventure for several citizens unless you give the party ample opportunity for ranged fire.)

**7. Bull and Harem.** a herd of 15 cows is led by a gigantic bull that charges if PCs advance. The bull moves at sprint speed, wears natural leather armor, has a 75% chance to gore or trample PCs and a 30% chance to dislodge characters hiding in trees. Use column 8 on the Damage Table to resolve attacks.

**8. Harmless Animal(s).** Your choice of deer, goats, birds or squirrels. Describe these creatures as though the PCs have never seen them before. Don't be surprised if the Troubleshooters are hard on these unwitting Commie traitors.

**9. Natural Event.** Use falling tree limbs (or whole trees), quicksand or an earthquake. Roll 1D10 for earthquake severity: 1 = slight vibration; 10 = "Where'd the dome disappear to?"

**10. Exit Point for the Bermuda Triangle.** This is always a favorite. Use it whenever you want, no matter what else is rolled. The Wreck of the Mary Deare. A grounded squadron of P-47's. Whatever.

---

## SCRUB/OPEN TERRAIN ARBITRARY ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 1D10 and run the corresponding encounter. If it isn't appropriate for the situation, modify it, roll again or create your own encounter.

**1. Savages.** See encounter 4 in the Forest/Hills Random Encounter Table. Triple the number of warriors and arm some with spears and slings (column 7 damage) and shields.

**2. Wild Horse Herd.** 2D10 horses led by a magnificent stallion thunder past, narrowly avoiding the PCs. However, if the PCs attack or try to catch one, the stallion attacks at sprint speed with a 75% chance of hitting (column 7 Damage).

**3. Buzzards.** They circle high above the PCs, waiting. Armed Forces patrols know that where there are buzzards there are often Commies and traitors. See Strike Force Troopers on the NPC Roster.

**4. Locusts.** A veritable plague descends upon the PCs. Visibility is reduced to zero. Vehicles crash unless stopped immediately. Lasts 1D10 rounds. PCs with a negative Macho Bonus may need to check for Insanity.

**5. Snake.** Same as encounter 5 on the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table (including Death Trooper option).

**6. Harmless Animals.** Your choice of prairie dogs, antelopes, turtles, spiders, etc. More ammo wasters.

**7. Bull and Harem.** See encounter 7 in the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table.

**8. Natural Events.** Choose one of these possibilities.

**Dust devils** — small dust tornadoes that knock things over and disrupt communications.

**Prairie fire** — moves at run speed, consuming all in its path, and seems to pursue the PCs.

**Earthquake** — see encounter 9 on the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table.

**10. Gamemaster's Special.** Close your eyes and make one up. Conan. Goblins. Venusians. Republicans. Use it whenever you want, no matter what else is rolled. Then do some fancy footwork to rationalize your frivolous impulse. Isn't it fun being the Gamemaster?

---

## MOUNTAIN ARBITRARY ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 1D10 and run the corresponding encounter. If it isn't appropriate, modify it, roll again, or create your own.

**1. Savage Hunting Party.** See encounter 1 on the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table. Arm a couple of warriors with slugthrowers.

**2. Harmless Animals.** Your choice of mountain goats, eagles, chipmunks, etc.

**3. Buzzards.** See encounter 3 on the Scrub/Open Terrain Arbitrary Encounter Table.

**4. Mountain Lion.** This ferocious creature surprises and attacks a single PC. This lion moves so fast it makes three attacks at 75% each round. (Column 7 Damage.)

**5. Snake.** See encounter 5 on the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table.

**6. Bear.** See encounter 6 on the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table.

**7/8. Natural Events.** Choose one of three possibilities:

**Rockslides** — Roll 1D10 for severity: 1 = small pebbles bury boots; 10 = boot buried under 3 meters of rock.

**Earthquakes** — See encounter 9 on the Forest/Hills Aritrary Encounter Table.

**Storm** — A thunderstorm starts brewing overhead; lightning strikes where you aim it.

**9. Mine Shaft.** An abandoned dark tunnel, shored up by rotting timbers, leads deep into the mountain. It's obviously dangerous, but it looks like a swell place to hide. A couple of small cave-ins may discourage the PCs.

**10. The Silly Option.** Mountain goats with mutant powers. The last of the Mohicans. Robbie the Robot. Trust the Force, Luke.

---

**YOU ARE OUTDOORS? WARNING! WARNING!**

cooperation and loyalty are always rewarded.

As the PCs leave the lounge, cafeteria, and recovery ward, other Troubleshooters shout words of encouragement and advice to them. "Don't leave the dome!" "I lost my leg out there!" "If it moves, shoot it." "Never leave the roads."

Just about everyone in the headquarters sees the mission alert, so PCs will find it hard not to report for their briefing. Assign treason points and fines to those who try to avoid the briefings (then guards drag them to the briefing anyway).

## 2.2.2 The Briefing Room

This room was fumigated several hours ago, and a sharp chemical odor lingers. There is no danger from the remaining wisps of pesticide, but the PCs should be distressed. The same four BLUE clearance guards stand in the room, silent and watchful. The three armed guards are wearing small air filters over their noses and mouths. The fourth guard, Spike-B, enjoys the fumes.

## 2.2.3 The Briefing Personnel

Bruno-B was terminated after the last briefing for asking too many questions about "mission authenticity." Squee-G and Gore-V should appear less confident and secure than in the first briefing. Gore-V knows Black-U has taken the lead in the tournament and Nevo-U will suffer a major setback if his minicomputer isn't rescued. Gore-V desperately wants to lead the rescue mission himself, but realizes his absence would be noticed and investigated. He's also sure the PCs will bungle the mission. Although Squee-G does not know of the tournament, he senses his superior's tension, and is worried by it.

## 2.2.4 Beginning the Briefing

Squee-G enters and barks, "All rise!" PCs who don't stand up respectfully are none-too-gently yanked to their feet by a guard. Wearing his shoulder holster, Gove-V enters and takes his seat behind the podium. He spreads six personnel files on the podium in front of him.

Squee-G motions for everyone to sit, then takes roll call. He first calls surviving team members, reprimanding those who did not perform well in the first mission. Next, he reads the names of clone replacements, urging them to avoid their predecessor's mistakes. Then he addresses the team. Read the following text out loud:

"We all know rumors are counterproductive, and I might add, often treasonous. Yet they abound. The current rumor that certain duochroma (ORANGE/RED) reflec armor is defective is absolutely false. To set this rumor at rest, I have ordered an INFRARED citizen dressed in the armor. I will laser him at point blank range, then bring him in so you may note the results."

Drawing his laser pistol, Squee-G strides out the door behind the podium. A second later, you hear the unmistakable shriek of laser fire, followed by a painful scream. After a slight pause, Squee-G steps back into the room — alone, a look of exasperation on his face.

Then, immediately composed, he turns and smiles broadly. "The test was a complete success, I assure you, proving conclusively that the armor is not defective.

Anyway, our next task is to assign mission equipment."

The armor held, but the target passed out from fright, and viewing him might be bad for morale. What do you expect from an Infrared?

## 2.2.5 Assigning Mission Equipment

The wall behind the podium swirls into a Computer screen. The screen displays a list of equipment assigned to the team for this mission. If any equipment was damaged or destroyed in the last mission, Squee-G reprimands the responsible parties, if they're still alive. Abandoned equipment sends him into a flaming rage. Hand out fines as you see fit.

Read the Mission 2 Equipment List, below, to the players so they can copy it. Give them a few minutes to divide the gear. One PC must take responsibility for every piece of equipment on the list, except the crawler. Everyone is responsible for it.

---

**Mission 2 Equipment List**

1 Flamethrower, 5 Shots Remaining, No Reload

1 Ice Gun

2 Laser Rifles, 1 Quadchroma (RED/ORANGE/YELLOW/GREEN) Barrel Apiece

12 Duochroma (RED/ORANGE) Laser Barrels

1 Slugthrower

5 10-round Clips of Solid Slug Ammo

1 Semi-automatic Slugthrower (with voucher authorizing assigned character to operate this GREEN clearance weapon)

25 Single HEAT Slugs

4 Environ Suits

1 Pair Binoculars

2 InfraSpecs

4 Backpacks

6 2-day Ration Packs

2 30-meter Ropes

6 1-liter Water Bottles

1 Hottorch

1 Box of 20 High Explosive Grenades

6 Pair Hiking Boots

1 Compass

1 All Terrain Crawler

---

No maps are available. They are too rare and classified for even Nevo-U to obtain for mere ORANGE clearance Troubleshooters.

After the PCs divide their gear, Squee-G assigns some additional equipment. Read the following text aloud.

"You are each assigned a parachute/sky-hook package. These packages are already in your crawler. Correct operation of the parachutes will be explained at a later time. It's really quite simple and very safe. The Computer will now explain the operation of the sky-hook personal retrieval system."

The image of a large backpack with a complicated harness appears on the screen. The Computer's familiar voice narrates while the image slowly rotates, showing all sides. "When you wish to be retrieved, put on the sky-hook and tighten the harness. Then pull

the activation handle. Relax your muscles, flex your knees and breathe normally. Do not look up or severe spine and neck injuries may result. Retrieval by sky-hook is always an exciting experience, and perfectly safe."

The crawler contains seven parachute/sky-hook packages. Each package consists of a harness sandwiched between a parachute and a sky-hook. The PCs know nothing of parachutes and sky-hooks and information about them is impossible to obtain.

The sky-hook allows aircraft to pick up people or cargo without landing. When the activation handle is pulled, a balloon pops from the backpack, fills with helium, and rises 100 meters into the air. A nylon shock-cord connects the balloon to the harness. An aircraft snags the cord and winches it in. The shock-cord absorbs much of the initial take-off jolt, but it's still a bonewrenching experience.



EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT. IMMEDIATELY. THANK YOU.

## 2.2.6 The Mission Assignment

Here's a tough dramatic assignment. As you portray Gore-V delivering the mission assignment, remember he is worried and fairly upset, yet trying not to reveal those feelings. Read the following text out loud:

Gore-V stands, leaning forward, his hands resting on the podium. Slowly, he surveys everyone in the room, his cold eyes never blinking. Outwardly calm, he radiates tension and energy.

"Troubleshooters," he says. "Your mission is of the utmost importance. Countless lives throughout Alpha Complex depend upon the outcome of your mission. Rare radioactive isotopes, needed for medical research and treatment, were recently stolen and removed from Alpha Complex in a sealed container.

"We learned the container's location only hours ago. Now, you must recover it. These isotopes have short half-lives, so you must return them by nightfall tomorrow. (Pause. Gore-V's eyes slowly cross and uncross as he gazes up at the ceiling.) Direct exposure to these isotopes can be deadly, but the container is completely shielded. As long as you do not open the containers you will be perfectly safe.

"Speed will determine the outcome and your survival. Pay close attention to these instructions; I do not expect to repeat myself.

"Immediately following this briefing you will run, not walk, to an autocar parked at the entrance checkpoint. All your weapons and other equipment will already be on

board, packed in crates. Fiber-O will transport you to the RSB Armed Forces Staging area where you will pick up your crawler.

"You will depart through gate 1, and your team leader will navigate you unerringly to a rendezvous with a flybot and its pilot, Grill-G-ESE-5. They will fly you to the container site and back. In flight, Grill-G will instruct you in the use of the parachutes. That is all."

Gore-V is in a hurry to get the mission started, so is impatient with questions. Squee-G dismisses everyone except the team leader. Then Squee-G leaves the room, very curious about what Gore-V is going to tell the team leader. The guards remain.

### 2.2.7 Private Leader Briefing

Review Map 2 on page 19 of the pull-out section.

Gore-V gives the leader a requisition form for the crawler, then shows the leader the route his team and the flybot will follow. Draw a rough map for the player, indicating important and interesting features, and explain the route. Then read the following text out loud to the player.

"The radio security code for Gate 1, out of the dome, is MEMBUKA. Remember it. The rest of the information I'm going to give you comes from one of The Computer's reliable surveillance satellites, so it should be accurate. The container is hidden in the basement of the central building of an Old Reckoning outpost of some kind and is protected by a lethal security system. The first object that moves down the stairs will be destroyed. You can trigger the system by throwing a piece of junk down the stairs. The system needs two minutes to recharge, so you won't have long. The container is within a machine against the back wall. We believe the thieves left the container in the machine to analyze its contents.

"Intelligence indicates the container is now labeled "CPU CORE," which may alarm several members of your team, especially the Computer Officer. You must remove the label before anyone else sees it. Use the additional sky-hook to retrieve the container."

He pauses, looking almost embarrassed, "I have never sent anyone on a more important mission — best of luck." His voice becomes icy, serious again. "Remember, no matter what, bring that container back. Dismissed."

---

## 2.3 The Mission

### 2.3.1 Entrance Checkpoint to the RSB Armed Forces Staging Area

During the entire trip from the briefing room, Fiber-O grins with glee as he sends red-garbed pedestrians scurrying out of his way and nearly hurls the PCs from their seats. With one final screech of the autocar's tires he turns off the main roadhall into a long yellow corridor. Fiber-O's attitude changes abruptly. His grin changes to tight-lipped silence.

Slowing to a crawl, he cautiously joins a line of autocars passing one by one through a checkpoint at the corridor's exit. An autotransport pulls in behind the PCs, carrying a squad of Death Troopers in its open back (see Death Trooper on the NPC Roster). They immediately begin taunting the PCs, shouting out,

"Hey, laserbait!" "Go back to the vats!" "Anyone want to butt heads?" Give the PCs a chance to respond if they're feeling rambunctious.

Casually, the two guards at the checkpoint salute the occupants of each autocar, then wave it through. The guards stand with a fierce-looking doberbot next to a small slug-proof booth. Both men carry belt-fed slugthrowers and wear GREEN armor. (See String-G and Grip-G on the NPC Roster, and doberbot on the Robot Roster.)

When the PCs' autocar approaches the checkpoint, Grip-G quickly presses a button on his belt and a line of angled steel spikes pops up from the floor, blocking the gate. Leveling his slugthrower at the PCs he steps forward, covered by his partner and the alert doberbot. In a gruff voice he addresses Fiber-O, "This is a restricted area. You've got one second to state your name and business." In an extremely polite voice, Fiber-O does so. Frowning, Grip-G orders, "Sniff them out, String-G, while I check on this."

Grip-G steps into the booth while String-G releases the doberbot. It sniffs all around the autocar then leaps up into the crates. The Death Troopers find this all quite amusing and continue taunting the PCs. These troopers only draw their weapons if the PCs draw weapons or open one of their crates.

After a few seconds the doberbot snarls, pointing at the crates with its snapping jaws. Very alert, String-G demands, "What's in the boxes?" No matter what the PCs say, a moment after they finish, Grip-G steps from the booth, lowers the spikes, and says, "You're cleared. Go on through." String-G protests, but his partner silences him, saying, "I don't like it any more than you, and I don't like you very much." The remainder of the mission takes place in the areas depicted on Map 2.



GO AHEAD, MAKE MY DAY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

### 2.3.2 Area 1. RSB Armed Forces Staging Area

This huge room, several times larger than the warehouse complex, is filled with activity, noise and confusion. Army patrols and special units form up here before going Outdoors. Soldiers, combots and warbots are everywhere. Right now, most of the activity centers around an Armed Forces strike force preparing for a mission (see 2.3.3). Mechanics swarm over an amazing variety of sinister vehicles, fixing and fussing, while technicians examine and fine-tune the numerous bots. Curses, shouted questions, and orders bellowed over revving engines fill the air.

*Unloading the Autocar*

Fiber-O drives to an All Terrain Crawler (ATC) parked at the edge of Gate 1 and stops, leaving the engine running. He assumes this ATC is the PCs', but he doesn't know and doesn't care. He just wants to leave as soon as he can. He demands in quiet, hurried tones that the PCs unload — now! If they respond too slowly, Fiber-O begins throwing their crates out of the autocar. As soon as the autocar is empty he takes off without a word.

Gate 1 is a massive concrete and steel wall that appears immobile. As soon as the PCs finish unloading, a speaker over the gate announces, "Clear!" An instant later, the gate snaps up into the ceiling in an eye-blink. A heavily-armed dozer-crawler, splashed with gore and shredded plant matter, blackened from laser fire and generally beat-to-pieces, roars through the opening, narrowly missing our intrepid PCs and their valuable Computer property. The gate snaps shut just as quickly with a reverberating boom.

*Welcoming Committee*

As the first PC touches their ATC, Beeg-G, the leader of a nearby squad of troops screams, "Halt!" The PCs face a line of 15 leveled laser rifles, covering Beeg-G's advance. Beeg-G marches up to the PCs and demands to know who they are and what they're doing. He is absolutely sure of his authority in this situation and will not hesitate to vaporize anyone who questions it. (See Beeg-G and Strike Force Trooper on the NPC Roster.)

Without a vehicle voucher, Beeg-G blasts the entire team — you can't be too careful this close to the Outdoors. If given a vehicle voucher, Beeg-G calls for a portable Computer terminal to verify it. The Computer responds with tension-building slowness, finally saying, "There is no record of this voucher or Troubleshooter team in RSB files. Please stand by." Needless to say, Beeg-G's boys eagerly await the order to "Fry Traitor!"

After the PCs have worked up a good sweat, The Computer says, "This team is authorized to operate this vehicle and leave the dome with it. Squadleader Beeg-G is highly commended for his quick response time in this situation. He serves The Computer in the glow of its praise!" Smirking, Beeg-G turns and leads his troops away, ignoring any questions from the PCs.

The PCs are free to inspect and load their vehicle now.

*The All Terrain Crawler (ATC)*

This ATC looks and drives like a box with treads. Inside is a single compartment with two driver's seats in the front. A Com III unit is mounted on the floor between the two seats. Above each seat is a hatch, and a red-painted handle labeled "Eject." If the handle is pulled, the seats eject perfectly, but there is a 60% chance the hatches above them don't open (Use Damage Table column 10).

Six fully equipped passengers, three to a side, can ride on benches in the back. At the very rear stands an empty rack labelled "Survival Gear." Below it is another rack full of camouflage netting. Seven parachute/sky-hook packages are piled on the floor.

An open revolving turret with an empty weapon clasp is mounted on top of the vehicle. A person standing up in the middle of the vehicle can operate the turret. Any weapon larger than a pistol fits in the clasp.

Bobby-O has the necessary skill to drive this vehicle, which is important because this ATC only operates manually; its bot brain can't even keep the thing idling. Top speed on the highway is 30 kilometers per hour, but it slows to a crawl off road, and cannot travel through mountainous terrain. It can cross rivers but it rides very low in the water, threatening to tip over whenever a PC shifts his weight.

*Getting Out*

After they pile everything into the crawler, the PCs must figure out how to open Gate 1. If they drive up to the gate, it does not open. A speaker, mounted above the door beside a video camera and a laser cannon, blares out, "Stop!" Until the code word "Membuka" is spoken over the radio, the gate remains shut. Moments after the code word is spoken (if the leader remembers it), the gate snaps open and the speaker screams, "Clear!" No matter how fast the PCs race through the gate, it slams shut just millimeters behind them.

From this point on the team leader should direct the crawler's course.

### 2.3.3 The Strike Force

Soon after the PCs exit the building, the gate opens again, disgorging a stream of troops and vehicles that begin forming up in the Free-Fire Zone. This strike force consists of 80 troopers, 4 officers, 15 advanced combots, 6 supply crawlers and 1 bridge-laying crawler. (See Strike Force Trooper and Officer on the NPC Roster. See Advanced Combot on the Robot Roster.)

This is the strike force The Computer is sending to capture Nevo-U's minicomputer. The route they will follow to the U.S.G.S. Weather Station is marked on Map 2. Once out of the Free-Fire Zone they shoot at anyone they see or hear, or think they see or hear. If everything goes just right, the strike force will reach the Weather Station just as the PCs are leaving with the minicomputer in hand. If the PCs ever strike off cross-country, this strike force will hunt them down. Use this strike force as needed to heighten paranoia in your players.

PCs monitoring their Com units hear extensive radio traffic as strike force officers discuss their march and target. Their target, "an Old Reckoning outpost of some kind," should sound familiar to the team leader.

### 2.3.4 *Area 2.* Alpha Complex Dome

PCs looking back on the dome from the outside for the first time should be awe-struck, overwhelmed by its size. The dome fills the entire western horizon with its smooth, curved surface. Only near the edge is the surface broken by numerous sensors, weapons, and building additions.

Emphasize the emotional impact this experience should have on the PCs and encourage the players to role-play the profound sense of security their characters associate with the dome (Mother!) and the extreme paranoia they feel facing the unknown.

### 2.3.5 *Area 3.* Gravel Roads in the Free-Fire Zone

Rutted, bumpy gravel roads, one lane wide, criss-cross the Free-Fire Zone. They are used by regular Armed Forces patrols and are the only safe paths through the zone. Do the PCs a favor and point out the missile batteries and huge laser cannons that track their progress through the Free-Fire Zone. If the PCs stray too far off a road for any reason, a laser battery from



*Traitors reconsidering their decision to leave the road.*

the dome fires one warning shot in front of them. If they fail to stop or move back into the road immediately, the next shot vaporizes the crawler around them. The third shot finishes them off.

Many gigantic military vehicles, guided by wild-eyed troopers, barrel down these roads. They wouldn't think to move aside or leave room on the road for a measly little crawler. The PCs must frequently move off the road to avoid collision. If they don't move, there's a 40% chance of a collision. In the event of a crash, PC survivors are pursued by Armed Forces troopers for reckless driving and failure to yield.

The many flybot patrols overhead like few things better than terrorizing Troubleshooters. After several rounds, the flybot pilots figure out which vehicle contains the PCs and begin buzzing it. The bots don't, of course, hit the crawler, but they come very close.

Improvise perilous encounters freely as the PCs travel through the Free-Fire Zone. Develop in the PCs a healthy fear, horror, and respect for the Armed Forces. Alert Troubleshooters will realize that coming home through the Free-Fire Zone will be no picnic.

### 2.3.6 *Area 4.* Forest

These vast expanses of green stuff and tall brown things are spooky places. Strange sounds, sights, and smells constantly remind the PCs how little they know of this environment. Maximum speed on foot in the forest is 3-4 kilometers per hour. Every two hours the PCs are in the forest, run an encounter from the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table on page 20 of the pull-out section.

### 2.3.7 *Area 5.* Hills

These giant mounds, dotted with really tall brown things and large boulders, provide excellent views of the surrounding area. Unbelievably, there are no escalators or even stairs to the tops, so travelling is slowed by tedious climbs.

Maximum speed on foot in the hills is 3-4 kilometers per hour. Every two hours the PCs are in the hills, run an encounter from the

Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table on page 20 of the pull-out section.

### 2.3.8 *Area 6.* Scrub Grass

Impress the PCs with the thickness of the coarse green carpeting here. Without seams it covers many kilometers of wavy floor. Unknown creatures scurry and slither through the grasses, causing alarm and drawing fire.

Maximum speed on foot in scrub grass is 5 kilometers per hour. Every two hours the PCs spend in the scrub grass, run an encounter from the Scrub/Open Terrain Arbitrary Encounter Table on page 20 of the pull-out section.

### 2.3.9 *Area 7.* Rivers

To those who can't swim, merely looking at rivers can be terrifying. Swirling eddies and debris caught in the current make the water seem alive. These rivers are too wide to jump over, too deep to wade across, and too turbulent to float across.

### 2.3.10 *Area 8.* Waterfalls

Describe these waterfalls as though they are as big as Niagara Falls, or larger. Emphasize the thunderous noise, the dizzying height, the surging power, the, the...well, you know. These areas are not recommended for bathing or fishing.

### 2.3.11 *Area 9.* Crawler Hiding Point

A small grove of trees at the base of the falls provides a perfect hiding place for the crawler. If the PCs do not hide the crawler, and survive to return to it, they find a scattering of small, melted metal scraps. Live and learn.

From here the PCs must proceed on foot to the flybot pickup point above the falls, as the ridge is too steep for the crawler. When the PCs climb the ridge, remind them that the junk they are carrying would fill several shopping carts, that the terrain is rugged, and that they are as comfortable in the Outdoors as a Wall Street broker would be in the jungles of Borneo. Express an interest in their plans for scrambling up the slope with their gear.

*Troubleshooters competing in the 6000-meter long drop.*

## 2.3.12 *Area 10.* Ridge

Although its height varies, this ridge is always steep and covered with loose, crumbly rocks. Characters must make frequent agility checks to avoid falling when climbing up or down. Ridges are impassable to land vehicles.

## 2.3.13 *Area 11.* The Flybot and Pickup Point

*The Flybot*

One kilometer from the waterfall is the flybot pickup point, a long narrow, grassy field next to the river, surrounded by low hills. Two deep skid furrows lead to the flybot, resting at the far end of the field. The vehicle is a strange mishmash of spare and salvaged parts assembled by someone who doesn't know much about aircraft. (In fact, Nevo-U built it himself, and no, he doesn't know much about aircraft, but a bot brain that does know helped him.) This is a fixed-wing flybot with no hovering or VTOL capabilities. It requires a short, flat length of ground for landing and take-off.

There's a small forward cockpit, entered from the top, and a larger rear compartment, entered from the back. A cannon is mounted under the craft's nose. The rear cargo doors open easily. Three folding seats are built into each wall of the cargo bay, ample room for six people with full gear. Against the wall separating the two compartments is a large winch over a floor hatch.

Closer examination reveals that the engines are still warm and the cockpit hatch is unlocked and charred from laser fire. The pilot, Grill-G, is slumped over the controls, dead of wounds from a single laser burst. (One of Black-U's agents almost stopped the flight.) A force sword and a GREEN-barreled laser pistol hang from Grill-G's belt (be sure Mort-O sees the force sword.)

*The Flight*

Bobby-O, with his vehicle skill, can fly the machine manually well enough for anything but combat. He also knows how to activate the bot brain's autopilot programming. As soon as the autopilot is engaged, the flybot begins the takeoff sequence, backing up, turning around and then launching itself, unless stopped. Once in the air, it skims the tree tops heading north until it can turn west to the U.S.G.S. Weather Station (*see* 2.3.14). The flybot's autopilot route is marked on Map 2. If flown manually more than a few kilometers from that route, the flybot is spotted and intercepted by an Armed Forces Model 916 flybot.

*Parachuting*

As soon as the flybot turns west, an audio-visual monitor in the rear compartment activates, showing an old army parachute training film. A fat, balding army sergeant shows how to put on a parachute, how to jump correctly and how to land. To demonstrate the last part, he climbs a short ladder and jumps into a sand-box, rolling to lessen the impact. The film only plays once. The PCs can stop, but not reverse, the film.

Once near the U.S.G.S. Station, a speaker begins shouting out commands. The PCs should recognize these commands from the parachute training film.

"Approaching jump site!" warns the PCs to put on their parachute/sky-hook packages and psyche up for the jump. The chutes in the film bear no resemblance to the PCs' equipment, so whether or not they paid attention to the film, each PC has a 50% chance of putting his package on upside down. Those wearing upside down chutes get to land on their heads.

"Form up!" tells the PCs to form a line facing the door.

"Attach lines!" clues the PCs to clip their ripcord handle onto the overhead rack that runs the length of the cargo bay. Three handles with built-in clips protrude from each parachute. One is the carrying handle; one is the ripcord that opens the parachute; the last collapses and detaches the parachute. The PCs have no way of knowing which handle to use, and so must guess. Each PC has a one-third chance of choosing any given handle. If the PCs dismantle one of the parachutes in an attempt to divine its operating principles, they may make an engineering check or roll under Mechanical Aptitude as a percentage to guess this information. Of course, they only have the same percentage chance of properly reassembling the parachute. Oh, dear.

Characters who use the rip cord are lucky. Their chutes open. Characters who use the carrying handle are left dangling out the doorway, still attached to the overhead rack. Flip a coin. Heads, the strap holds and the character can drag himself back into the flybot. Tails, the strap breaks, plunging the character into free fall — cause for an immediate insanity check! Only if he passes the check can he pull another handle, a 50-50 chance! Characters who use the wrong handle fall to the earth, leaving their chutes drifting through the sky above them.

"Go! Go! Go!" means just what it says. The rear doors open, green lights flash and whoever is in front is staring down at the mountains. He must pass an immediate insanity check to be able to jump. If he fails the check he freezes in the doorway and must be pushed out.

PCs who figure out the commands, jump when told, and open their chutes will survive the jump, though you may want to dispense some sprained ankles and damaged gear if you're in a peevish mood. They must then collapse and detach their chutes quickly or get dragged away by the wind. If they don't all get out of the plane together, the last ones land far away and must hike to the top of the mountain to be picked up.

Once the flybot has passed the jump site it begins to circle the peak. It continues to circle until the sky-hook balloons go up (see below). It then snags them and heads back to the crawler.

Remember, don't let the players use their knowledge of parachuting to their character's advantage. They are supposed to be role-playing characters who have never touched, seen, or heard of the things.

## 2.3.14 *Area 12.* U.S.G.S. Weather Station

*The Station*

(If the PCs delayed their arrival here, you may decide the strike force has already arrived and is waiting for them.)

On the smooth, level top of a high mountain lies a cluster of small dingy gray cement buildings, all that remains of an Old Reckoning United States Geological Survey Weather Station. A large rectangular building stands in the center of the cluster, surrounded by two circular and three rectangular outbuildings. Two broken-down dish antennas lean against one side of the main building.

Nevo-U's minicomputer is hidden in the main building's basement. He communicates with his computer through an automated UHF radio and one of the dish antennas (cleverly camouflaged to appear useless). He rarely visits.

The closer one gets to the buildings the worse they look. Storms and vandals have battered open the rusted metal doors and strewn their contents about. The two circular buildings contain nothing but steel pedestals that once held telescopes. The other small buildings provided storage and housing for scientists. Toppled metal shelves, cabinets, and empty cot frames are all that is left.

The main building holds the remains of many large machines. Dark holes in the frames mark

where buttons, knobs, and screens used to be. On the back of the largest device is a large panel that conceals a narrow steep cement stairway to the basement. There is no light in the stairwell. A flashlight will show that the stairs lead down to the open doorway of a small room, but nothing more. PCs who carefully examine this entrance will note an unusual coating of fine black dust on the ceiling opposite the doorway and along the walls, floor, and ceiling of the stairwell. PCs with field weapons skill will recognize this soot as evidence of flamethrower use.

A powerful firethrower is hidden in the floor at the base of the stairs. Any object larger than a mouse that crosses the last stair triggers the firethrower. When set off, a gushing jet of flame fills the stairwell, blasts out the panel opening and broils against the ceiling. Anyone caught in the stairwell when the flame erupts suffers damage from column 11 on the Damage Table. The flames will burn outer clothing and singe the hair of anyone looking at the stairwell. The building is non-flammable, so it suffers no



damage except for a thick layer of soot that covers everything. The PCs have two minutes before the firethrower recharges. This can be a very long or short two minutes as you see fit.

At the bottom of the stairs is a single unlit room, just high enough to stand in. A light switch is on the wall to the right of the door. Once turned on, the bright lights reveal that the entire far half of the room is filled with floor-to-ceiling computer banks. A chair rests in front of the single terminal. A rough bed stands to the left of the door. A small metal table and icebox are on the right. The ice box is empty and warm.

A container labeled "CPU Core" is wired within the largest machine against the back wall. The container weighs 40 kilograms.

*The Sky-hook Escape*

As the PCs emerge from the main building with the "isotope container," they see the Strike Force moving up the mountain side from the south. The PCs must act quickly if they wish

to live. If the PCs stand their ground and wait for the Strike Force, or if they try to escape on foot, the crack troopers cheerfully pursue and execute the traitors with such subtle weapons as tac nukes and plasma generators. Their best option (the most dramatic one) is to use the sky-hooks. See 2.2.5 for an explanation of how the sky-hook works.

If switched on auto-pilot, the PCs' flybot swoops in to retrieve the balloons. It flies in a large circle, snagging one balloon on each pass, then reeling in the shock-cord for six rounds while circling for the next pass. The flybot randomly determines which balloons to snag on each pass. If the flybot is on manual (auto pilot off), snagging and reeling in balloons is up to the pilot.

There is a 10% chance each shock-cord breaks when snagged. The chance doubles if two people use the same sky-hook. As soon as the first balloon inflates, the eager Strike Force troopers spot it and open fire. They're out of range initially, but quickly close in, shooting at the balloons, the PCs, the buildings, and sometimes each other. The last PC should be picked up in the middle of a fire fight. PCs already in the flybot can spray covering fire for their teammates still on the ground (a fine opportunity to assassinate a teammate in the confusion).

The Strike Force Advanced Combots, further down the mountainside, concentrate their fire on the PC's flybot. On its first pass, the flybot is out of range. On the second pass, the combots have a 15% chance of hitting it. On each successive pass the chance increases 15%. If hit, pieces are blown off the flybot, and it smokes and sputters, but it finishes all the pickups. (If the flybot hasn't been hit by the time the flybot completes its pickups, a mysterious suspension of game rules increases the combots' chance of hitting to 100%.)

After completing the pickups, the flybot flies another 5-10 kilometers, billowing dark smoke and slowly loosing altitude, until it crash-lands.

Roll on the first column of Table **14.3.1** in the *Gamemaster Handbook* for injuries.

### 2.3.15 *Area 13.* Power Lines

Tall Old Reckoning high-voltage power towers dot the countryside. Most are still standing, strung with long-dead cables, but several have fallen into tangled heaps of rusted steel. Low-flying flybots occasionally run into these lines.

### 2.3.16 *Area 14.* Bomb Crater

Long ago, from a country far, far away, a small nuclear bomb arrived, forming an impressive crater. The hole now collects and contaminates rainwater. Residual radiation in the air, soil and water cause passers-by to become ill. Remaining in the crater for more than fifteen minutes will result in nausea and headaches for two days. Remaining for more than two hours in the crater will result in incapacitating radiation sickness which will overcome the PC several days later. Recovery is as in recovery from incapacitation.

### 2.3.17 *Area 15.* Highway 45

This Old Reckoning highway is used frequently by army patrols. No one has ever maintained it, so the black-top has crumbled away to dust. Even so, it's one of the best roads around. Maximum speed on foot on the road is 5 kilometers per hour.

### 2.3.18 *Area 16.* Highway 55

This 4-lane divided highway cuts across the land like a scar. Although the steel-reinforced concrete is cracked and even buckled in places, most of the road remains intact. If the PCs decide to escape down this road, abandoning the good life with The Computer, they discover a mine field at the edge of the map. The army rarely patrols this from the ground, relying instead on flybots.

### 2.3.19 *Area 17.* The Only Bridge

The only bridge across the deep, swift, PC-drowning river is out. Pieces of it lie downstream, strewn along the river bank. The pilings and steel girders that remain will certainly give out under the weight of a curious PC.
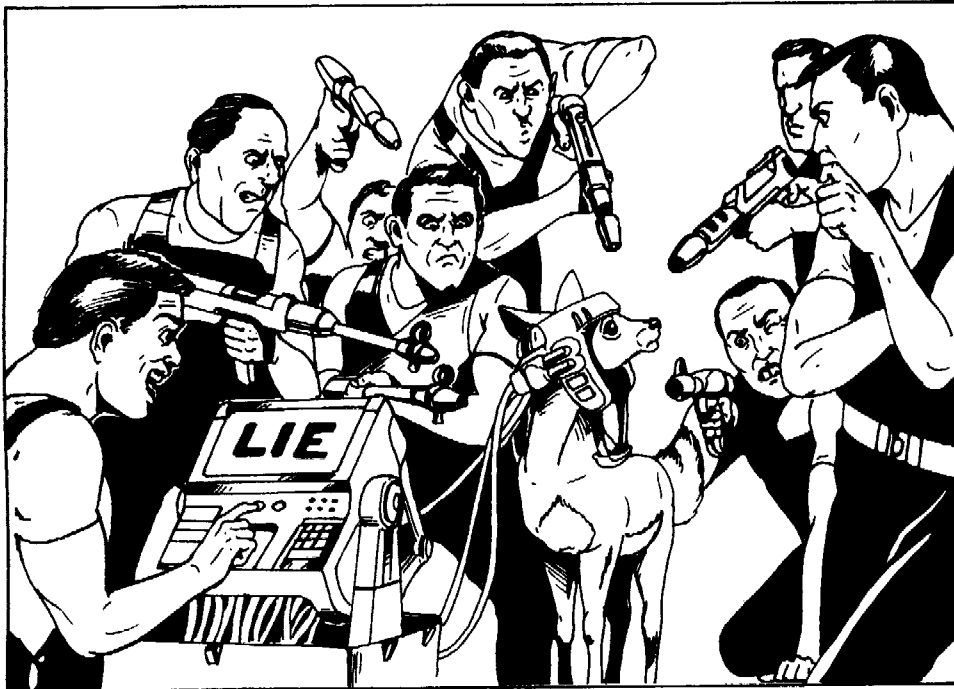
### 2.3.20 *Area 18.* Mountains

To dome dwellers such as the PCs, mountains are completely alien and threatening. Gaping chasms, towering walls, sheer edges and wisps of cloud and fog should strike terror into their little hearts. If they climb high enough, be sure to mention the cold, white, fluffy stuff.

The PCs' crawler cannot enter mountains. Maximum speed on foot in the mountains is 2 kilometers per hour. Every two hours the PCs spend in the mountains, run an encounter from the Mountain Arbitrary Encounter Table on page 20 of the pull-out section.

### 2.3.21 *Area 19.* Tainted Lakes

Although it looks clear and tastes sweet, the water in these lakes is poisonous. The commie savages that live around the lakes are immune to the poison's effects (the ones that weren't immune died). Not surprisingly, the PCs are not immune. If the PCs need a village to explore, use the savages in encounter 1 on the Forest/Hills Arbitrary Encounter Table for the village warriors. Toss in some women, children, old shamans and ramshackle housing and presto, you have a village. Unfriendly villagers invite visitors to a feast, then make them the main course. Friendly villagers invite visitors to a feast where most of the food is boiled or steamed in the lake water.

### 2.3.22. *Area 20.* Shangri-la

On a hill, tucked amongst some sheltering trees, is a hitherto undiscovered billionaire's A-frame mountain retreat. A pack of eight ravenous dobermans, descendants of the owner's original guard dogs, makes this A-frame its home — the major reason the place has yet to be reported. The house is packed with priceless Old Reckoning objects. However, none of the lights work and there is an odorless gas leak that will explode with the first spark, flame or laser burst, scattering the house, its contents and any trespassers across the hillside.

Feel free to place this house anywhere in the mountains so it's in the PCs' path.

### 2.3.23 *Area 21.* Hidden Road

Trees completely hide from view this broken, weed-covered, single-lane road. It leads from Highway 45 (the turn-off is grown over) to an old toxic waste dump (*see 2.3.24*). Four rusted, padlocked, chain-linked gates block the road at intervals.

### 2.3.24 *Area 22.* EPA Toxic Waste Dump

In a tiny valley surrounded by gentle hills are a whole series of colorful mounds and pools. In Old Reckoning times this valley served as a dumping ground for toxic wastes of all kinds, hence the many pretty colors. Have fun here describing the strange sights and arousing the players' curiosity.

PCs who become contaminated with the splendid assortment of poisonous substances have a life expectancy of 2D10 days. If contaminated PCs return to the Alpha Complex they face executions as commie agents for introducing these toxins to the Complex. Certain secret societies would be quite interested in some of these substances, and black market distribution would be gratifyingly profitable.

### 2.3.25 *Area 23.* Vulture Aerial Target Ranges

These forest areas are devoid of trees and pockmarked by numerous craters. Vulture Squadron pilots use these ranges to sharpen their already deadly aim with bombs and missiles. Coincidentally, a practice session begins a few rounds after the PCs wander into one of these areas. The Vulture pilots are tickled to have live targets for a change and pursue them beyond the range boundaries. After all, only exiles and commies would be running around a target range.

### 2.3.26 *Area 24.* Old Reservoir

Now mostly mud, this used to be a large reservoir that fed two huge pipes to the south. The pump house at the start of the pipes is rubble now.

### 2.3.27 *Area 25.* Pipes

A pair of huge above-ground water pipes that used to drain the old reservoir wind their way across the landscape. Dry and broken now, they provide shelter for all sorts of critters.

## 2.4 Ending the Mission

### 2.4.1 The Welcoming Committee

This mission may end in the Outdoors with the death of the last PC. However, some may survive to return to the dome. The moment they cross into the Free Fire Zone, whether on foot, crawler, or otherwise, sensors pick them up. The Computer dispatches an Armed Forces unit to further identify them.



*"Retrieval by skyhook is always an exciting experience, and perfectly safe."*

This welcoming committee consists of 20 troops, led by a Sergeant and an Officer, backed up by an Advanced Combot. All the men are riding in open-topped, armored 4-wheel drive autocars. On the NPC Roster, see Hotshots for the troops, Strike Force Trooper for the Sergeant and Strike Force Officer for the Officer. See Advanced Combot on the Robot Roster.

With a bull horn, the officer demands to know who the PCs are. He is in constant contact with The Computer. No matter what they say or who they claim to be, The Computer can't figure out who they really are. It orders the welcoming committee to disarm the PCs and "escort" them back to the dome.

When they reach Area 1, the RSB Armed Forces Staging Area, the PCs are held in custody while The Computer tries to track down who they are and figure out what they were up to. Injured PCs are given immediate medical attention by docbots. As one trooper explains to them, "If you turn out to be traitors, we want you looking your best at your execution."

### 2.4.2 The Briefing

One-by-one, the PCs are led away, handcuffed and interrogated by an army officer who wears no indication of his security clearance. Computer cameras monitor the interrogation, but the PCs can't tell if they're on or not. Meet privately for just a few minutes with each player to role-play the interrogation. Use this opportunity to debrief the PCs.

*Returning Without The CPU Core*

If the PCs did not return with the CPU Core, Nevo-U decides it's not worth his while to bail them out. The army promptly loses the PCs in the bureaucratic shuffle and they spend the rest of their days in prison, waiting for The Computer to decide to execute or release them. But The Computer has moved on to more important things.

Role-playing long waits in small cells isn't much fun, so bring out the clones for the third mission.

*Returning With The CPU Core*

If the PCs returned with the CPU Core container, the interrogator focuses on it. As long as all the PCs tell him it's radioactive isotopes, they're safe. If anyone says otherwise, the container is immediately opened to verify contents. Upon finding the CPU Core, the army summarily executes every member of the team and then does the paper work. Nevo-U himself barely escapes a swift Internal Security investigation, which only strengthens his resolve to avenge himself against Black-U (*see* **Mission 3**).

The same fate befalls the PCs, if the Armed Forces obtains a laser disk record of the mission from the team leader's helmet recorder, or discovers what they were doing in some other way. If the PCs try to implicate Squee-G or Gore-V, the crime of "Slandering a loyal Citizen" is added to their list of offenses.

If the PCs stick to the isotope story, Nevo-U quickly arranges for their release. Gore-V personally greets and further debriefs them, if necessary. Of course the PCs must account for all damaged and lost equipment, but Gore-V will be lenient in handling out reprimands and fines, and promises the PCs two weeks "on call" before their next mission.

Of course, just two days later... Mission 3.
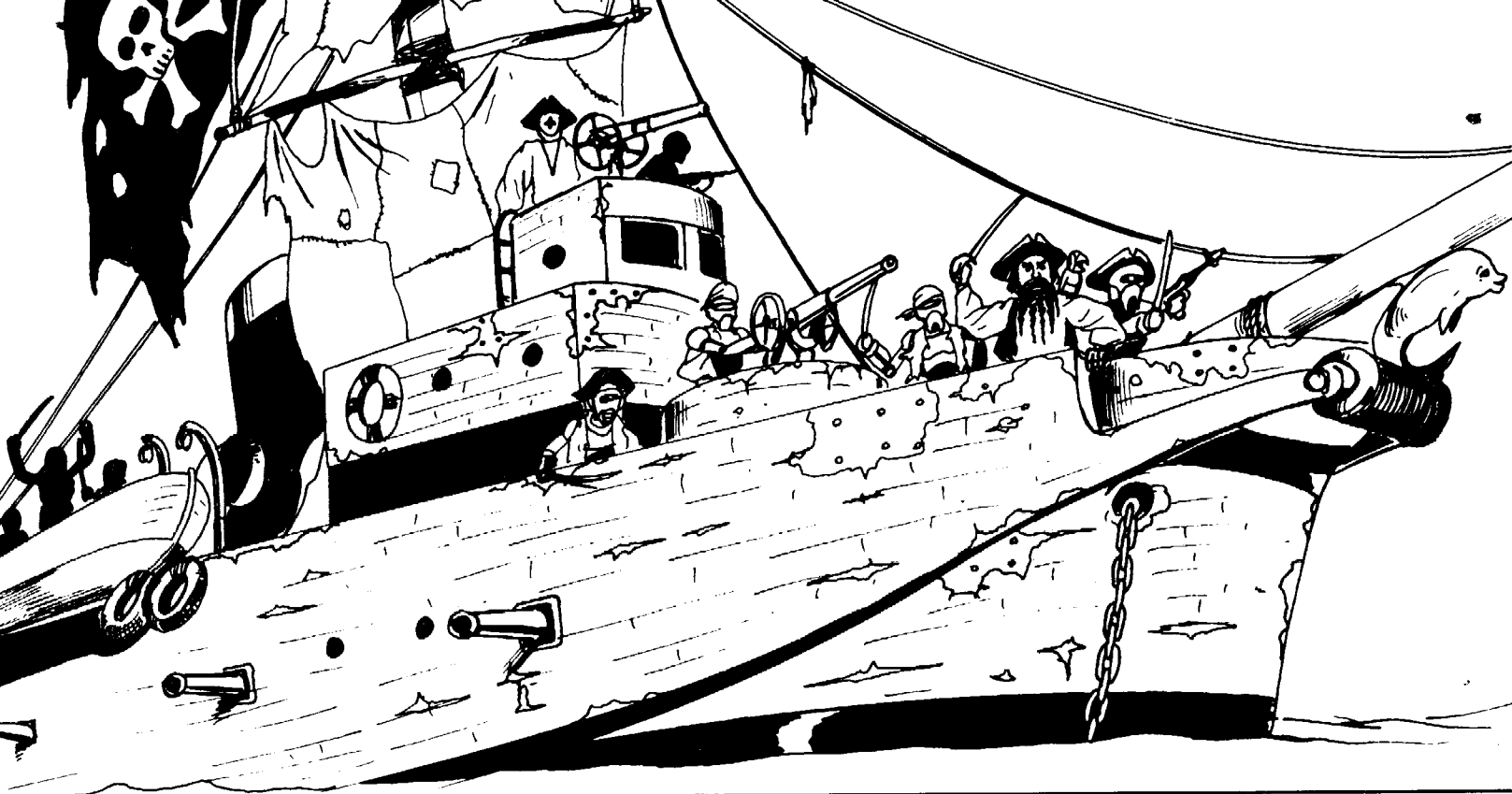
*Fifteen bots on a dead man's chest.*

# 3. MISSION THREE: THE FINALS

## 3.1 Mission Summary

Even as the PCs were on Mission 2, Nevo-U was planning his strike against Black-U. Nevo-U is angered that Black-U finked to The Computer and caused the destruction of the weather station and his minicomputer. Worse yet, Black-U has pulled ahead in the tournament. The only way Nevo-U can win is to eliminate Black-U.

During the two days between Mission 2 and the alert for Mission 3, scores of Nevo-U's Program Group clerks burn the midnight oil arranging, checking and double-checking all the details. As soon as the necessary bribes, intimidations and covers are taken care of, Nevo-U puts his team (the PCs) into action.

They cross into TJC sector disguised as HPD & Mind Control workers, then bluff their way into the TJC reservoir. Once there, they must ride out on jet-skis to assault Black-U's stronghold, an ancient fireboat moored in the reservoir. About as crazy as they come, Black-U has converted his ship to resemble a pirate ship, and crewed it entirely with special Pirate Bots. The PCs must overcome these bots before they can take on the First Mate Bot and Black-U-BRD-5 himself.

## 3.2 Pre-Mission Briefing

### 3.2.1 Mission Alert

Strangely, the PCs do not receive their mission alerts directly from The Computer. Instead, Red clearance couriers track down each PC to deliver a sealed computer message (see below). If a character asks The Computer to confirm these orders, The Computer does so, thanking the character for his security consciousness and ordering him immediately to his briefing. Assign

the character 1 treason point for failing to heed an official Computer message.

**• • • MISSION ALERT! • • •**

**:If seal is broken, terminate courier.**

**:EXTREMELY URGENT!**

**:Rejoice, Troubleshooter! As a reward for diligence and loyalty, you are selected to serve as a personal bodyguard and escort for the entertainer Teela-O-MLY during her visit to RSB Sector. Although you will be on duty, you will have access to tomorrow night's show — normally reserved for GREEN clearance and above.**

**:Report immediately to RSB Sector Troubleshooter Headquarters for your pre-mission briefing and new uniform fitting.**

**:Stay Alert! Give thanks for The Computer's trust in you. Polish your equipment and bathe. The Computer and Teela-O-MLY are your friends.**

Teela-O'Malley's evening shows have quite a reputation, and she is visiting RSB Sector tomorrow. The PCs, however, won't come within kilometers of her. Knowing Black-U has informers, Nevo-U used Teela's visit and the above mission alert to gather his team without tipping off Black-U.

As usual, characters who don't report for their briefing are in big trouble.

### 3.2.2 RSB Sector Troubleshooter Headquarters

Teela's visit is the talk of the sector. The Vulture Squadron guards at the entrance check-

point talk of little else, all wishing they could see the show and meet Teela in person.

Once again, the PCs must turn over all weapons they are carrying. Security is tighter because several people have smuggled in weapons recently. Under the watchful eyes of the duty officer, each PC must pass through a metal detector and an old x-ray machine ("It's perfectly safe, bub, heh heh.") Unfortunately, today's R&D weapon cleaners are all rookies. Incompetent rookies. There's a 50% chance each weapon turned in will never fire again.

Once through the checkpoint, each PC is led to a small chamber. Inside, a robot measures the character for a "new formal jumpsuit and boots." In fact, the robot is fitting the characters for wetsuits and flippers. When the robot finishes, a guard escorts each PC to a secure lounge. While in the lounge, give each player a rumor from the General Rumor Table. (See page 4.)

Kay-O receives the following secret message from a high-ranking Computer Phreak. "Your cover is blown; the High Programmer's spy is going to eliminate you soon." Give Mort-O the following secret message from his Illuminati superior: "Make the spy feed false information to R&D about the Tech-dominated RSB Troubleshooter Headquarters."

After a suitable delay, two armed guards appear and escort the PCs to Briefing Room C.

### 3.2.3 Beginning the Briefing

The same four guards stand in the corners. Squee-G and Gore-V are already in the room, sitting at the podium, when the PCs arrive. The largest slug-throwing pistol the PCs have ever seen lies on the podium in front of Squee-G. The safety strap on Gore-V's shoulder holster is unsnapped. Both men are tense, and their

efforts to appear calm only make it more evident. Squee-G regularly consults his watch. Gore-V occasionally tilts his head, as though listening to the small device protruding from his right ear. (Gore-V is receiving mission information from Nevo-U as it becomes available.)

Squee-G takes roll call quickly. First he asks for each Troubleshooter by name and title. Then he points out glaring faults in the character's performance to date and reprimands the character, making it clear that such incompetence won't be tolerated again.

### 3.2.4 Choosing a Team Leader

Give the players an opportunity to elect a new leader, especially if several PCs have reported dissatisfaction with the present leader. If the team leader has been working out well you may veto the team's new choice. Of course, if he's working out too well....

Squee-G explains that in its vast wisdom and fairness, The Computer will let the team elect a new leader, if they want to. Squee-G then reiterates the leader's many responsibilities. Force the players to vote by secret ballot after three minutes of discussion, no more.

Only if a new leader is elected does Squee-G remember to tell the PCs that the additional leader pay program was temporarily suspended. All other benefits remain.



STAY ALERT.
TRUST NO ONE.
KEEP YOUR
LASER HANDY.

### 3.2.5 Assigning Special Mission Equipment

Once again, the wall behind the podium swirls into a giant Computer screen. At the same time the room lights dim. "Pay close attention," orders Squee-G. From the film that follows and the special mission equipment, the PCs should realize the task ahead of them is not related to Teela O'Malley. If anyone asks about her, Squee-G responds with a quick reprimand to stop dreaming and pay attention.

An HPD & Mind Control training film appears on the screen, narrated in one of The Computer's deep, authoritarian voices. The film explains how to change water filters in large water-systems. A team of workers wearing distinctively ugly HPD & Mind Control coveralls performs the task at a domed reservoir outlet to the accompaniment of a full orchestra. The filters are round steel cages, about two and one half meters tall, filled with a porous material, and appear quite heavy. The reservoir, which is several kilometers across, is truly awe-inspiring. PCs who have not been outdoors and seen rivers or other large bodies of water should make easy insanity checks upon realizing so much water exists. Most citizens have no reason or opportunity to learn to swim, so large bodies of water are particularly frightening.

When the film ends, the lights come up and an equipment list appears on the screen. Much of the equipment will be unfamiliar to the characters, though they should recognize some of it from the training film. As per regulations, characters must sign for all equipment. The italicized notes are for your information only.

---

**MISSION 3 EQUIPMENT LIST**

6 Ugly HPD & Mind Control Worker Coveralls With Insignia That Reads: "Reservoir Maintenance"

6 Tool Boxes emblazoned with HPD & Mind Control Insignia

6 Wet Suits, Grey With Orange Trim, One Sized To Each Team Member

6 Pairs Flippers

6 Bright Orange Vests With Handles[1]

6 Weight Belts[2]

3 Slugthrowers

9 10-round Clips of Armor-Piercing Slug Ammo

9 10-round Clips of Solid Slug Ammo

1 Energy Pistol With Five 5-Round Reloads

2 Laser Rifles (Five Orange Barrels Apiece)

1 Cone Rifle[3]

20 Armor Piercing Cone Rifle Shells

20 High Explosive Cone Rifle Shells

2 Boxes of 20 High Explosive Grenades

6 Rope Ladders With Grapple Hooks On One End

1 Model V Docbot

2 Suits of Kevlar Armor With Mylar Coating

6 Sealed Filter Crates, Each 2x1x1 Meters, Weighing 250 Kilograms, Wheels On Bottom[4]

2 Empty Filter Crates

2 Blobs of Plastic Explosive With Timer[5]

[1] Inflatable life jacket will support 1 person.

[2] Life jacket will not support character wearing weight belt.

[3] Comes with voucher authorizing assigned character only to operate this Blue clearance weapon.

[4] Each crate actually contains one jet-ski (see 3.2.7 for details).

[5] Roll on column 15 of the Damage Table for the effects of the blob's explosion. Timer can be set from 1 second to 60 seconds only (alterations are possible with demolition skill.)

---

### 3.2.6 The Mission Assignment

Gore-V stands to give the team their mission assignment. He's upset, nervous and sweating. He knows Nevo-U's plan, and realizes if Black-U finds out, the team could walk straight into an ambush. But that isn't worrying Gore-V. He's afraid all the activity will expose Nevo-U, and consequently himself. He half-suspects one of Black-U's assassins is planting explosives in his residence even now. Read the following text aloud to the players.

Gore-V's icy voice is strained, his expression grim. "Troubleshooters, I will be brief — and I will be honest with you, because you deserve it. This will be your final mission. You can count on support from me, Tech, and The Computer right to the end."

He pauses, touching the pistol in his

---

holster before continuing. "Through patient and diligent work, The Computer has located one of the most dangerous traitors in all Alpha Complex. He calls himself Captain Beard, or something similar. We've been after him for years, but he's as slippery as vat gruel. If we don't strike immediately he'll escape again, to undermine the well-being of thousands of loyal citizens. Stopping him is your job."

He surveys each of you, as though doubting your ability. "We can't send in a high clearance team. This traitor has informers everywhere; movement by a high clearance team would certainly tip him off. He isn't expecting you, so surprise will be on your side.

"He's hiding out in the middle of TJC Sector, using HPD & Mind Control for cover. They don't even know he's there, and their security is so lax we don't dare tell them. You'll go in disguised as a Filtration Replacement Team and blow up this traitor's stronghold. Fiber-O will transport you to the site. The vehicle officer and one other person will follow him with the filters in a flatbed autotransport. You are all dismissed to pick up your equipment — except the team vehicle officer and team leader."

Gore-V will tolerate a few questions, but answers most by saying, "Your leader will be completely briefed; he'll inform you as necessary."

### 3.2.7 Private Briefing

After the other PCs leave, Gore-V meets with the vehicle officer and the team leader. Read the following text out loud to those players.

"Gentlemen, the less everyone knows before they need to, the less they can leak. However, the responsibility of knowledge is part of your job. I don't expect to repeat myself. The traitor you're after is hiding aboard a boat parked in the center of the TJC Reservoir. For your information, and this is classified, a boat is a vehicle designed specifically for movement on water. Anyway, you need to cross more than a kilometer of open water to reach him, and you need to move fast.

"The Computer has provided a way. Those six crates do not contain filters. They hold jet-skis — water cycles, if you will. A powerful water-jet propels these craft over water at amazing speed. They're easy to operate; a single joystick controls speed and direction. Start them by pulling sharply on the handle protruding from the engine casing. When the time comes, you must reveal this information to your teammates."

Gore-V then hands a set of autotransport keys to the vehicle officer and dismisses him, warning him to drive carefully with the jet-skis. Finally, Gore-V addresses the team leader alone. Read the following text out loud to that player.

"You're going to have to cross through the RSB/TJC Sector checkpoint. Fiber-O has the proper papers, but you'll never get through with all your weapons and gear. I suggest you load your equipment into the empty filter crates. Open them when you reach the

reservoir. Incidently, there's a smaller checkpoint leading to the reservoir area. Past that, Fiber-O will not proceed to the maintenance area; he'll pull into an unused roadhall. The alphanumeric door code there is 250624. Good luck."

## 3.3 The Mission

### 3.3.1 RSB/TJC Sector Checkpoint

The Computer closely monitors and regulates all intersector traffic. Consequently, intersector checkpoints, such as this one, are miniature fortresses. Laser cannons within armored pillboxes cover the four-lane "spines" that connect the two sectors. Guards and doberbots physically search vehicles while Computer monitors scan the passengers and check their papers.

The PCs approach the checkpoint during the off hours, so traffic is minimal and only a skeleton crew mans the checkpoint. When the PCs arrive, the line of spikes that usually blocks the roadhall is down, but flashing red warning signs order all vehicles to stop for inspection.

If the PCs stop, four GREEN clearance guards and a doberbot walk over and greet them. (Use Grip-G on the NPC Roster for the guards. See Doberbot on the Robot Roster.) The guards instruct the drivers to hold their papers up for The Computer cameras scanning the area. The doberbot sniffs around while the guards examine the vehicles. The PCs' papers pass inspection. As for the rest...

Role-play the guards, questioning the players about who they are, what they're doing, where they're going, what they're carrying, and so forth. Exploit any timid or careless responses. Here are some general guidelines:

1. If the PCs look like Troubleshooters (aren't wearing their HPD & MC disguises), the guards are instantly curious about their mission. Even though they outrank the PCs, they're just guards, and wish they led the more exciting life of a Troubleshooter in The Computer's service.
2. The guards try to confiscate all weapons carried openly. If the PCs are dressed as workers, the guards arrest them if they find any weapons.
3. If individual PC's stories don't match, the guards become suspicious.
4. If the plastic explosives are not sealed in a filter crate, the doberbot sniffs them out and goes wild, growling and snarling and clashing its steel jaws together. The guards try to arrest the PCs for possession of undeclared explosives.

If the PCs don't stop at the checkpoint, or run into difficulties that necessitate a fast getaway, let them slip by in a dramatic narrow escape. The laser cannons fire off a few rounds, but miss (unlikely, but exciting). Give the PCs a few pursuers to shake, a few tiny roadblocks to crash through, a few small security bots to run over, then surround them with combots and vaporize the whole bunch! You may console the players with the knowledge that their plastic explosives blow up, too, vaporizing most of the combots.

### 3.3.2 TJC Reservoir Checkpoint

A lone clone, Whimp-Y, works the late shift at this gate on the roadhall into the TJC Sector Reservoir. This roadhall sees little enough traffic during primary hours. During the late shift it's positively deserted. Whimp-Y is quite glad to have visitors.

Whimp-Y is reasonably gullible, and will accept any marginally-pausible story the PCs offer regarding the filters. However, this clone is also corrupt. After listening to the PCs, he frowns and says, "I don't know, this is highly irregular. There may be a fee involved here. I'll probably have to call this one in." He dawdles until bribed, shot, or threatened with a weapon.

If the PCs crash the gate or threaten him, he notifies his superior, one of Black-U's robots. The robot decides not to bother Black-U and arranges an ambush in the unused roadhall (see 3.3.3).

### 3.3.3 Unused Roadhall

As soon as he can, Fiber-O departs. The flatbed autotransport must stay in the roadhall, unless the PCs think of something else to do with it. If they really try, they might persuade Fiber-O to tow it. If they think about it, though, they should realize the autotransport is their only way back to RSB Sector.

The armored door here only opens if the proper code, 250624, is punched into the control panel. The door opens onto a short pier jutting into the TJC reservoir.

#### The TJC Reservoir

The reservoir is L-shaped and huge — several kilometers across, covered by a translucent roof. The pier is on the short leg of the "L," near the corner. The maintenance area, with the pump house and filter station, is at the end of the short leg, more than a kilometer away. A thin catwalk, bolted to the walls, runs around the entire perimeter. Pieces of the catwalk railing and floor are missing in places. The water is uniformly 15 meters deep. The water is warm and absolutely clean. It used to be crystal-clear, but Black-U adds blue and green dyes to make it look like ocean water.

#### Ambush by Pirate Bots

The PCs may have earned themselves an ambush. (See 3.3.2.) If so, three Pirate Bots greet the opening door with two rounds of slug fire, then charge with cutlasses. These bots are just part of Black-U's completely mechanical crew of various modified robots. All resemble humans, more or less, but these wear garments unlike anything else seen in Alpha Complex. They wear loose trousers and bright colored shirts (usually tattered). Many wear hats and scarves. Some even sport tiny pictures scratched into their surfaces. A few wear rings through their audio sensors. (See Pirate Bot on the Robot Roster.) These Pirate Bots fight to the end in characteristic buccaneer fashion.

#### Riding The Jet-skis

Once the pier is secure, the PCs must unpack their jet-skis, push them into the water, fire 'em up, and take off! Remember that initially only the team leader and vehicle officer know how to operate them. (See 3.2.7 for a description of the jet-skis.) Think of these vehicles as water motorcycles: fast, loud, exciting, and wet. They do float, but if they flip over (agility check every now and then), they are hard to right. The engine stops whenever the operator lets go of the control stick. Two persons can ride on one jet-ski (a driver and a gunner), but don't reveal this unless the PCs try it out.

Try to inspire the PCs with the excitement and adventure these vehicles offer. At the same time, reinforce their fear of drowning and their vulnerability to fire while on jet-skis. Any time a character attempts to maneuver his jet-ski in any way other than a wobbly straight line, an attribute check is in order. Determine which attribute and the level of difficulty according to the maneuver.

### 3.3.4 A Pirate Captain and His Ship

Black-U is a large, fearsome-looking man with a gigantic beard braided into long strands. A copper-finished Parrot Bot sits on his shoulder, squawking such nonsense as "walk the plank," and "feed the bird," while clanking its wings. (Incidentally, this bot neither flies nor walks. It just perches.)

Black-U's stronghold, a converted fireboat, floats in the center of longest part of the reservoir, out of sight of the pier and maintenance area. The Jolly Roger is no mere boat. A crew of 21 robots mans this 33-meter-long ship. Designed as a powerful ocean-going fireboat, the Jolly Roger now merely floats in place, permanently moored to the bottom of the reservoir. Most of its original equipment is no longer

*Dedicated Troubleshooter experiments with ramming maneuver.*
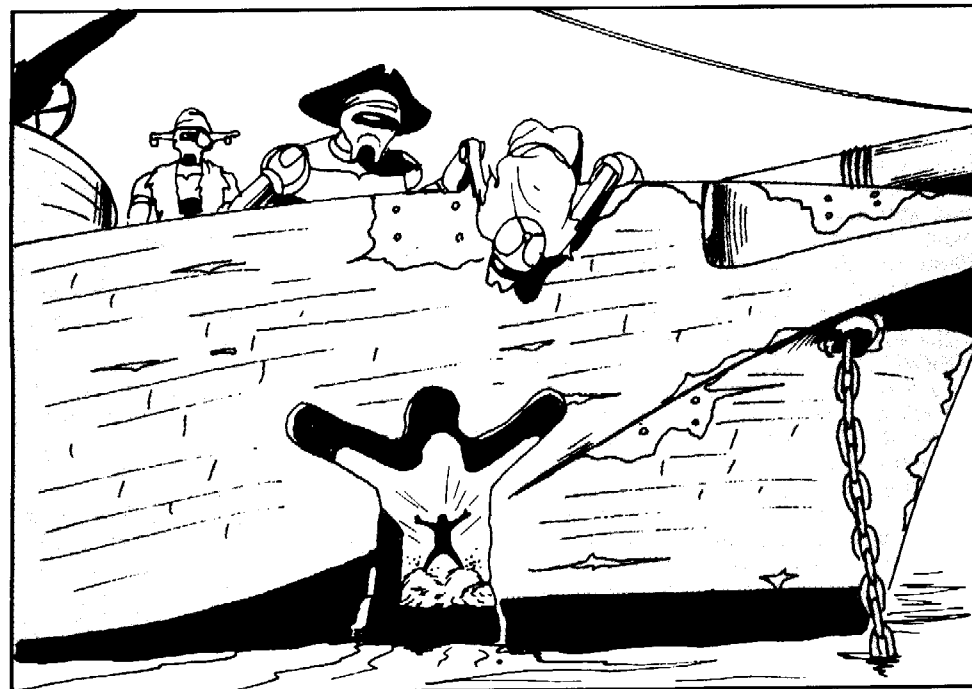
operational, but water-cannons and hoses are in mint condition.

Black-U has filled much of the ship with personal luxuries and sophisticated communications equipment for tapping into The Computer. He spends as much time as possible here, overseeing his many projects and directing his teams in the tournament. To protect this valuable asset, Black-U only allows robots on board, and then only those he has reprogrammed himself.

Obsessed with a few Old Reckoning pirate films he owns. Black-U converted his ship to resemble an old wooden sailing vessel. His conversion is only partly successful. The entire ship is painted to resemble wooden boards, but the rusting steel hull shows through in places where the paint is peeling. Three round, black cannon barrels poke out of each side of the hull, just above the water line. A tall steel girder, bolted to the ship's smokestack, serves as a mast. Welded near the top of the mast is a small platform (the crow's-nest). Above that hangs a black and white skull-and-cross-bones flag, Black-U's Programs Group emblem. Dozens of sewntogether sheets hang from cross poles on the mast, limp sails that have never known wind under the dome. A long boom juts from the bow, holding a carved figurehead above the water. A jumble of steel cables serves as rigging, connecting the mast, deck and boom.

The *Jolly Roger* is described in detail below (*see* **3.3.6**).

### 3.3.5 Assaulting the *Jolly Roger*

Black-U directs the defense of this ship from the bridge, issuing orders through a special combat named "First Mate." (*See* First Mate on the Robot Roster.) First Mate is big, mean and ugly. He's fanatically dedicated to Black-U and looks down on the other robots who serve him. From a distance, First Mate looks like a giant deformed man wearing a long overcoat, high boots and a three-cornered hat decorated with gold tassles. First Mate's slugthrower is modified to resemble an ancient flintlock pistol — it even belches black smoke every time it's fired.

The rest of the crew consists of 8 Pirate Bots and 12 Deck Swab Bots. (*See* Pirate Bot and Deck Swab Bot on the Robot Roster.) The Pirate Bots are described in **3.3.3**. The Deck Swab Bots do most of the work on the ship, hoisting and lowering the sails, swabbing the decks, and rowing Black-U to and from the maintenance area in a rowboat.

First Mate sounds a general alarm when the PCs are sighted rounding the bend in the reservoir. Three Pirate Bots immediately man the main water cannon on the forward deck and one mans the cannon on each bridge wing. Another Pirate Bot climbs to the crow's-nest with a telescope. Directed by two Pirate Bots, all the Deck Swab Bots crew the "10-pounders," six authentic-looking cannons beneath decks.

Black-U may not be much of a historian, but he puts on a good show. The 10-pounders do not actually fire projectiles. They're merely special effects machines. A speaker in each barrel produces a tremendously loud explosion when the gun is fired, followed by a big puff of gray smoke from a smoke generator. Other directional speakers simulate the scream of flying shells. The entire reservoir reverberates with the sound when the *Jolly Roger* fires a broadside. Most spectacular of all (this is Black-U's favorite part) are the water geysers that simulate splashing cannonballs. Literally hundreds of tiny but powerful special effects machines float

just under the surface to cause geysers all around the ship when appropriate.

The PCs, of course, should believe they are riding directly into cannon fire. After all, they see the puffs of smoke, hear the roar of the cannon and the screaming shells, and feel the spray from cannon balls slamming into the water. The *Jolly Roger* will fire four broadsides at the PCs if they approach directly, more if they take evasive action. When each broadside is fired, every player must roll 1D100. On a roll of 10 or less, a nearby geyser knocks over the PC's jet-ski. On a roll of 5 or less, a geyser errupts directly under the jet-ski, blowing it into the air and completely destroying it (the PC is not hurt).



When the PCs are within 200 meters of the *Jolly Roger*, the 10-pounders stop firing and the Deck Swab Bots prepare to repel boarders. Eight of them gather with the two Pirate Bots in the deck house under the bridge. In pairs, the other four prepare the two high-pressure hoses on the aft deck. All water cannons open fire when the PCs are in range.

The main water cannon's range is 150 meters (use column 6 on the damage table). Its crew is 50% under cover. The water cannons on the bridge wings have a 100-meter range (use column 5), and their crews are similarly protected. The firehoses have 50-meter ranges (use column 4), but those crews are completely exposed to fire. The crews can reel the fire hoses anywhere on the ship. The bots' base percentage to hit with the water cannons and hose are listed on the Robot Roster. PCs hit by the water cannon or hoses must make a difficult agility check or be knocked down when riding a jet-ski. If boarding the *Jolly Roger* or on deck, PCs make an easy agility check to avoid being knocked off the ship into the water.

The bot in the crow's-nest snipes at the PCs with his slugthrower as does First Mate from the bridge. Shouting orders and watching the battle, Black-U struts back and forth on the bridge, fully enjoying himself.

Concussion from grenades and cone rifle shells may blow robots high into the air to splash into the reservoir, even if they aren't damaged or destroyed. Impact of slugs (or captured water cannons, if the PCs get on board) may knock robots backwards over the railing. Not surprisingly, overboard bots sink like chunks of metal. However, all Black-U's robots are waterproof. Furthermore, a steel shaft runs from the bottom of the ship to the bottom of the reservoir. Overboard robots walk on the bottom to the shaft, then climb up to rejoin the battle. (Black-U devised this system so he could make robots

walk the plank without destroying them.) To the PCs, of course, Black-U will seem to possess an endless supply of robots. Note that damaged robots have a 20% chance of short circuiting and frying themselves if they go overboard or are hit with a stream of water.

Only armor-piercing ammo can pierce the outer hull and deck top. The blob of plastic explosive must detonate on the hull beneath the water line to have a chance of sinking the ship. The same pumps that run the water cannons can pump water out of the ship just about as fast as it pours in. A minor damage effect will sink the ship in 12 hours, unless Black-U can make repairs. A major damage effect will sink the ship in 6 hours and a destroyed effect sinks the ship in one hour. The Pirate Bot in the crow's-nest is looking for just such a threat, and will concentrate his fire on the PC with the explosive. On First Mate's order, Deck Swabs will jump overboard just to grab the blob off the hull on their way past.

Once the PCs are on board (if they get that far) First Mate directs the defense while Black-U retreats to his computer center below decks. It's up to you to coordinate the surviving robots to fend off the boarders. Neither Black-U nor First Mate will give or ask for mercy; all Black-U's prisoners walk the plank.

### 3.3.6 On Board the *Jolly Roger*

The following areas are depicted on Map 3. Descriptions of the *Jolly Roger* utilize naval terminology. *Forward* is toward the *bow*, or front, of the ship. *Aft* means toward the *stern*, or rear, of the ship. To a PC facing forward, *port* is on left, *starboard* to the right.

**Kids In a Candy Store**

As the PCs search the Jolly Roger they will discover numerous unfamiliar items. Some will be obviously valuable; some will be completely incomprehensible. Most will be profoundly treasonous. Describe the contents of the cabins and below-deck areas in neutral terms or by comparison to objects the PCs would find familiar in Alpha Complex. For example, an oscilloscope is "a metal box with a screen resembling a video monitor."

Any PC displaying knowledge of high-clearance or otherwise treasonous items (computer accessories, books, etc.) is liable to be reported by other loyal Troubleshooters. Drop more or less subtle hints about this if the PCs are apparently less than vigilant.

PCs may try to smuggle out items for sale on the black market, for their secret societies, or for their own entertainment. If this doesn't occur to them, drop hints about how attractive that computer hardware would be at the Computer Phreaks clubhouse.

PCs may also try to prove their loyalty to The Computer by destroying or confiscating treasonous items. Anyway, this is the best alibi when caught damaging or smuggling valuable property. The Computer is a sucker for passionate speeches about dedication to the highest principles, blah-blah-blah...

*Area 1.* Stern Ladder

Black-U's rowboat is tied to this ladder welded to the hull. In every other place, the deck is too high above the water for the PCs to reach without standing up on their jet-ski handlebars, an acrobatic feat of great difficulty. Pirate Bots should cluster around this ladder to resist the boarding party, taunting the PCs — "Harrrg, matey!" "C'mere, ye faint-hearted landlubbers" — in gravelly, sinister synthesized voices.

**Area 2.** Top Deck

Slippery when wet. The rusting steel deck shows through where the wood-grain paint has peeled or worn off. A railing surrounds the deck's outer edge. A small, locked hatch near the stern leads down to a hallway. A closet (2a), starboard of the smokestack, is filled with fire axes, fire extinguishers, buckets, mops and a 2-meter plank.

**Area 3.** Fire Hoses

A large shed on the top deck houses two large reels of fire hose and the valves to control them. These hoses are long enough to reach anywhere on the ship. Of all the bots, only First Mate is strong enough to operate one of these hoses by himself. The others work in pairs. For PCs, 30 strength points are required to fire the hose without being blown backwards.

**Area 4.** Smokestack and Mast

The *Jolly Roger's* engines fell apart years ago, so the smokestack isn't used. PCs can climb down the smokestack, to the engine room.

The smokestack does hold up the mast, though, and that's important to Black-U. The mast itself is a steel girder almost impossible to climb. However, a maze of cables runs from the edge of the deck up to the crow's-nest. Designed for powerful hands, the cables are not fun for PCs to climb and are slippery when wet. (Black-U learned the hard way that ropes don't always support robots.)

Dozens of sheets hang from two crosspieces on the mast. These sheets catch fire easily, but nothing else up there burns.

**Area 5.** Port Emergency Room

Long ago, when this fireboat was designed, emergency rooms were included to treat people injured in the fires the boat was fighting. Black-U converted this room into a garment factory. His bots' clothes, hats, and boots are sewn here, as well as the sails. The aft closet is filled with spare robot clothing. The smaller, forward closet contains a sewing machine and bolts of cloth.

**Area 6.** Starboard Emergency Room

This room is similar to the Port Emergency room. Black-U uses this room to regularly polish and waterproof his robots. He also uses tiny drills to scratch "tattoos" into their arms and backs. The only closet is filled with jars labeled "Beard's Own Polyurethane Robot Sealant." Wouldn't R&D or Corpore Metal find this unique substance interesting?

**Area 7.** Deck House

Small portholes in this large room can be used as firing ports, giving the defender 90% cover. A ladder against the aft wall leads up through a hatch in the ceiling to the bridge (Area 12). A ladder against the forward wall goes down through a hatch into the mess hall (Area 17), then the engine room (Area 32). Eight Deck Swab Bots and the two Pirate Bots will rally here to defend this important access to the lower decks.

**Area 8.** Booty

Lashed to the deck is a pile of ten treasure chests. Some of the chests are made of wood, but most are aluminum or plastic crates painted to look like wood. Ten thousand credits worth of fake jewelry, gems, electrical insulators, and gold pieces fill these chests. Each of these items is equally valuable in Alpha Complex — worth one credit per item.

**Area 9.** Cargo Hatches

These solid, very heavy doors open into the cargo holds (Area 26). A couple of rounds of abuse with massive objects or weapons fire will disable the door locks.

**Area 10.** Main Water Cannon

This water cannon is mounted on a raised platform that rotates to aim the cannon in any direction. A crew of three normally operates this cannon which has a range of 150 meters (column 6 damage).

**Area 11.** The Bridge

Large, armored windows give the bridge an excellent view forward and to the sides. A large, round wheel is set in the center of the bridge. Characters and robots can remove the handles on the wheel to use as clubs. A barrel, labeled "Rum," rests near a large captain's chair. The barrel contains stale water colored a reddish brown. A ladder against the aft wall leads down through a hatch to the deck house (Area 7).

**Area 12.** Bridge Wings

A small balcony opens off each side of the bridge. Railings provide 50% cover for anyone on the balcony. A small water cannon with a range of 100 meters is mounted on the end of each balcony.

**Area 13.** Chartroom

A large oaken table stands in the center of this room. A sextant (a real Old Reckoning antique), dividers, and rulers lie on the table beside an old, old map of the ocean off Bermuda. Other maps are rolled into plastic tubes hanging on the walls. These artifacts would be worth thousands of credits to secret societies or black market operators. If surrendered to The Computer, they would be evidence of true loyalty.

**Area 14.** Telecommunications Station

Black-U stays in touch with his many agents and The Computer through a complex network of scrambled UHF (Ultra High Frequency) radios. In contrast to most of the *Jolly Roger*, the controls here are absolutely up-to-date and functional. A curtain in the port wall leads to the central radio transmitters and receivers (Area 15). PCs from the Technical Services Group will drool over this stuff. So will black market entrepeneurs.

**Area 15.** Radio Transmitters & Receivers

This room is jammed with extremely high clearance radio transmitters and receivers. Wires lead up through the ceiling to antennas. Just knowledge of this equipment is treasonous below ULTRAVIOLET clearance. If The Computer knew Black-U owned these, it would crash a subsystem! Computer Phreak members should be informed that these treasures would earn them instant preeminent status in their secret society.

**Area 16.** Mess Hall

Rough tables and benches fill this room. Regularly, Black-U makes his bots sit here while he lectures, instructs and reprimands them.

**Area 17.** Gun Room

Wire-mesh hammocks hang from the ceiling in this dimly lit room. In shifts, Black-U's bots crawl up into their hammocks and "sleep" for several hours.

Three rough holes are cut into the hull on each side of the room. An ancient-looking cannon sits before each hole. A ramrod, brush and single cannon ball sit beside each cannon. (Since the cannon doesn't actually shoot anything, the robot crews just load and unload the same cannonball.) See **3.3.5** for an explanation of how Black-U uses these cannons.

**Area 18.** Cabin

These two mirror-image cabins each contain a bunk, a chest and a desk. The cabins have never been occupied, and contain nothing casually pilferable.

**Area 19.** Officer's Mess

Black-U uses this room primarily to watch old pirate movies and occasionally to hold meetings. A large table stands in the center of the room. Video screens pull down on each wall so Black-U can surround himself with pirates. On special occasions, Black-U sets up a replica 16mm movie projector and shows his preserved "original films." Black market value of the 16mm projector and film is approximately 1000 credits. To the Romantics, the value is 4000 credits.

**Area 20.** Electronic Workshop

Shelves full of reels of computer tape, boxes of computer disks, and packages of computer chips line the walls here. Soldering guns, oscilloscopes, calculators, circuit boards and complete set of miniature tools are scattered across a desk in the center of the room. With the right contacts, this stuff could fetch a fortune on the black market.

However, displaying knowledge of the functions of these devices and supplies is clear evidence of treasonous access to high clearance information. Describe the contents of the room as an ignorant child would view them. "There are clear wheels with long, brown, thin tapes wrapped around them, and large plastic donut-shaped objects in boxes. Some clear plastic bags contain small plastic boards with numerous bits of colorful plastic and metal attached in a meaningless pattern." PCs with appropriate skills (computers, electronics engineering, etc.) may receive more detailed descriptions.

**Area 21.** Captain's Lounge

This is probably the most luxurious room the PCs have seen or imagined in their lives. Deep, plush carpeting covers the floor here. An ornate chandelier hangs from the ceiling over a dark green billiard table. The curved rear walls are made of armored plexiglass, giving Black-U a fine view of the "sea." Bookshelves full of antique books, most of them fakes, line the rear walls. The purpose and function of most of these items should be unknown to the PCs. Who knows what they'll make of the billiard table.

**Area 22.** Captain's Quarters

This is Black-U's personal quarters, and it's worthy of a High Programmer. The walk-in wash room is especially well-equipped to keep Black-U's beard in awesome condition.

Black-U has decorated this cabin to resemble a movie pirate captain's cabin, with phony wood-texture paint, a simple bunk, several sea chests, nautical charts of the Caribbean, and a crude table and chairs. Several ample jugs marked "XXX" sit on and around the table. The jugs contains "Whippy Fun" (a bland vat beverage) laced with powerful stimulant and euphoric drugs. One drink will produce the equivalent of "roaring drunk" in any Troubleshooter.

Now you understand Black-U's extravagantly bizarre behavior. These drugs have turned Black-U's brains to applesauce. The Mystics would be very interested in these jugs; so would Free Enterprise, the Illuminati, Death Leopard, and any other secret society that could sell the drugs or use them in sabotage schemes.

**Area 23.** Computer Center

Coded modems, laser-disk drives, holographic color monitors, bubble memory tubes, bioconsoles, ink-jet printers and a host

of other computer peripherals fill this room floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall. This is the seat and focus of Black-U's power. He uses this equipment to tap into the Alpha Complex Computer and steal processing time, manipulate data, issue and modify orders, etc. Black-U controls his tournament teams from here.

If the PCs board the *Jolly Roger,* Black-U makes his last stand here. If he is losing he will destroy or disguise all evidence of treason that might be linked to him. He will never surrender.

Depending on the types of weapons used by the PCs, the fire-fight here may spare Black-U the necessity of destroying any evidence. Any stray missile or beam fire will destroy the computer here. The video and communications systems are all computer-coordinated, and will shut down completely when the computer is destroyed. The charts and reports may survive unless fire or explosives are used.

If the PCs can incapacitate Black-U in the first few rounds, they can capture the computer center intact. If Black-U lasts for more than two rounds, he will fire at the computer, disabling it, then swing his laser beam across the paper documents, setting them aflame. Tough luck.

But if the PCs manage to capture the computer center intact...

By observing the dozens of monitors on the walls of this room and the charts and reports hanging on the walls, the Troubleshooters may deduce the basic elements of the High Programmer Tournaments. The monitors follow the progress of various competing teams in the middle of other competitive events (sort of like a Wide Complex of Sports), while the charts and reports chronicle the results of earlier competition. If the PCs look around, they will find reports on the results of the competitions they took part in.

Throughout the electronic and paper records in this room may be found evidences of unspeakably high treason among the most powerful and trusted citizens of Alpha Complex. What can the PCs do with this evidence?

Reveal it to The Computer? How will it respond to such tragic betrayals? Who will The Computer believe? Lowly Orange Troubleshooters, or the citizens it has raised above all others in Alpha Complex?

Sell the information, or blackmail the High Programmers? A dangerous game, but one that might really pay off. No Illuminati would ever pass up such an opportunity.

Destroy the evidence, and hope that The Computer never realizes that its faithful servants have been exposed to such seductively treasonous influences?

Make sure the PCs are aware of the possible consequences of reporting, concealing, or destroying the evidence. No matter what they do, they'll probably get in trouble. Gently remind the PCs of this. Then it's just about time for The Computer's voice to suddenly appear on the com units, inquiring pleasantly for a mission progress report. "Well, uh, we... ehr... mmm... that is...."

*Area 24.* Anchor Winch

A 2-meter-wide capstan stands on the deck. The heavy anchor, like most of the ship, is just for show; the ship's hull is permanently moored to the bottom with steel cables. No treasure or monsters here. Keep moving.

*Area 25.* Anchor Storage

These two rooms are piled high with rusted

anchor chain. Not much black market demand for rusted anchor chain.

*Area 26.* Cargo Holds

Large hatches (Area 9) open into these holds. Both holds are empty. Nobody home. A big explosion in here will sink the ship in short order.

*Area 27.* Brig

Black-U maintains these four barred cells to hold prisoners until he has time for the pomp and festivity of a proper plank walking. Captured PCs can expect to spend some time here, reflecting and hoping for a rescue that will never come.

*Area 28.* Crew's Head

Black-U converted this large washroom to accommodate his robot crews. He lubricates, tunes up, recharges and repairs bots here. A single Pirate Bot, its legs off for repairs, sits on a bench, unable to join the battle. It will, however, shoot any PC who opens the door.

*Area 29.* Galley

One of the Deck Swab Bots is specially programmed to prepare and serve Black-U the fine cuisine High Programmers expect. Since the PCs have never seen food prepared in less than kilolitre quantities, they won't recognize this room for what it is.

*Area 30.* Pantry

As in the galley, the PCs should recognize very few, if any, of the fine herbs, spices, grains, fresh fruits and other delicacies stored here. However, a successful Identify Wild Foods skill check will reveal the nature of these substances, and may suggest their black market value.

*Area 31.* Freezer

Hanging from the ceiling of this walk-in freezer are legs of lamb, whole turkeys and a side of beef (from the clone-research labs). To the PCs, such wretched carcasses could only be the victims of torture, hanging in a morgue. The shock of learning this stuff is food may stun characters for several rounds.

*Area 32.* Engine Room

Two big diesel engines sit side-by-side here amid a jumble of cables, pipes, hoses and wires. The only functioning pieces of equipment here are two high-pressure water pumps that run the water cannons and hoses, as well as pump out any water that may enter the ship.

*Area 33.* Underwater Shaft

A hatch in the floor opens into a shaft to the bottom of the reservoir. Overboard robots climb up the shaft to return to the ship.

*Area 34.* Nuclear Generator

Black-U provides power for the electronic devices and the pumps with a compact nuclear generator. It is self-regulating and very, very stable. However, a large enough explosion (perhaps the plastic explosive blob?) could breech the shielding and fill the ship with deadly radiation. No one gets out alive, but the mission is a total success.

# 3.4 Ending The Mission

## 3.4.1 The Welcoming Committee

Once again the PCs may end the mission for you very conveniently by dying. If you were too lenient with them, some may survive and escape.

If the PCs win the battle, either by sinking the *Jolly Roger* or by eliminating all resistance on board, ten boatloads of Internal Security frogmen arrive and arrest all the survivors. In

any case, the distraction of the battle allows Nevo-U to once again take the tournament championship. He is so pleased by this outcome (and by wiping out his rival Black-U in the process) he quickly makes the arrangements to extradite arrested PCs from TJC Sector Internal Security.

Some of Black-U's bots may survive and walk out of the reservoir on the bottom. They would undoubtedly dedicate the rest of their lives to tracking down the PCs and eliminating them. Throw one into your next adventure to add even more paranoia.

## 3.4.2 The Debriefing

Two days after their return, Gore-V personally debriefs the team survivors in Briefing Room C. Review section 18.8 in the **Gamemaster Handbook** before conducting the debriefing with your players.

Gore-V commends, reprimands, praises, and fines the characters according to the reports, records, and statements available from the characters. He collects the laser-disks from the team leader. Remember that the characters must account for all equipment assigned to them. When assigning points and raising security clearance, take into account all the missions the PC participated in. The performance of deceased clones is also relevant, since guilt/praise by association is an established principle of **Paranoia.**

At the end of the briefing, Gore-V announces that the Special Troubleshooter team is disbanded, and all the PCs will be reassigned to their previous jobs. He wishes them loyal and productive existences.

## 3.4.3 Special Invitation

Nevo-U is always on the lookout for ingenious, devious, and lucky characters, particularly if they have incriminating evidence of his treason and the good sense to keep quiet about it. If one or more of the PCs are such characters, Nevo-U conducts a full investigation into their background and personality. If they seem safe and useful, Nevo-U instructs Gore-V to offer them a place in his Programming Group. Changing secret societies is extremely rare, so such an opportunity should reveal to the PC the magnitude of the Group's power. If he accepts, the PC can become a double agent in his old secret society, or receive a new identity. In either case, his ex-secret society will probably come back to haunt him.

## 3.4.4 "And the Grand Prize Winner Is...."

If the PCs have evidence of the treasonous practice of High Programmer Tournaments, and they try to peddle that evidence to The Computer, secret societies, or the black market, roll 1D100.

**01-10** — Things don't work out. Activate clones.

**11-90** — It could have been worse. After a brief period of anticipation and terror, it becomes obvious that nothing important comes of their efforts. Better luck next time.

**91-00** — Things work marvelously. Promote the PCs to a higher security level and make them fabulously wealthy. Then arrange for an extended and dramatic public treason trial which makes them an example of the Commie corruption of even the most loyal citizens. Teela O'Malley personally visits them in their cells before the gala execution. There isn't a dry eye in the house.

# VAPORS DON'T SHOOT BACK

West End Games, Inc.
251 West 30th St.
New York, NY 10001

:Welcome to the 84th Annual High Programmer's Invitational Tournament. This year the action should be hotter than ever, as teams from 211 Alpha Complex sectors compete for the coveted Hilton Ashtray Trophy, the highest achievement in intra-complex sports competition.

:Last year's Grand Prize Winner, the High Programmer Nevo-U-MYN, has selected you to defend his title. Aren't you proud? Many other High Programmers will be attempting to defeat you, but Nevo-U has every confidence that you will persevere. It is not a good idea to disappoint a High Programmer.

:Incidentally, this competition is extraordinarily illegal. It is suggested that you do not mention it to The Computer, as this might get the High Programmer in trouble. People who get Nevo-U in trouble tend to wind up as litre quantities of vat liquid. The High Programmer is not a nice person.

:So get on out there and win this one for Nevo-U! He's counting on you. Aren't competitions fun?

Copyright © 1985, West End Games, Inc.

"PARANOIA" and "VAPORS DON'T SHOOT BACK" are West End's names for its science fantasy roleplaying game and supplement, TM applied for.

***Vapors Don't Shoot Back*** is an Orange Clearance *Paranoia* adventure for 2 to 6 players, plus Gamemaster. The adventure contains three missions, in which the fearless (well, sort of) Troubleshooters are once again pitted against the forces of evil, suspicion, stupidity and ignorance as they attempt to carry out contradictory, incomprehensible, and usually lethal instructions from The Computer and the High Programmer.

This package contains a 32-page illustrated Gamemaster booklet complete with all of the information necessary to run the adventure smoothly and easily, including an 8-page pullout section with maps, encounter tables and player character cards. The inside of the adventure's cover provides the non-player character and robot roster for the adventure; this cover is detached from the booklet and can be used as a stand-up screen to keep unauthorized personnel from viewing restricted information.

Recommended for ages 12 and up

ISBN-0-87431-026-1

#80102

0  18874 80102