

STAR WARS®

GOROTH

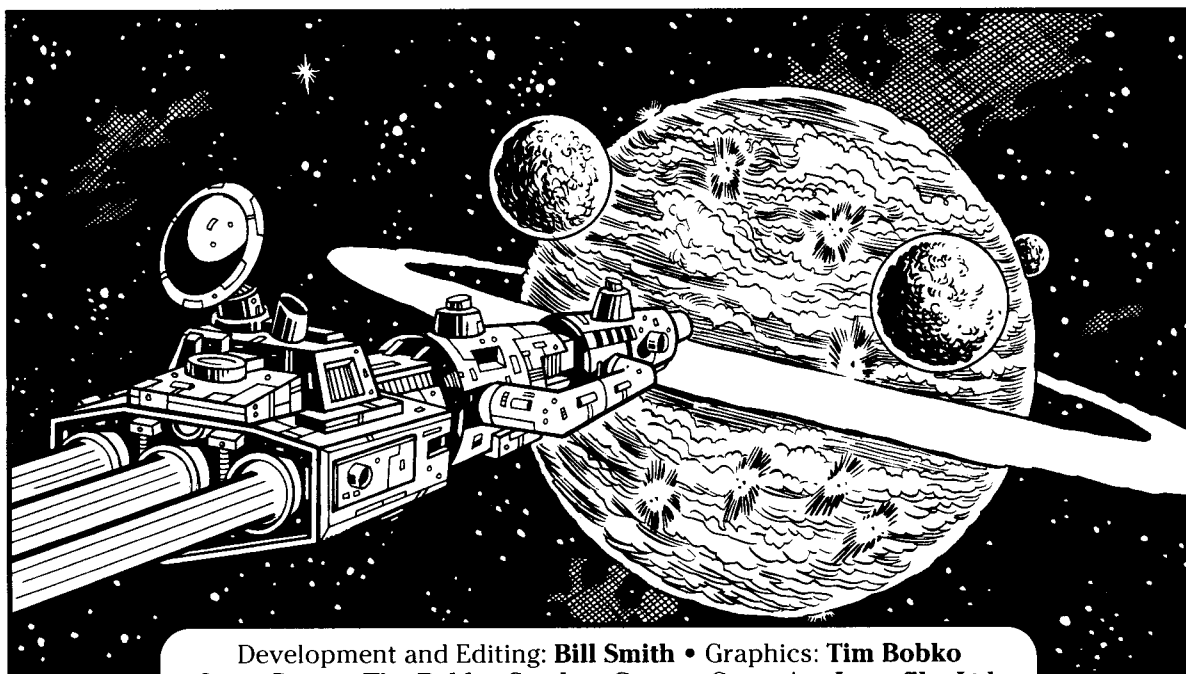


SLAVE OF THE EMPIRE

STAR WARS®

GOROTH SLAVE OF THE EMPIRE

by Nigel D. Findley



Dan & David Day

Development and Editing: **Bill Smith** • Graphics: **Tim Bobko**
Cover Design: **Tim Bobko, Stephen Crane** • Cover Art: **Lucasfilm Ltd.**
Interior Art: **Dan and David Day, Mike Vilardi**

Publisher: **Daniel Scott Palter** • Associate Publisher/Treasurer: **Denise Palter**
Associate Publisher: **Richard Hawran** • Senior Editor: **Greg Farshtey**
Editors: **Miranda Horner, Peter Schweighofer, Bill Smith, Ed Stark** • Art Director: **Stephen Crane**
Graphic Artists: **Tim Bobko, Steve Brown, Tom O'Neill, Brian Schomburg**
Sales Manager: **Bill Olmesdahl** • Licensing Manager: **Ron Seiden** • Warehouse Manager: **Ed Hill**
Accounting: **Karen Bayly, Wendy Lord, Kimberly Riccio** • Billing: **Amy Giacobbe**

Published by



RR 3 Box 2345
Honesdale PA 18431

40098

Introduction

Today, looking back on the years of the Old Republic, before the emergence of the Empire, it is all too easy to see a halcyon era, the kind of unalloyed “Good Old Days” recalled by people distressed with the present and intimidated by the future. The galaxy was peaceful then. The quadrillions of sentient beings of the Republic enjoyed order and security through a kind of “Pax Galactica.”

So most people believe, at least. Unfortunately — as is so often the case — the truth is somewhat less simple and less reassuring than the comfortable fallacy. Yes, it is true that overall the galaxy was at peace during the millennia of the old Republic.

The galaxy is vast, however, and historians are forced to adopt a galactic perspective if they want to make sense of it. On a galactic scale, the Republic era was one of peace. But, when one uses a galactic scale, it is all too easy to lose sight of “irrelevant” details — like individual systems. Small and isolated “brush-fire” wars sparked to life, burned for years or decades, then sputtered out. Semi-autonomous “provinces” strove with their neighbors for territory, resources and influence; colony worlds rebelled, struggling to throw off the yoke of what they saw as oppression; traditional rivals and new enemies tried to settle with turbolasers and concussion missiles what could not be settled through diplomacy.

Most of these outbreaks of violence were so small as to be unworthy of notice from a galactic perspective. What does one world, or one system, really matter among the millions of worlds in the Known Galaxy?

Except to those caught up in these conflicts, of course. To historians and galactic political scientists, they matter not at all. To the victims, they matter a great deal.

The planet Gorothe is one of those forgotten worlds unlucky enough to fall victim to an “unimportant” war. More than four millennia ago, it was a rich prize coveted by both sides in a regional “border skirmish.” When the two sides realized that neither would be able to claim the resources of Gorothe unchallenged, each came to the same terrible conclusion: if they could not have Gorothe, then no one would.

Four thousand years have passed. The two factions which fought over Gorothe — and eventually came to virtually destroy it — have vanished in the flood of history. The world of Gorothe has managed to rise from its own ashes. Its inhabitants have begun to rebuild the civilization that was blasted back almost into the neolithic age.

And now, once more, Gorothe finds itself and its resources coveted by two foes: this time, the Empire and the Rebel Alliance. Gorothe represents a resource that each faction dearly wants, yet is unwilling to see possessed by its foe.

Will Gorothe again be caught between the hammer and the anvil of war?

Gorothe: Slave of the Empire

Welcome back to the *Star Wars* universe!

Gorothe: Slave of the Empire is a supplement for *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*. It describes a new star system, and a new world, that has suddenly assumed surprising significance to both the Galactic Empire and the Rebel Alliance.

This book includes all the information *Star Wars* gamemasters need to incorporate the Gorothe system and its dominant species into their campaigns.

Goroth Prime

Type: Arid volcanic wasteland
Temperature: Hot
Atmosphere: Type II (breath mask suggested)/Type III (breath mask required) (variable; see below)
Hydrosphere: Arid
Gravity: Standard
Terrain: Wastelands, volcanic mountains, deserts, shallow poisoned oceans
Length of Day: 36 standard hours
Length of Year: 300 local days
Sapient Species: Gorothites (N), Humans
Starports: 2 stellar class, 3 limited service
Population: 500 million
Planet Function: Hyperbaride mining, homeworld
Government: Officially P'Dar'Ken (planetary council) but de facto Imperial Colonial Governor
Tech Level: Space
Major Exports: Hyperbarides
Major Imports: High technology, foodstuffs
System: Goroth
Star: Goroth Alpha (red-orange)

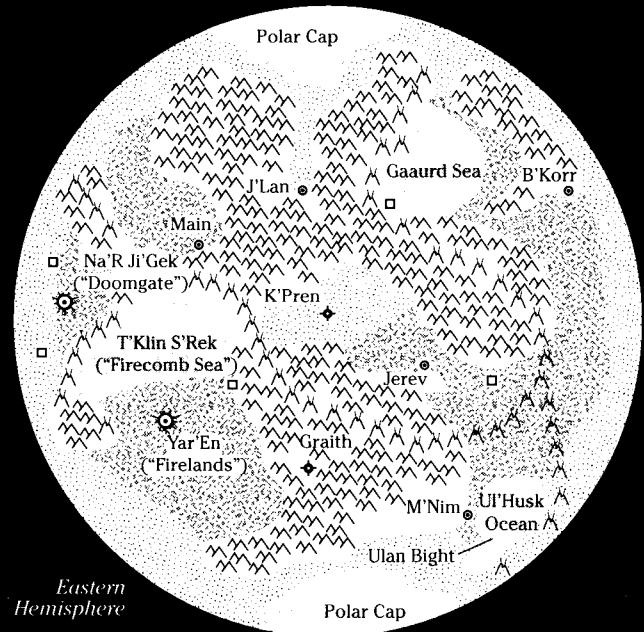
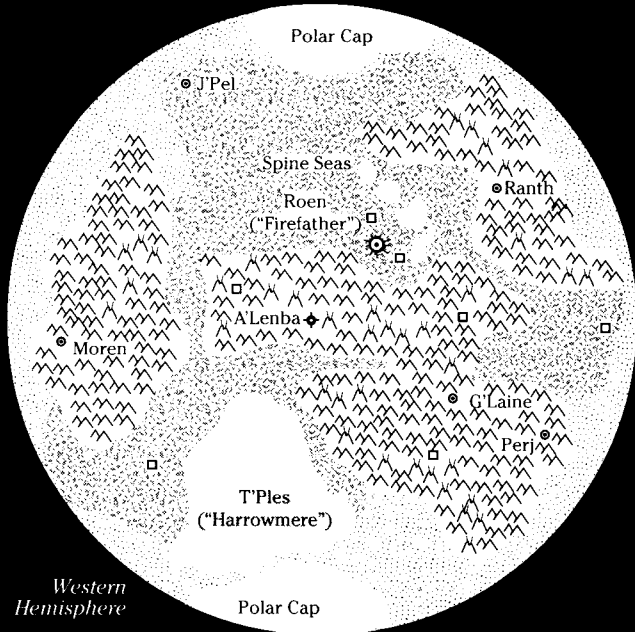
Orbital Bodies:	Name	Planet Type	Moons
	Oris	nickel-iron terrestrial	0
	Goroth Prime	arid volcanic wasteland	3
	Denava	gas giant	6
	Denbalen	gas giant	7
	Goroth Beta	brown dwarf	0

World Summary

Goroth Prime — known to the Aqualish as “Celleballen” (“Wasteland”) — appears from space to be a blasted cinder of a world. It seems perpetually wrapped in thick, reddish-brown clouds that roil and churn. Titanic static discharges within the clouds are so brilliant that they can be seen from thousands of kilometers above the planet’s surface. A tenuous ring — actually megatons of planetary crust blown into orbit by asteroid impacts four millennia ago — girdles the planet.

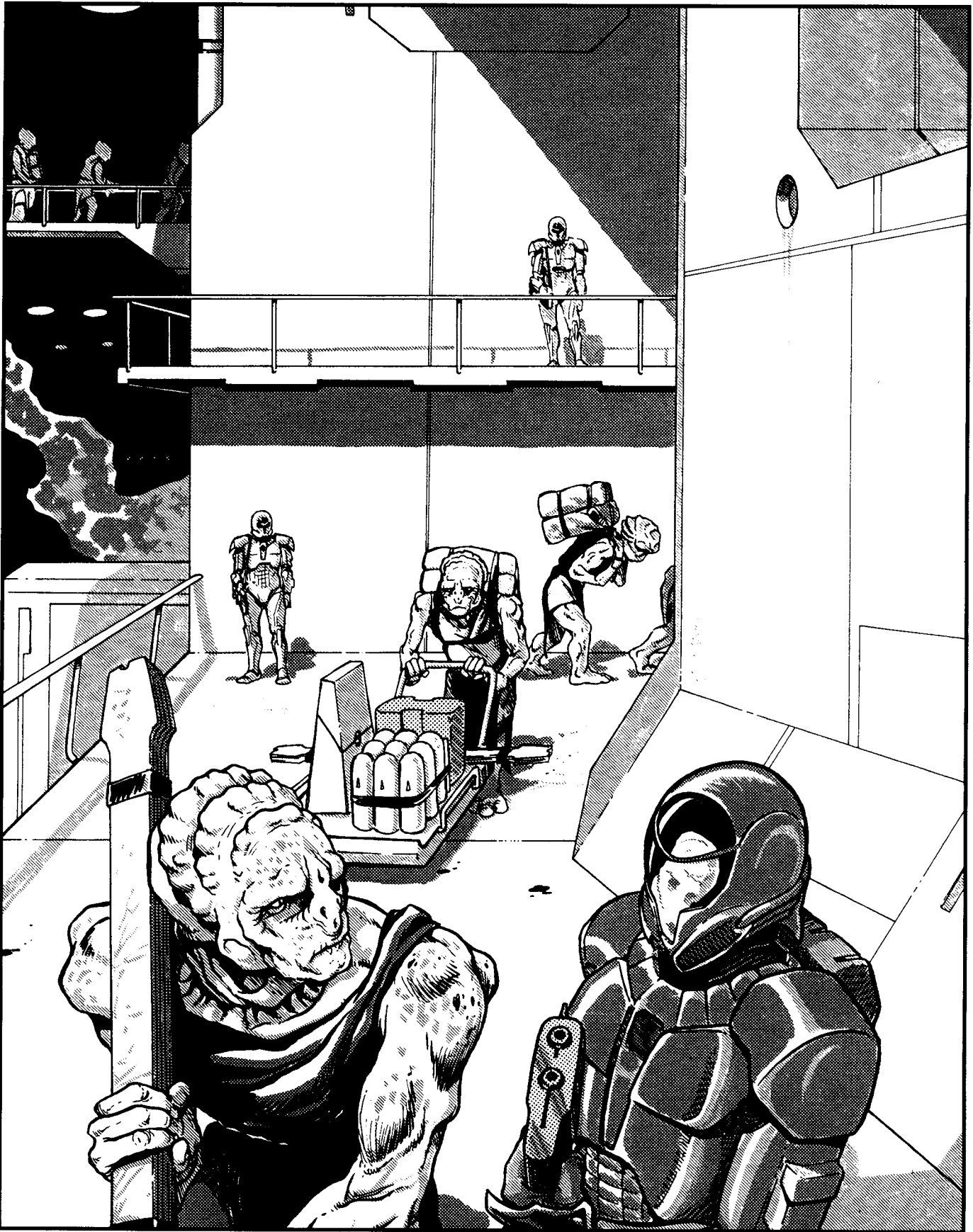
Goroth Prime is a major source of hyperbarides (super-heavy stable elements) and is thus of great importance to both the Empire and the Rebel Alliance. Goroth Prime has been deemed to be a “protectorate-colony” — Imperial terminology for an annexed world — and the native sentients to be an “indigenous labor pool.” In other words, slaves.

The Goroth system is so far off the normal hyperspace routes that it is expensive — even as the Empire measures such things — to maintain an adequate garrison and to extract the hyperbarides that make Goroth valuable. For this reason, the Empire has opened the world to the corporate sphere. Currently, several major interstellar corporations vie with each other to exploit the world, all the while trying to avoid bringing unwanted Imperial attention upon themselves.



Planet Log Terrain Key

Volcanic Badlands	Craters	Water	Spaceport
Desert	Mountains	City	Hyperbaride Plant
Ice	Volcano		



Mike Vilardi

Chapter One

History

Each of the half-billion inhabitants of the world of Gorothis knows that modern war is not the glamorous, exciting panorama one might come to expect from Imperial recruiting ads. It is bloody, and lethal, and the wounds it causes are not limited to the combatants — or even to those who were alive, or whose parents were alive, when a particular battle took place.

The world of Gorothis is a relative newcomer among worlds that are home to sentient life. According to native xenobiologists, life arose on the planet Gorothis more than five billion years ago, but remained primitive until “recently” (cosmologically speaking, of course). The semi-sentient ancestors of today’s Gorothisites emerged less than a million years ago, and true civilization gained a foothold on the world less than 10,000 years ago.

Gorothisite civilization developed along lines common to many other species. From simple hunter-gatherer bands, the natives quickly discovered the value of agriculture. Small farming villages rapidly grew into burgeoning cities (although they maintained the structure of the farming villages; these cities simply had much larger populations). Gorothisite civilization advanced to the feudal level and then stopped.

During this period, the planet of Gorothis was almost astoundingly fertile, a temperate world rich in plants, animals and valuable resources. It was perfect for the development of a sentient species. The climate was benign, there were few predators, and food was abundant. The Gorothisites quickly learned how to maximize their yields from agriculture and animal husbandry. To supplement their diets, they harvested the abundant fish and other forms of marine life that filled the warm, shallow oceans. Thus it is not surprising that the dominant religion of the time considered the world of Gorothis to be a kind of “terrestrial paradise,” entry into which the Gorothisites had earned through good deeds in previous incarnations.

There was one “serpent” in this paradise — for

reasons that exogeologists have yet to fully understand, the crust of Gorothis has always contained a relatively high concentration of hyperbarides. “Relatively” is the key word here. At the time, concentrations of hyperbarides in the crust stood at levels of one part per quadrillion. Still, in comparison to most terrestrial planets — which contained no hyperbarides whatsoever — these concentrations were abnormally high. The crust was also rich in various valuable heavy metals.

Hyperbarides are cytotoxic agents — highly poisonous to life-forms whose metabolism is based on a carbon-oxygen chemical economy (and to certain other life-forms as well). Poisonous, too, are most heavy metals. All forms of life on Gorothis had evolved in the presence of trace quantities of hyperbarides and higher levels of heavy metals, however, and thus had an innate resistance to these elements’ poisonous characteristics. Thus, while the food crops that sustained the Gorothisites would kill a Human over time, the natives were totally unaffected by these toxins.

The Republic Era

The Gorothis system is located well off established hyperspace trade routes in the backwaters of the Mid-Rim region of the galaxy, just within the boundaries of “The Slice.” Hyperspace travel in this region of space — labeled on star-maps as the Trans-Nebular Sector — is complicated by the presence of several nebulae. These facts combine to make it very unlikely that any starship would “stumble upon” the Gorothis system by accident. Still, given enough time, even the longest of odds will eventually come up.

That statistically unlikely discovery occurred some 8,000 years ago, when Corellian “traders” (pirates) blundered into the system. Once the Corellians were confident they had evaded the Republic customs frigate on their tail — the reason they had been jumping through this re-

gion of space in the first place — they took the time to scan the system they had discovered. When they learned that the second planet of the system was home to a sentient species, they realized they had discovered something of immense value: a planet-sized market for the “trade goods” they carried aboard their vessel.

For their part, the Gorothites were politely interested when the Corellian ship landed. While their technology was centuries away from allowing them to visit the other planets in their system, the Gorothites had deduced the nature of the different “lights” that moved through their night skies. Further, they had come to suspect that some of those lights might be homes to creatures more or less like themselves. The Corellian traders were a touch disappointed that the planet-bound locals did not treat them like gods. But that disappointment passed when they found the Gorothites willing to buy any and all technological items the traders carried. Following standard operating procedure (for them), the traders accepted simple goods of local manufacture in return for high-tech items like comlinks, datapads and macrobinoculars — even though the local goods nowhere near matched the value of the technological items. Corellian traders had long ago realized the value of “loss leaders” — items sold for less than their value, with the intention of creating long-term customers for energy cells, upgrades and accessories.

As soon as was practical, the Corellians returned to the Goroth system, heavily laden with more, and flashier, technological bagatelles to excite the natives. In return, they accepted not pots and basket-work this time, but tons of what the Gorothites viewed as “worthless rock.” Actually these rocks contained pure metals such as osmium and iridium. While worthless to the Gorothites (due to their primitive technology they were unable to extract and utilize them), these metals were valuable to spacefaring cultures. The Corellians had still not learned of the hyperbarides, though. The concentration of hyperbarides in these ores was still so low that only a very intense scan would pick them up and the Corellians had no reason to suspect their presence or perform such a scan.

For obvious reasons, the Corellian traders who found the Goroth system hoped to keep their discovery their own rather profitable little secret. It is perhaps fortunate for the Gorothites that things did not work out that way. In one of those strange coincidences that some claim to be the workings of “destiny,” an Ithorian herdship also discovered the heretofore unknown Goroth system, and revealed the Corellians’ secret to the Republic.

Science teams and diplomatic representatives

descended upon the world, and within a remarkably short time (as these things go), Goroth was inducted as a candidate for member-planet status in the Old Republic. The Republic prescribed a program that would advance the technological level, planetary wealth and overall standard of living as quickly as possible (limited only by the native sentients’ ability to absorb the changes). The Bureau of Acculturation — the government agency in charge of monitoring such programs — helped nudge the civilization of Goroth to a spacefaring culture within four centuries.

During this phase of rapid growth, Goroth was monitored by on-site experts from the Bureau of Acculturation and other similar governmental bodies, whose responsibility was making sure cultural development progressed as expected. However, this on-site monitoring was quite limited because the indigenous food crops of Goroth — and even the planet’s air and water — were poisonous in the long-term for non-native life-forms due to the heavy metal and hyperbaride presence. Even while being “groomed” for full membership in the Old Republic, Goroth enjoyed an unusual degree of autonomy and self-determination. Some 500 years after it had been discovered, Goroth was granted the status of full membership in the Old Republic.

From the outset, the Gorothites understood that the planet’s natural resources were of value to other worlds in the galaxy, and capitalized on that perceived value. For more than a millennium, Goroth flourished, trading ores for new technologies and for luxuries.

Goroth at War

Some four millennia before the present day, things began to change in the Trans-Nebular Sector. Corellian colonies began springing up throughout the region, sometimes squabbling among themselves, but more often cooperating as a kind of “Corellian bloc.”

Meanwhile, various splinter factions of Aqualish (“Barralenal,” or “colonizer/pilgrims,” as they styled themselves) were making their presence felt in the region, establishing colonies of their own. These “colonizer/pilgrims” were Aqualish who were distressed by the “suppression” of their native culture on their homeworld of Ando (for more information on this “suppression,” see pages 13-14 of *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races, Second Edition*). They were looking for worlds where they could live the way they wanted — fighting each other and anyone else foolish enough to get in their way. It was only a matter of time before the Corellians and the Aqualish came into conflict. Many Aqualish still held an antipathy toward the Corellians, and none more so than the “colonizer/pilgrims.”



Darr & David Day

■ Se'Lenti, "the Scouring," strikes Goroth Prime.

A strong sector government would have recognized the danger represented by the two expansionistic and acquisitive groups, and done something to defuse the situation. Unfortunately, the Governor of the Trans-Nebular Sector — one Matri Bey — was a bureaucrat and not much of a politician, and was more or less out of her depth in running an entire sector. Before she was even aware that trouble was brewing, the Corellian and Aqualish colonies were fighting a low-intensity war. Her attempts to quell this violence were notably inept and ineffective, and “border skirmishes” soon escalated to all-out warfare between the Corellian bloc and the Aqualish Barralenal. As an interesting footnote, the Jedi Knights did not become involved because they were apparently busy with other conflicts.

Systems in the Trans-Nebular Sector began to choose sides. Still other systems did what they could to withdraw from the fray entirely, trying to keep a profile low enough that neither side would notice and “co-opt” them.

As for Goroth, its mildly poisonous environment and its distance from the established space lanes combined to maintain the system’s effective autonomy. Some Gorothites were concerned by the spreading war. To protect Gorothite interests, the government commissioned a new military force, the D’Jar’Min (which translates roughly to “Planetary Defense Arm”). More impressive in name than in actuality, the D’Jar’Min was initially little more than a symbol of autonomy.

Over time, however, some real funding was transferred to the D’Jar’Min, and preliminary provisions for planetary defense were made. Goroth’s three small moons were refitted with heavy weapons to serve as permanent defensive battle stations. A powerful battery of ion cannons, powered by large solar cells, was mounted on each satellite. Confident that these defensive stations represented all the protection the world of Goroth really needed, the planetary government froze all additional funding to the D’Jar’Min. Thus, Goroth had no “space navy” simply because the government believed the ion batteries made such expenditure unnecessary.

Profiteers

Secure in its feeling of relative invulnerability, Goroth declared its neutrality as the Corellian/Aqualish war spread across the Trans-Nebular Sector. Yet again, the system’s location was an advantage: far enough beyond the developing battle-lines to be safe, yet close enough to the disputed zone to be important to both sides.

In relatively low-level interstellar conflicts like the one developing between the Corellian bloc and the Aqualish Barralenal, a key issue was finding and utilizing supply depots and staging

areas for assault forces. Both sides of the war realized that the Goroth system was perfectly situated to become a “safe haven” for supplies and reserve forces.

If the combatants had been better equipped, one or the other would have moved in and “annexed” Goroth. Or, more likely, both sides would have fought over the system. As things were, however, neither side could divert sufficient resources from the main war effort to take and hold the Goroth system.

Instead of annexation, then, both factions decided on non-violent means to sway Goroth to their side. They shamelessly wooed the Goroth planetary government, offering everything from blandishments, through promises of future support, to major infusions of currency and advanced technology.

At this time, the “Rel’Kan” (president of the Goroth planetary government) ruling the “P’Dar’Ken” (“Planetary Council”) was an individual called J’Kek D’rith Kalama. Rel’Kan J’Kek realized that Goroth was in a highly advantageous situation. Goroth’s value to both sides in the conflict was indisputable, but not quite high enough to warrant a diversion of force. This put the P’Dar’Ken in an excellent bargaining position.

Under the canny leadership of Rel’Kan J’Kek, the Gorothite government played one side off against the other in a bidding war. When the Corellian colonies offered 15 megatons of spin-stabilized dylinium in return for the right to refuel their warships from the Goroth system’s two gas giants, Rel’Kan J’Kek extracted a promise of 20 megatons from the Aqualish in return for the same concession. When the Aqualish offered 10,000 cubic meters of pressurized tibana gas to allow their troops to take their official leaves on the surface of Goroth Prime, Rel’Kan J’Kek sold the same privilege to the Corellians for an equal volume of the valuable gas. Throughout this bidding war, Goroth tenaciously maintained its neutrality; neither side in the conflict was allowed any concession that the other side could not also acquire — for a price.

At a political level, Goroth remained a valuable resource to be used by both sides. On a more personal level, however, the situation was almost surreal. Corellian “freedom-fighters” and Aqualish “holy warriors” — both on leave — would often find themselves drinking in the same establishment or rubbing shoulders on the streets. While violence often flared, it remained on a personal level and never escalated beyond barroom brawls and street-corner rumbles. Uniformed troops — and undercover espionage operatives — flooded Goroth’s cities, injecting even more off-planet currency into the world’s economy.

Predictably, Rel'Kan J'Kek's popularity with his people skyrocketed during this period. It takes a good statesman to keep his system from being ensnared in a war, the Gorothise populace believed; but it takes a brilliant one to remain neutral and to profit so lavishly at the same time.

While elsewhere in the Trans-Nebular Sector the war was growing in ferocity, the Gorothises rewarded their Rel'Kan for his perspicacity by selecting him for an unprecedented fifth term. In fact, a grass-roots movement emerged that wanted to install J'Kek D'rith Kalama as "President-for-Life"; this initiative was voted down in the P'Dar'Ken — but just barely.

Not all Gorothises were overjoyed by the "bidding" war which Rel'Kan J'Kek seemed so adept at maintaining. A faction of political philosophers led by J'Kek M'hoy Trinia — another member of the influential J'Kek clan — argued that the situation could not hold, and that the Rel'Kan was leading the planet toward the brink of disaster. The "bidding war" should be ended, these philosophers argued, before things went too far. The P'Dar'Ken should withdraw all concessions granted to both sides, and return to a policy of scrupulous neutrality, having nothing whatsoever to do with either the Corellians or the Aqualish.

Their arguments fell on deaf ears, however. Rel'Kan J'Kek, his advisors, and much of the government were intoxicated by what they saw as their power over the two combatants. For their part, the citizens were blinded to the potential dangers by the vast influx of wealth and the increase in the standard of living that resulted from the fine balance Rel'Kan J'Kek was maintaining. The philosophers' concerns were shouted down, and the government continued to push even harder for concessions from both sides.

Catastrophe

Eventually, Rel'Kan J'Kek's government pushed too hard. Gorothise demands grew too extreme. The balance shifted and no longer was it cheaper to placate and trade with the Gorothises.

Nobody really knows which side cracked first or whether both decided to settle matters at about the same time. The logic that led to the catastrophe is cogent, however, and independent of which side reached the fateful conclusion first.

It was the cold reality of interplanetary economics that sealed Gorothise fate. Neither the Aqualish Barralenal nor the Corellian colonies could afford to "annex" Gorothise. Conversely, neither could afford to leave the world to be utilized by the enemy. Someone decided that Gorothise had to be eliminated from the equation.

Conquest is time-consuming, and extremely costly. Obliteration, by contrast, is disturbingly inexpensive.

Bombardment

The government and people of Gorothise received no warning. Gorothise's rudimentary Bl'Era Har ("Sky-Track") system — run on a very limited budget by the under-funded D'Jar'Min — first detected the asteroids when they were only a few hours out. There were five of them — "endotherm-killers," historians would call them later. Within minutes of their initial detection, the Bl'Era Har personnel had pinned down the asteroids' trajectories — and had confirmed what they had suspected and feared from the first moments. All five asteroids were on a collision course with the world of Gorothise Prime.

There was no way to stop, destroy or even deflect them. If the Gorothise system had possessed a true space navy, there would have been a chance — albeit a slim one — that the incoming projectiles could be diverted (possibly through being rammed by starships, if through no other means). Gorothise had no such navy, however. It lacked even a merchant shipping fleet — throughout its history, the system had depended on others to ferry supplies and trade goods.

The three orbital defense stations were still operational and fully manned, but they were equipped only with ion cannons: lethally effective against attacking warships but useless against unguided, free-falling rocks.

The P'Dar'Ken had developed civil defense plans to respond to natural disasters like earthquakes, but these plans simply were not designed to deal with a disaster of the scale that now faced the world. The Gorothises could do nothing — nothing at all — except seek what shelter they could and wait.

They did not have to wait long. Less than a local day after they had first been detected, the first of the five asteroids slammed into the planet. Over the next 16 hours, the other four asteroids struck. In all, three struck land and the other two plunged into the oceans.

Gorothise rang like a gong as the land strikes cracked the planet's crust, blasting megatons of debris into the atmosphere. Still, it was the two ocean strikes that were more damaging. Cubic kilometers of water were vaporized by the blowtorch heat of the asteroids. While much of that water quickly condensed out as rain, even more remained in suspension in the atmosphere, cloaking the entire planet in thick clouds which deflected the light and heat of the sun.

Multiple tidal waves, hundreds of meters high, spread out from the ocean strikes, inundating the surrounding coastlines, scouring away cities,

arable land, and everything else in their way. Kilometers inland, the tsunamis eventually broke against the foothills of volcanoes suddenly woken from centuries-long dormancy. Earthquakes tore the land apart. Mountains softened and slumped; seas and rivers boiled away; geysers of deeply-buried radioactives burst forth from the centers of the burning impact craters, poisoning atmosphere, land and sea alike. Toxins spewing forth from the volcanoes almost totally destroyed the protective ozone layer and harsh ultraviolet energy from the sun lashed the planet. In a matter of hours, Goroth had become a fiery wasteland.

The crews of the planetary defense stations could only watch in helpless horror as their home was ravaged. The asteroid impacts were so violent that megatons of dust and debris were blown into orbit. Within hours of the impact, this expanding cloud of debris had extended out to the orbit of the three satellites. At orbital velocity, the moons swept through the debris and space “shrapnel” destroyed the defense stations’ fragile solar cells, dooming the crews to slow death.

It is impossible to determine how many died. Whole continents were wiped from the face of the planet; immense cities vanished beneath the waves or were swallowed by convulsions in the crust. Civil defense shelters were obliterated by lava flows and mud slides. One of the land strikes landed almost directly on the seat of the P’Dar’Ken; over 150 million Gorothites called the surrounding city home. Sector records estimate that the population of Goroth in the years before the cataclysm had been in excess of five billion souls. No more than two million survived.

Aftermath

It is surprising that any Gorothites survived the cataclysm at all, and a testament to their incredible resilience.

The initial consequences of the “endotherm-killers” dissipated within weeks. The seismic resonances of the strikes eventually ceased to ring through the crust of the planet. The worst of the secondary strikes — chunks of planetary crust thrown into sub-orbital or unstable orbital trajectories that fell back to the surface — subsided. The survivors began to emerge from their various shelters.

Many fell prey to the long-term consequences of the bombardment. The tectonic stability of the crust had been badly upset. As the plates shifted, the planet was racked with mighty earthquakes. Once dormant volcanoes burst back to life. Lava, mud and pyroclastic flows scoured the land down to bedrock in many places, wiping away all life. Millions of tons of particulate matter were flung into the atmosphere by these volcanoes, joining

the water and rock already injected into the atmosphere by the initial impacts. The climate changed drastically.

Conditions that should lead to planetary warming contended with those that should cause a dramatic cooling of the world (due to immense dust clouds blocking out all sunlight). In the long run — after years of storms seemingly violent enough to tear mountains themselves asunder — planetary warming won out, and Goroth’s average temperature began to climb.

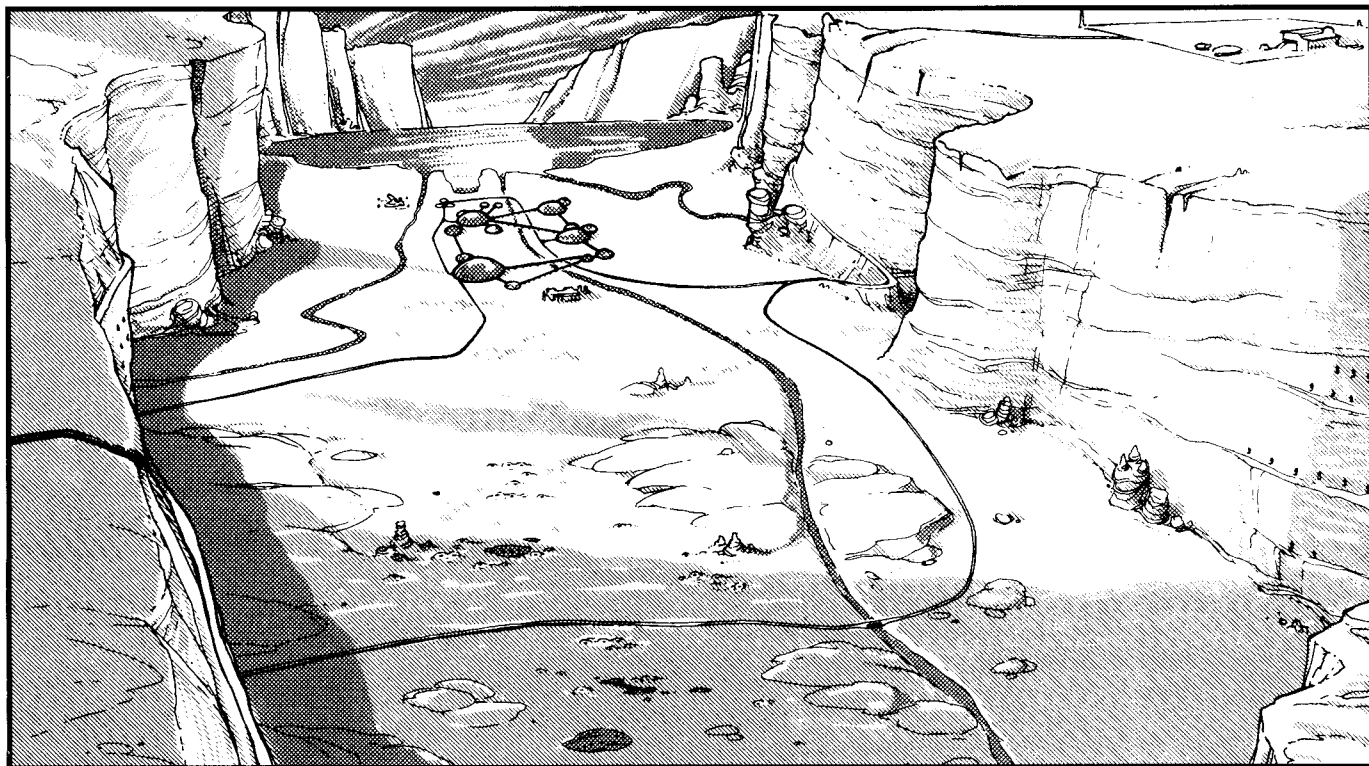
When the asteroids struck, most of them punched right through the planetary crust into the asthenosphere below. Welling up from these rents in the planet’s lithosphere, magma — laden with heavy elements and hyperbarides — spread out to form poisonous lakes of molten rock. While some of these craters closed themselves relatively quickly (as the magma cooled and solidified), some were kept liquid by upwellings of material, superheated by the planet’s mantle below. Even centuries after the impact, many of these great pits burned, bubbled and surged, like open ports into the violent heart of the planet.

When the surviving Gorothites emerged, it was into a world that closely matched their religion’s depiction of the “netherworld,” where the souls of murderers and traitors are tortured for eternity. The sky was filled with thick, roiling clouds, lit by the ruddy light of distant fires. Titanic lightning bolts — a result of the massive static charge arising from all the particulates churning in the atmosphere — lashed the mountaintops. The land shook and shifted. Frequent shooting stars — delayed secondary strikes — lanced down through the cloud-deck. The air was hot and harsh, burning their throats raw.

The reality of the situation was even worse than its appearance. The high technology that had allowed so many to live so well was concentrated around the great cities. The great tsunamis had wiped them away forever. Those food crops and herds of food animals that had not been killed in the initial cataclysm died as a result of the lingernig conditions on Goroth.

Of the Gorothites who emerged from their shelters, one in three died of starvation in the first year after the cataclysm. This time came to be known as Se’Lenti, “the Scouring.” Somehow, a few Gorothites managed to hang on, carving out a tenuous survival on the brink of planetary extinction.

Still, another tragic factor worked against the survival of the Gorothites. The trace concentrations of highly-poisonous hyperbarides in the crust of the planet — and thus in the bodies of all indigenous creatures — reflected a very different condition deeper in the planet. The molten core of Goroth was incredibly rich in hyperbarides.



Mike Vilardi

Overhead view of the o'beki of Graith.

The concentrations of hyperbarides in the magma, which now flooded the surface, were much higher than the Gorothises were used to, and thus the crust of the planet itself was “poisoned” by its own interior. The air of Gorothis was quickly contaminated by the poisonous hyperbarides. As rain fell, it absorbed chemical compounds out of the atmosphere — sulfur compounds, which created the sulfuric acid of “acid rain”; and hyperbaride salts, which were responsible for poisonous “hard rain.” Through air and water, the entire surface of the world was eventually contaminated by hyperbarides.

For any other species, this would have led to extinction. The Gorothises (and certain other species native to the world), had evolved in the presence of hyperbarides — if only in trace quantities — and had some degree of innate immunity. Granted, the concentrations to which they were now exposed were orders of magnitude greater to that which they were used to. Immunity or no, hyperbarides in excessive amounts still killed Gorothises.

As it turned out, the hyperbarides contaminating the landscape were both doom and salvation. As well as being cytotoxins (which would have killed off most creatures), many compounds of hyperbarides — such as the hyperbaride salts in the “hard rain” — are effective mutagens. The rate of mutation in all of Gorothis’s species skyrocketed. While the majority of the mutations that arose were detrimental, some populations

began to develop an increased resistance to the cytotoxic effects of hyperbarides.

Reconstruction

By increasing both the intensity of natural selection and the incidence of mutation, the Se’Lenti significantly increased the rate of evolution. The surviving Gorothises reached physical maturity quickly, enabling them to have new generations in a very short period of time. Individual Gorothises could quite conceivably live to see the birth of their own great-great-grandchildren.

Within a few centuries, increased resistance to the cytotoxic effects of hyperbarides was well established throughout the gene pool of the Gorothises. This gene, of necessity, also developed in the other species of Gorothis that survived. This trait quickly became established as a simple single-locus dominant in these species’ genotypes.

While the majority of offspring carried at least one copy of the gene for resistance, the mechanics of genetic inheritance ensured that in a certain percentage of offspring the non-resistant gene would be reinforced, and the offspring would die. The Gorothisite society that was re-emerging from the after-effects of the Scouring had to come to terms with an infant mortality near 10%. Still, the population began to increase — slowly at first, but at a steadily increasing rate.

Within a thousand years of the Scouring, the

population had climbed back to nearly ten million. Now, four millennia after the Scouring, it approaches the half-billion point.

Always stubborn and tenacious — and exceptionally adaptable — the Gorothites buckled down and began to rebuild what they could of their lost civilization. They were hindered by the fact that they had lost much knowledge and technology. Centers of learning — such as universities, research facilities, and computerized library databases — were destroyed in the Se'Lenti. The Gorothites had to make do with what was left.

Their society's infrastructure had been almost totally destroyed. Sources of usable energy — hydroelectric dams, nuclear power plants and geothermal plants — had all been ruined, as had normal channels of communication. Thus, in the early days of the Reconstruction, small pockets of survivors sprung up. They were isolated enclaves, often unaware that there were other survivors elsewhere on the planet. When these enclaves finally managed to communicate with each other and coordinate their efforts, the rate of rebuilding increased.

Even today, however, Gorothite society still reflects these early days of the Reconstruction. The enclaves of survivors were located in those parts of the planet least affected by the Scouring (out of logical necessity: it was only in these locales that anyone managed to survive). When technology was recovered or developed that could improve conditions — by filtering the air

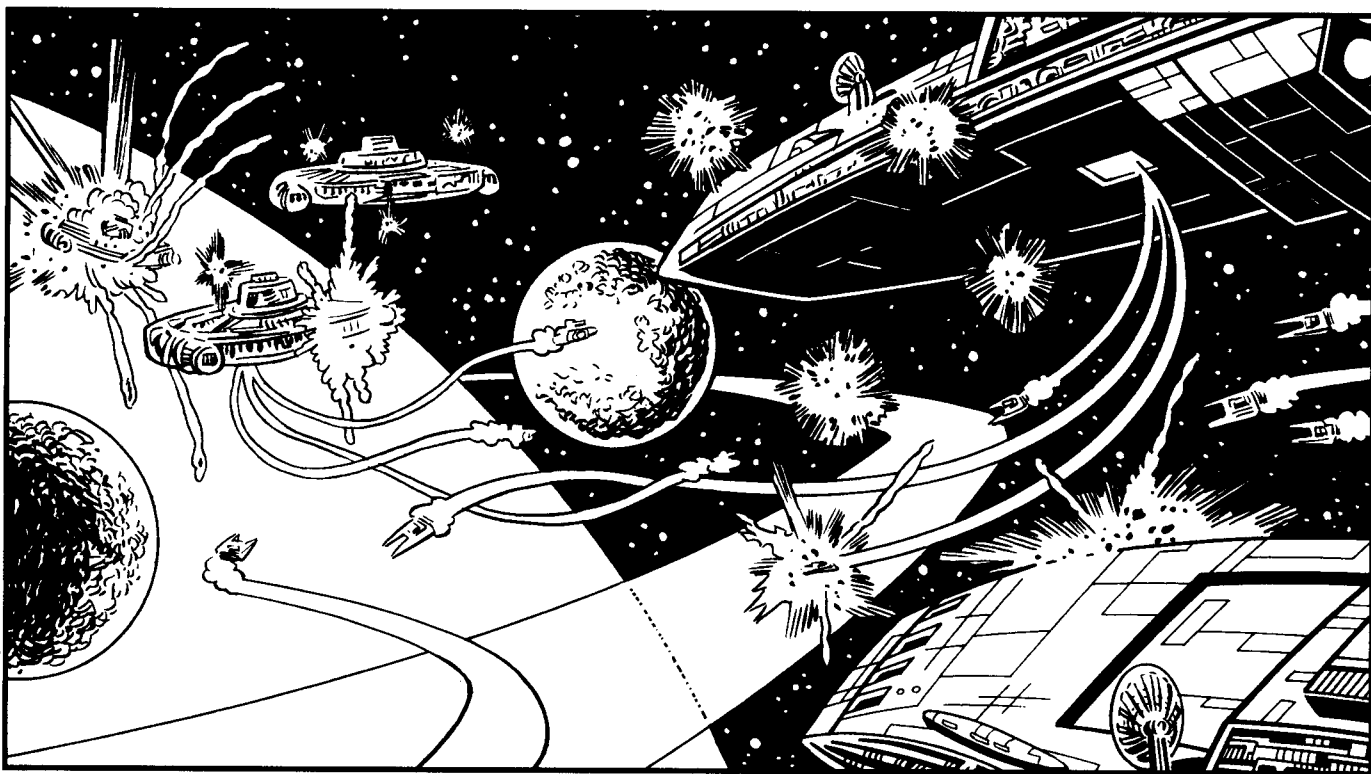
and water, by stabilizing the crust (to some degree, at least), by plugging the smaller volcanic vents that still belched toxins into the atmosphere, and so forth — the amelioration work was, of course, concentrated on the neighborhood of these enclaves.

Thus, the enclaves were turned into o'beki ("havens") — areas where conditions are relatively benign. As with many things on Goroth, the key word here is again "relatively." Compared to the Yar'En ("Firelands"), for example, the o'beki are paradise. Compared to conditions on other worlds, by contrast, they still resemble nightmare realms.

The Gorothites have managed to reconstruct a planetary civilization. Out of necessity, it was quite different from what existed before the cataclysm. Still, there was once more a central government to which all the enclaves and o'beki paid allegiance. The overall level of technology has edged back upward, although still falling short of modern Imperial technology.

The Imperial Era

In the intervening millennia, the brush-fire war between the Correllian colonies and the Aqualish had died down — and, in fact, had been largely forgotten. Records still existed that mentioned the Goroth system, but the general conclusion was that the world had been destroyed. Like the war that had ravaged it, Goroth itself was largely forgotten.



Elsewhere in the galaxy, momentous events were taking place. The Empire arose, and with that change in government came a consolidation of power. The Trans-Nebular Sector Moff had established himself as a de facto warlord. This came to a sudden end when a task force of Imperial Star Destroyers emerged from hyperspace in close orbit around the sector's capital. Despite the current Moff's claims of loyalty and obedience, the commander of the task force sent a detachment of stormtroopers down to the planet to arrest the entire sector government. A court martial was convened, the governor and his lackeys were tried for treason against the Empire, and before the day was out the key members of the government were terminated. The majority of the task force quickly moved on; there were other provinces that needed the same "shock treatment" as the Trans-Nebular Sector, after all. The Imperials left behind a new Moff, Nebin Cray, and a small force that would become the core of a new sector fleet.

As part of his new duties, the Moff began reviewing the (somewhat disorganized) records left behind by his late predecessor. Buried in these records, he found mention of the Correllian/Aqualish war. A search through various historical databases led him to an entry describing the fate of Goroth — and hinting at its value as a storehouse of strategically-important metals. The Moff dispatched a scouting mission to this forgotten system.

Planetfall

Once again, an out-of-system ship appeared in orbit around the world of Goroth Prime at a key point in history. This time the vessel was an Imperial *Bayonet*-class light cruiser, the *Nastion*. Judging by the information gleaned from the old provincial records, the captain of the *Nastion* expected to find a dead world. He was utterly surprised, then, to find that the Gorothite civilization still existed.

Still, indigenous populations were not the captain's concern. If Goroth was as rich in heavy metals as the records implied, he reasoned, a superficial assay at any point on the surface would show it. Accordingly, he sent down a survey crew aboard a small shuttle, which lost attitude control almost immediately after entering the roiling atmosphere. The shuttle crashed, killing all aboard.

A hurried investigation into the circumstances of the crash (the *Nastion*'s captain had, of course, to consider the possibility of hostile action by the natives) turned up a significant fact. Apparently, the cataclysm had significantly altered the magnetic field of the planet. This, coupled with the level of radiation in the air (and other, as-yet

unexplained factors), tended to make repulsorlift generators malfunction.

As was normal with the class of shuttle used by the ill-fated survey crew, the shuttle pilot had entered the atmosphere under normal ion drive. While searching for a suitable place to land, however, he had switched over to repulsorlift so he could hover just below the low cloud deck. Fluctuations in the power of the repulsorlift engines made the shuttle highly unstable, and before he could recover control, the high winds that roiled the clouds dashed the small ship into a mountain-side.

The *Nastion*'s captain did not make the same mistake twice. This time he sent down an unmanned probe, controlled remotely from orbit. The probe, too, became unstable the moment it switched to repulsorlift operation, but — forewarned — the remote pilot managed to keep the smaller vessel under control and land safely. The probe retrieved a core sample, lifted off, and returned to the cruiser.

An assay of the core sample quite literally staggered the *Nastion*'s captain. As he had been told to expect, Goroth's crust was rich in valuable heavy metals. More importantly, however, it was also liberally laced with hyperbarides — measured in parts per billion, now, rather than in parts per quadrillion. The planet was an absolute mother-lode of materials with great strategic military value. The *Nastion* immediately returned to the sector capital. The Moff, in turn, hurriedly informed his superiors and requested the assets necessary to "utilize" the planet.

As it turned out, those superiors had concerns of their own ... ones far-removed from one forgotten world in a distant and very minor sector. When the request for exploitation assets arrived from Moff Cray, Imperial command put the request on hold. While the Empire recognized that Goroth was of strategic value, that value was long-term, requiring a significant investment to properly exploit. The Empire was in the midst of an unprecedented military expansion, and no funding was to be diverted from its massive ship-building program.

Some military analysts consider the Imperial Navy's actions regarding Goroth to be shortsighted and foolish, evidence that Imperial strategists simply did not understand the true value of the planet. This is not really the case, however. Most of the Navy's leadership did recognize the importance of Goroth — enough, at least, to "rediscover," as it were, the cruel equation that doomed the Gorothites once before.

The Empire could not afford to annex Goroth and strip it of its hyperbarides. Neither could it afford to leave this world unused.

The Corporate Sphere

This time there was a third factor in the equation: the megacorporations. Much as it galled him, the Moff had to admit that he could not exploit Goroth properly because he simply did not have the available resources. The megacorporations, on the other hand, certainly did have the resources to do so, and were willing to do whatever it took to get a slice of the “hyperbaride pie.”

Thus — with the approval of the region’s Grand Moff — the Moff struck an unusual deal. Those megacorporations interested in exploiting Goroth could bid for the right to do so. The winning bidders would be granted certain rights and privileges with respect to Goroth, and the hyperbaride trade in general. In return for these rights and privileges, they would have to subordinate themselves totally to the authority of a planetary Colonial Governor to be assigned by the Moff. This Colonial Governor would have ultimate authority as far as the participating corporations were concerned. Most importantly, he would have the right to withdraw exploitation rights from any corporation that failed to play by the rules.

Predictably, the corporations hated the concept of putting themselves under the direct authority of anyone. Still, they recognized the immense value of Goroth, and figured this would turn out to be a good deal for them. After all, many executives reasoned, agreeing to conditions is not the same as abiding by those conditions. On Goroth, as elsewhere under the Empire, corporate conduct would be guided by the “Golden Rule”: “Don’t Get Caught.”

When it actually came to bidding for exploitation rights, the Moff finally decided to offer three distinct types of contracts.

- “Primary Rights” — the most expensive — were more or less “anything-goes” letters of marque that allowed the corporations possessing them to do virtually anything — anything that wasn’t directly in contravention of Imperial interests, of course. The definition of “in contravention of Imperial interests” would be left largely up to the Colonial Governor. The corporations immediately realized that this set-up made the Governor an incredibly influential man.
- “Secondary Rights” were more restrictive, putting limits on just what “local resources” could be exploited, and how.
- “Subsidiary Rights” — the cheapest of the lot — allowed the possessor to negotiate with those companies holding Primary or Secondary Rights for subcontracts. In essence, Subsidiary Rights gave smaller corporations the privilege of squabbling with each other over the leavings of the Primary and Secondary Rights-holders.

Two of the largest megacorporations in the Empire acquired primary rights: The Tagge Company (TaggeCo) and The Karflo Corporation. Secondary rights were acquired by Trigdale Metallurgy and Vaufthau Processing Industries. Finally, a half-dozen or so smaller corporations snapped up subsidiary rights, and began scrapping over the “spillage” from the major players.

Forced “Recovery”

Unfortunately, exploiting the resources on Goroth is not much easier for the megacorporations than it is for the Empire. Even though conditions have improved slightly over the four millennia since the Se’Lenti, Goroth is still a poisoned world. Its air and water — and even its life-forms — are poisonous to just about any off-planet being. In the o’beki, where the Gorothites live, the atmosphere and water are slow poisons, but poisons nonetheless. Closer to the volcanoes — located along the tectonic subduction zones — and near the still-molten asteroid-strike craters, conditions are orders of magnitude worse (Type III atmosphere): rapid and agonizing death to any off-worlder not wearing a complete envirosuit.

Of course, it is these areas — the most hostile on the planet — where the concentrations of hyperbarides are at their highest, and thus the places of most interest to the corporations.

Not only biologicals suffer from ambient conditions, of course. As the first Imperial survey crew discovered to their terminal detriment, fluctuating radiation levels make it very risky to use standard repulsorlift technology. Further, the same conditions prove remarkably hostile to droids — specifically, to their logic circuits. Without special (and expensive) “hardening,” droids quickly suffer damage to their central processors, experience a kind of “nervous breakdown,” and have to be repaired or replaced.

Certainly, there are ways around these problems. Envirosuits could protect workers from hyperbaride and radiation poisoning. Heavily-modified repulsorlift drives could be made to operate safely on Goroth. And hardening could protect droids and other computer-controlled equipment from logic malfunctions. All these solutions were expensive, however — some extremely so. Any costs incurred in exploiting the resources of Goroth would decrease corporate profits — and the megacorporations will do anything to avoid losing profits.

The primary rights-holders quickly recognized a way to keep their costs down. Rather than importing expensive specialized technology, why not use what was right there at hand? After all, the Gorothites themselves were at least partially resistant to hyperbaride poisoning and had plenty

of experience surviving and working in the harsh environment.

It was TaggeCo that first approached the Colonial Governor about using the “indigenous assets” as workers. After extensive lobbying — and, some people claim, the judicious transfer of credit in “forgivable interest-free loans” — the Colonial Governor finally agreed with TaggeCo’s proposal that using the Goroithes as “client-workers” (read “slaves”) would not be “in contravention of Imperial interests.”

The Karflo Corporation’s local representatives demanded the same rights and privileges as soon as they learned of the agreement — Karflo too was a primary rights-holder, after all — and the Colonial Governor was forced to agree.

So that is how the current situation has come to pass. The Colonial Government has established its seat in the largest of the o’beki, known as Graith, a relatively sheltered valley in the high mountains. This o’beki is also the center of megacorporate activity on the planet. TaggeCo, Karflo and the others all have their local headquarters here, in environment-controlled pressurized domes — known locally as “pressures.” These pressures are connected by enclosed tunnels and tubes through which “movators” and “people movers” run.

The Goroithite inhabitants of Graith live outside these pressures, in subterranean settlements and extensive cliff-dwellings.

The native planetary government of Goroith still exists. There is still a planetary Rel’Kan, and a P’Dar’Ken. Officially, the Colonial Governor and his government hold an “advisory” position, subordinate to the Rel’Kan and the P’Dar’Ken council. All decrees and declarations made to the native population of Goroith are issued in the name of the Rel’Kan, and ratified by the rest of the P’Dar’Ken by Orders-in-Council. On other worlds of the Empire, the news media sometimes holds up the world of Goroith as an example of “peaceful cooperation” between the Imperial bureaucracy and a duly-elected planetary government.

The truth of the matter is quite different, of course. The native government is an empty sham, a figurehead with no real power. The Colonial Governor and the corporate representatives are the true rulers of Goroith. Their word is effectively law, and the Rel’Kan and P’Dar’Ken must “rubber-stamp” whatever they decide. The Rel’Kan and the P’Dar’Ken’Al (“council-members”) all know that refusing to do so will simply lead to their being replaced by more malleable “politicians.” While some members of the P’Dar’Ken rather relish the perks that come with their position, others stay in their positions in the hope that they can somehow help their fellow Goroithites.

Other o’beki around the planet have their own P’Dar’Ib (“local councils”) — and their own Imperial Regional Prefects (extensions of the colonial government). Again, the fiction is that the P’Dar’Ib have the true authority, while the Regional Prefects are just “advisors.” All but the most naive Goroithites recognize this as a lie, of course. The corporations also have a strong local presence in each of the enclaves. Although the complexes of corporate and colonial “pressures” are not as extensive as in Graith, they still exist, casting shadows — real and metaphorical — over the homes of the native Goroithites.

Further extending Imperial control, any significant native Goroithite industry has been officially “nationalized” — to “better serve the indigenous natives,” of course, through centralization, coordination and economy of scale. In effect, any industry or business large enough to affect the planetary economy is under direct Imperial control, through the Colonial Governor, and under the indirect influence of the corporations. Thus, the overwhelming majority of Goroithites work indirectly for the Empire and the corporations — at wages set by the Colonial Governor, as advised by the corporate executives.

No matter how strenuously the Colonial Governor claims that Goroith has a free economy, it’s far from free. Wages are set by the Governor. Businesses that produce goods for consumption by the natives are also controlled, and prices are set by the central government. Competition is totally managed. If a new business springs up, offering goods or services in competition with an “officially sanctioned” nationalized company, then that organization is quickly driven out of business — perhaps through direct government intervention in the form of “licensing restrictions” or perhaps through nationalization by the Governor’s office. These actions are purportedly taken by the Rel’Kan and P’Dar’Ken, of course, and only for “benevolent” reasons. The recovering economy of Goroith is highly fragile, the official party line goes, and only through central coordination can that economy be maintained and nurtured.

Independent businesses, outside this central coordination, are a threat to the overall economy and well-being of the natives, and thus to be avoided. Again, only the most naive of Goroithites fail to recognize that the Rel’Kan and P’Dar’Ken are powerless, and that these actions are being directed by the Colonial Governor and the corporations to cement their control over every facet of native life.

Most Goroithites work — directly or indirectly — for the megacorporations, exploiting the mineral wealth of the planet. Millions of Goroithites

work in the most terrible of conditions, extracting hyperbarides from poisoned, volcanic wastelands (such as Yar'En, the "Firelands," and Na'R Ji'Gek, "Doomgate"). The ugly truth of the matter is that these "client-workers" are slaves of the Empire and the corporations. No matter what term is used to describe them, the reality is unavoidable: a worker who cannot quit, cannot go on strike, receives a subsistence salary, and can buy goods only from his employer at prices set by that employer is, in truth, a slave.

The Resistance Movement

Predictably, a resistance movement has emerged on Goroath. Natives who want their world freed of the Imperial and megacorporate yoke have banded together in cells and small organizations. "Freedom-fighters," most call themselves; the Colonial Government, of course, brands them "terrorists" and "saboteurs" and is doing whatever it can to stamp them out.

Currently there are a handful of resistance organizations throughout Goroath. Although they share a common goal — the removal of Imperial oppression — they do not agree on the best way to achieve this goal. Some promote passive resistance, and very limited "civil disobedience." Others believe that only through shocking violence and terror — by making Goroath totally ungovernable — can the Imperial yoke be lifted.

The largest and most influential of these organizations, Gor'Jen'Ar (the "Committee for Free Goroath"), tries to steer a middle course. Its leaders believe that passive resistance alone will not work and that more direct action is necessary. They recognize, however, that it is possible to become too militant. Currently, the Gorothites are being used as "client-workers" only because doing so is cheaper than bringing in the expensively-modified technology that would replace them.

The shadowy leaders of the Gor'Jen'Ar fear that overly militant action — like that countenanced by the splinter T'B'Dellyi'Mai ("People's Freedom Action Council") — will change this equation to the detriment of all Gorothites. While the T'B'Dellyi'Mai believes that making it simply too expensive to do business on Goroath will lead to an Imperial withdrawal, the Gor'Jen'Ar fears that the Empire will take more direct action. As soon as it becomes cheaper to replace the "cli-

ent-workers" with technology, the Empire will replace them. Once there is no benefit in using "client-workers," the indigenous population of Gorothites will become a liability. And the Empire has a history of taking harsh action against liabilities.

The Gor'Jen'Ar leaders share a very real fear that too much militancy will lead to the obliteration of the Gorothite species. As the world has already learned once, extermination is cheaper than subjugation. What is to prevent the Empire from initiating a genocidal campaign against the natives?

Rebel Involvement

It is through the resistance movement — largely through the Gor'Jen'Ar, although other groups are also involved — that a limited Rebel presence has finally come to Goroath. It has only been in the last couple of years that the Rebel Alliance has come to recognize the value of Goroath — to the Empire, and potentially to themselves as well.

The hyperbarides scoured from the crust of Goroath are being used in the hyperdrives and turbolasers of Imperial capital ships — ships that are being used against the Rebel Alliance. Obviously, there is great military advantage in slowing — or, ideally, stopping — this flow of hyperbarides from Goroath to Imperial shipyards.

There is another side to the question too, of course. The Rebel Alliance itself is building capital ships of its own. Goroath represents an incredible source of the vital hyperbarides. If the Alliance could somehow secure Goroath for itself, the rate at which it could expand its own fleet would increase many-fold.

Thus, the Rebel Alliance would love to see the Imperial and corporate presence removed from Goroath. Then the Alliance could move into the power vacuum, helping the Gorothites to establish their own, truly independent, planetary government — a government that would, of course, be friendly toward and owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Rebel Alliance.

The Rebel Alliance is incapable of taking direct action. While the Imperial Moff in the Trans-Nebular Sector is comparatively weak, there is no way that the Rebel fleet could liberate and hold Goroath. Their best bet is to support the moderate — yet still effective — factions within the Gorothite resistance movement.

Chapter Two

System Overview

Goroth is one of the 80 or so systems in the Trans-Nebular Sector. This region of space lies 10 parsecs or so within the outer boundary of the Mid-Rim (within The Slice; for more information on the Mid-Rim and The Slice, see pages 131-132 of *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, Second Edition*).

Within the Trans-Nebular Sector is the Trans-Nebular Zone, which has about a dozen systems, Goroth being among them. The zone (and sector) takes its name from the major “landmark” in the area, the Vestor Nebula. The Vestor Nebula is a great cloud of ionized gas. At its core is the Vestor Pulsar, a neutron star that is the rapidly-spinning “cinder” of a giant star that went supernova millennia ago. Twin jets of ionized gas, shot out from the vicinity of the neutron star at almost inconceivable velocity, sweep through space like beams from a cosmic lighthouse, as the neutron star spins and precesses. With a pulsation rate that remains constant within a tiny fraction of one percent from year to year, the Vestor Pulsar serves as an excellent navigation beacon in this region of the galaxy. Ships can take a bearing and a very accurate “time tick” from it.

The Vestor Pulsar produces gravitational fluctuations which pose a very real hazard to hyperspace navigation. Since such records have been kept, over a dozen survey and research ships have gone missing in the region of the Vestor Nebula, presumably due to the interference which is likely to have thrown them subtly off course, possibly into a star or other hazard. For this reason, the Vestor Nebula itself remains a “dead zone.” Only the most foolhardy or desperate captains plot hyperspace jumps to take them through the Nebula itself. The only safe routes to the Trans-Nebular Zone systems involve multiple jumps, normally two- or three-leg routes. It is for this reason that the Trans-Nebular systems — including Goroth — were discovered so late in the course of galactic history.

Travel Times and Distances

Due to the hazards of traveling in the area, the Goroth system is isolated and remote in terms of travel times. A typical three-leg route from the margin of the Perlemian Trade Route takes 12 days (Moderate *astrogation* difficulty). A two-leg route can cut this time by up to two days, but the chances of a navigational error are increased (increase the difficulty to Difficult).

The nearest inhabited system to Goroth is the Baylin Cluster, one of the Correllian colonies involved in the war that led to the Scouring of Goroth Prime. The Baylin Cluster is 14 hours from Goroth by a direct hyperspace route (Moderate *astrogation* difficulty).

The capital of the sector (and home of the current Sector Moff, Gal Brello), Milarian, is 22 hours from Goroth (Moderate *astrogation* difficulty).

System Primary

The primary of the Goroth system is Goroth Alpha, referred to by the Gorothites as “K’Len” (“The Mother”) or, more commonly, “the sun.” It is a main-sequence star, red-orange in color. Its size, mass, surface temperature, radiation output and gravity are standard for this type of star.

Planets

Oris

Ancient Gorothite poetry describes Oris as “sheltering in the fiery skirts of K’Len, The Mother.” While not quite accurate, it is descriptive. Oris — an ancient word for “birth” or “dawn” — orbits close to Goroth Alpha, with a perihelion of 2.6 light-minutes. It is a small world, roughly spherical with a diameter of 2,950 kilometers. In other systems, it would probably be classed as an asteroid. It is almost exclusively nickel-iron, with some metamorphic rock inclusions. Blown-torched by the sun, it is scorched and lifeless.

Imperial astronomers automatically assumed

that so small a planet so close to its primary would have to be tidally-locked. They were surprised to learn that Oris' rotational period does not match its orbital period. This effective rotation is very slow, however — a "day" on Oris lasts 31 standard days from sunset to sunset — and is actually slowing down at a measurable (though minuscule) rate. The conclusion is that Oris is a relatively recent addition to the Goroth system (on an astronomical time-scale, of course), more than likely a "dark wanderer" captured by Goroth Alpha's gravity.

Goroth Prime

Orbiting with a perihelion of 7.1 light-minutes, Goroth Prime is the only planet in the system to develop sentient life. Its structure follows the standard terrestrial paradigm, with a molten nickel-iron core surrounded by a semi-solid mantle, and a solid lithosphere. The only feature that sets it apart from standard terrestrial worlds is the relatively high concentration of hyperbarides in its core, asthenosphere and mantle. Since the Scouring, Goroth has been surrounded by a tenuous ring.

Goroth Prime has three natural satellites. They are in a single orbit, situated in a stable orientation precisely 120 degrees apart. They are all tidally locked with the planet below, so that they keep the same face eternally toward the planet below. This was a benefit for the planetary defense system, since the ion cannons of the D'Jar'Min had constant and interlocking fields of fire. The satellites — airless spheres of rock, showing no magnetic field or volcanism — are similar in appearance and size. Telar has a diameter of 2,850 kilometers; J'Mel is 2,600 kilometers in diameter; V'Sar is the smallest, with a diameter of 1,760 kilometers.

Denava

Denava is a gas giant, banded with reds and browns that indicate complex organic compounds in its upper atmosphere. It orbits with a perihelion of 40.7 light-minutes, its orbit inclined at 5° to the ecliptic. It is a large world, 153,050 kilometers in diameter. Its density is low, however — less than that of water — implying that any solid core must be quite small, and composed of nothing denser than solid hydrogen and methane ice. Its atmosphere consists largely of hydrogen — with a small but significant concentration of helium, plus many trace elements — which makes it valuable for starships refitted to run on hydrogen instead of more traditional processed, high-energy fuel slugs. By skimming the upper fringes of its atmosphere, a modified ship can refill its tanks with hydrogen.

Denava has an immensely strong magnetic field, and is quite a strong radio source. The

nearest of its six small moons act like the rotors of a planetary generator, and high-voltage conduits of ionized gas — invisible, but nonetheless dangerous to unwary spaceships — connect them to the gas giant.

Intelligent life never evolved on Denava, but this does not mean that the world is lifeless. Huge gasbag-like creatures can be found in various bands of the atmosphere, "grazing" like great whales on the organic materials that fall as "snow" from the upper levels of the clouds.

Denbalen

Denbalen is another gas giant, slightly smaller than Denava at 147,100 kilometers in diameter, but still a colossus. Its orbit is not inclined with respect to the ecliptic, but it is retrograde. Denbalen has a perihelion of 67.2 light-minutes.

In appearance, Denbalen is quite similar to Denava, showing the same red and brown bands of clouds, eternally roiled by planet-wide storms. The dynamics of the planet are quite different, however. Denbalen's density is significantly higher than Denava's — still less than that of water, but great enough to imply that there must be a solid world, not significantly smaller than Goroth Prime itself, at its core. Denbalen has no magnetic field whatsoever, and is not a radio source. Still, the temperature of its cloud-tops is several degrees higher than would be predicted solely from solar heating, so there must be some kind of activity deep within the titanic world. Denbalen is thought to be lifeless although studies of the great planet have been limited. Denbalen has seven satellites.

All but one — P'Chek ("Mystery") — are airless spheres of frigid rock. P'Chek, in contrast, has an atmosphere almost as dense as that of Goroth Prime itself. This atmosphere, however, is almost exclusively oxygen — 98%, in fact — with the only other major component being helium. Planetologists are at a complete loss to explain how such an atmosphere could have naturally come about in the absence of any plant life on the world.

Even more fascinating, P'Chek was obviously inhabited in the distant past. Ruins of artificial structures can be found spotted around the "coastlines" of large, shallow depressions that might once have been the beds of oceans. The ruins seem quite similar in architecture to the structures built today by the Twi'lek species. The Twi'leks, however, have no record of ever having visited the Goroth system (especially since they are a relatively primitive species, technologically-speaking).

In any case, carbon-dating and other techniques indicate that these ruins are more than a billion years old. As its name signifies, P'Chek is — and will probably remain — a mystery.

Goroth Beta

Goroth Beta is a “brown dwarf” — the second member of a binary star system that never “ignited” its nuclear furnace. Orbiting far, far out from the primary — its perihelion is a staggering 340.3 light-minutes (5.67 light-hours) — Goroth Beta is a gas giant, almost one and one half times the diameter of Denava (227,575 kilometers, to be precise). Like Denava, the temperature at the surface of its dark brown cloud cover is abnormally high. Obviously, the radiation reaching the planet from the distant sun is totally inadequate to explain this heating. Goroth Beta must have a hot core, with heat reaching the surface of the clouds through radiation and convection. Many planetary scientists believe that there must be at least some fusion occurring in the core of Goroth Beta. In other words, its “nuclear furnace” is burning after all, but at a slow, measured rate.

Little is known about Goroth Beta. It is so far from the sun that few research missions have made the journey. It seems that little can be learned from even close inspection, however. A thorough understanding of the brown dwarf can come only from probes sent down into its fiery heart. Such probes were beyond the capabilities of the Gorothites themselves, and the Imperials have little interest in any research that cannot be expected to yield useful (in other words, profitable) data. Goroth Beta has no satellites, and is thought to be lifeless.

A Travelers’ Advisory

The Vestor Nebula and the pulsar at its heart are not the only hazards to navigation in this region. Since the Scouring, it has been somewhat hazardous to approach the Goroth system at all. This is because the asteroid impacts flung megatons of hyperbaride-rich debris into space. Much of this has fallen back to the planet — either as secondary strikes or as “hard rain” — while significant amounts remain in orbit as Goroth Prime’s tenuous ring. Countless tons, however, remain in Goroth system space, forming a “halo” of hyperbaride-rich material. The concentration of material in realspace can be measured in molecules per cubic meter of space. In hyperspace, however, the situation is quite different. For reasons not fully understood, superheavy elements like hyperbarides seem to cast a larger

“hyperspace shadow” than one would predict from their mass and concentration. In hyperspace, the halo around Goroth Prime is very noticeable indeed.

This halo thus represents a very real hazard to hyperspace navigation. It is dangerous to fly close to Goroth Prime while in hyperspace. Standard procedure when entering the Goroth system is to drop out of hyperspace at the “hyperspace threshold” — 72 hours travel (at a Space movement speed of 4) away from Goroth Prime. Use the chart below to determine how long it will take a ship to fly to Goroth after dropping out at the hyperspace threshold.

Space Move	Hours to Goroth
1	288
2	144
3	96
4	72
5	57.6
6	48
7	41.1
8	36
9	32
10	28.8
11	26.2
12	24

Brave or foolhardy captains might decide to save a little time by flying in closer to Goroth Prime before dropping into realspace. Doing so represents a very real risk of ionizing the starship’s controls, however — with unpleasant results if the ship is required to maneuver or fight once it has dropped out of lightspeed. A ship that flies within the hyperspace threshold suffers a single “attack” inflicting 6D ionization damage (refer to the ion cannon rules on page 110 of *Star Wars, Second Edition* to determine the effects of this attack). Remember that shields do not protect a ship from ionization damage.

For similar reasons, it is also risky to enter hyperspace while within the hyperspace threshold. Standard procedure is to fly sublight until the ship clears the threshold. While a ship does not suffer an ionization attack as when flying into the system, increase all *astrogation* difficulties by +20.

Chapter Three

Geology and Geography

Goroth Prime is a standard terrestrial world. It has an equatorial diameter of 12,756 kilometers. Its mean density is 5.5 (the density of water is 1.0), implying that it is a rocky world with a relatively small nickel-iron core. Its surface gravity is 0.98 standard — close enough to one standard gravity that instruments are necessary to measure the difference.

Goroth Prime's magnetic field is abnormally strong for a terrestrial world. This would make little difference except for the fact that its magnetic poles and its axis of rotation are offset by almost 20 degrees. This means that, as the planet rotates, its magnetic field sweeps through the hyperbaride-laden atmosphere and ring structure. This leads to significant build-ups of static electricity in the atmosphere, particularly in the ring. Thus, Goroth is often shaken by lightning storms that make electrical discharges on other planets look like tiny sparks by comparison. Discharges in the ring also affect the environment, flooding the planet with electromagnetic pulses (EMP).

Goroth Prime rotates slower than the norm. The local day is 36 standard hours in length — 1.5 standard days. Its year is 300 local days (equivalent to roughly 450 standard days, or 1.22 standard years). Goroth's axis of rotation is perfectly perpendicular to the plane of its orbit; thus, the planet experiences no seasons. Day and night are of equal length, with no seasonal variation.

Population

The planet's current population approaches 500 million. Under the auspices of the Colonial Governor, an official census is underway to confirm the true figure, which may be up to 5% different either way.

The vast majority of the planet's population is made up of native Gorothites. Bureaucrats, politicians, military representatives and support personnel making up the Colonial Government number 3,650. According to official mega-corporate employment rolls, there are some

15,000 direct corporate employees — as opposed to “client-workers” — on Goroth. Since these employment rolls are generated for taxation purposes, it is quite possible that the true number is somewhat higher than the “official” figure.

There are thought to be a small number of “client-workers” of other species — perhaps as many as 1,000 of them — toiling in the hyperbaride cracking plants of Goroth. A Rebel spy recently reported seeing two or three Wookies working in a “slaving gang.” There are also rumors that convicts and political prisoners from other Imperial-dominated worlds are serving out their sentences on Goroth.

Then there is the military — or paramilitary — presence. A full legion of Goroth Planetary Police (actually, paramilitary security forces) and their support personnel — numbering a total of 7,500 — is stationed on the planet. At any given time, there are also less than a thousand Naval personnel on duty on the planet, as well as crewmembers on leave from the two capital ships that remain permanently in-system.

And finally there are out-of-system visitors.

It surprises some people that the Empire would let anyone but Imperial personnel onto a planet of such strategic significance and value. In fact, however, the Empire can hardly declare Goroth off-limits no matter how desirable that might be. For one thing, the corporate presence guarantees that the Empire does not have complete control over who comes to and goes from Goroth. Corporate employees are constantly being transferred to and from Goroth operations. Management delegations and consulting teams frequently visit the facilities. Supplies must be delivered, and raw materials must be shipped off-planet.

Almost as importantly, however, the Empire wishes to maintain the fiction that Goroth is not a slave world. Goroth is a prime example — so the Imperial-controlled newsnets trumpet — of cooperation between an autonomous system and the Empire, to the greater benefit of both parties. Declaring the world totally off-limits — effec-

tively setting it up as a secure Imperial outpost — would expose this “mutually-beneficial cooperation” for the sham that it is.

Thus there is some limited travel to and from Goroth beyond that of corporate, Imperial and military personnel. Goroth has no tourist industry, of course, but there are reasons other than tourism for private citizens to visit a world. Much business is conducted on Goroth. The credit-flow attracts entrepreneurs, businessmen — respectable and less so — plus the usual assortment of rogues, con-men and gamblers who can smell a quick credit a parsec away. Further, there is the potential for a little lucrative “gray-market” trading. Most markets on Goroth are under indirect Imperial and corporate control thanks to the nationalization of major industries. Any controlled market automatically breeds demand for goods beyond that control. Of course, smugglers are also drawn to Goroth.

Geology

Like most terrestrial planets, Goroth consists of five different parts. In order — from the outside in — these are the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the lithosphere, the mantle and the core.

The atmosphere of Goroth is fairly standard in thickness and composition for this type of terrestrial world (with some notable exceptions, of course). Atmospheric pressure at sea level is 1.1 standard atmospheres — higher than normal, but not exceptionally so. Goroth Prime’s atmosphere comprises 74% nitrogen and 20% oxygen. “Trace” elements include argon, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, hydrogen sulfide, methane, and water vapor; there are also small but measurable concentrations of hyperbaride compounds. The most prevalent of these are ilinium trioxide (0.0002%) and vintrium hydride (0.0001%), although there are dozens more similar compounds in even smaller concentrations.

Goroth has several seas, all of them small and very shallow. In total, water covers only 12% of the planetary surface. The average depth of the oceans is 300 meters.

The planet’s crust varies in thickness from a few hundred meters — in highly active areas like the Yar’En (“Firelands”) and Na’R Ji’Gek (“Doomgate”) — to a kilometer or two. The upper mantle is approximately 100 kilometers thick. Compounds of hyperbarides make up less than 0.001% of the crust and upper mantle, with ilinium trioxide being the most common compound.

The inner mantle is denser and heavier than the material above it. It is semi-solid, and relatively hot (perhaps 1,500° Celsius). The mantle extends from the base of the crust to a depth of almost 2,800 kilometers. Concentrations of hyperbarides are much higher in the mantle,

climbing to almost one tenth of a percent!

The corporations have established several pilot boreholes into the mantle to extract the hyperbaride-rich material; they are manned by Gorothites. The immense technical challenges have limited the yield from these projects so far; some corporate scientists are projecting significant breakthroughs in the near future.

The core is divided into an outer shell and an inner core. The shell is semi-rigid, and is over 2,000 kilometers thick. Composed largely of nickel and iron, the shell has density of 10.0 — ten times the density of water. The inner core is thought to consist of the same elements, but at a much higher temperature — 7,500° Celsius or so. Even at these temperatures, the inner core is solid, simply because of the immense pressure it is under. The inner core is thought to have a density of 13.0. Concentrations of hyperbarides are even higher in the core than in the mantle — perhaps as high as 0.25% — but with current technology it is considered impossible to “mine” the core for the valuable elements.

Tectonic Plates and Continental Drift

As with many volcanically active terrestrial worlds, the crust of Goroth is split into a number of tectonic plates which “float” on the mantle. Upwellings of warmer and more fluid mantle material from deeper within the planet cause these plates to move. This is the origin of so-called “continental drift.”

Tectonic movement on Goroth Prime was always more rapid than the norm. For one thing, its core is more than 1,000° Celsius hotter than average for similar terrestrial worlds. For another, radioactivity — arising from the breakdown of meta-stable hyperbarides, as well as from the decay of more familiar radioactive isotopes — has caused pockets of abnormal heat (“hot spots”) within the mantle.

The result is that convection currents in the asthenosphere — which basically “push around” the tectonic plates — are stronger than is usual.

The Scouring destabilized the crust even further, splitting the tectonic plates into smaller fragments, each with its own motion. Most tectonic plates on Goroth move 40 to 80 centimeters per year (as opposed to the 5–10 centimeters per year range, which is more common for similar terrestrial planets); some of Goroth’s plates move as much as two meters per year!

Volcanism and Seismic Activity

Increased continental drift, of course, leads to higher-than-normal levels of volcanic and seismic activity. Many earthquakes result from tectonic plates moving against each other. Most quakes take place where the edge of one tectonic



Mike Viliardi

In the Badlands

Let me tell you, boy, I've seen some pretty harsh environments. This Gorothis place, it's one of the bad ones.

It's dark, see? That's part of the problem. The sun never really cuts through the clouds overhead. Middle of the day's as dim as twilight on any civilized world. Without optical enhancers, you can't see much further than you can chuck a rock. Except when the lightning flashes, of course. Then you can see more details than you probably want to see.

Night-time? What do you think, boy? Blacker than the inside of a space slug, a lot of times. Sometimes the lightning strobes everything into sharp relief. Sometimes there's a kind of fire in the undersides of those clouds. But sometimes it's so black you might as well have been struck blind.

The badlands are scary places to be at the best of times. Outcroppings of lava-rock everywhere. Black. Harsh. Jagged. Sharp enough to tear your envirosuit if you brush against them wrong. And there's something else about them. They seem to move in the shifting light. Lightning flashes, and you see an outcropping a dozen meters away. Couple seconds later, another flash — and it looks like it's less than 10 meters away. And is that an arm reaching out toward you?

Have you ever walked through a hall of statues at night? You know that feeling that they're moving when you've got your back to them? It's the same feeling in the badlands. Except the statues aren't of Humans. They're of things that come out of your darkest nightmares.

plate slides below the edge of another — typically along ocean shorelines and mountain ranges. “Mid-continental” quakes do occur, however.

It is a rare day that passes without at least one minor tremor at any given point on the planet's surface. Crust-wrenching “megaquakes” are much more uncommon, but they certainly do happen. Over the past century, the o'beki of Graith has suffered three major quakes — “major” meaning they were powerful enough to cause serious structural damage and significant casualties — but no true megaquakes.

By contrast, a smaller o'beki known as J'Jan has suffered two megaquakes in the same period, buckling the crust and changing the topography of the area, and almost obliterating the settlement. For obvious reasons, Gorothises have extensively researched earthquakes. Even so, the science of predicting seismic events is still in its infancy. Gorothise experts believe that the enclave of Graith will almost certainly suffer a devastating megaquake within the next 50 years — but the chances that it will occur tomorrow or 49 years hence are the same.

From a game standpoint, minor quakes will cause no damage to structures, ships, vehicles or characters. They can, however, be exceptionally unsettling to people not used to them — after all, most people expect the ground to stay put — and players should take the opportunity to develop their characters' reactions through role-playing.

Major quakes can be devastating, causing extensive damage (structural damage can run anywhere from 3D character scale damage to 8D starfighter scale damage). Normally, characters should be able to “dodge” earthquake damage; this represents diving out of the way of falling

masonry, jumping yawning crevasses, and basically keeping their balance while the world goes mad around them. Of course, these damage values do not take into account damage from falling debris, collapsing structures, explosions, fires and all of the other “secondary” damage effects of earthquakes. A true megaquake can cause up to 10D capital scale damage to structures, almost certainly completely devastating communities for kilometers around!

Gorothise architecture takes into account the certainty of earthquakes. Gorothise subterranean shelters are strong, shored up with many stout columns. Their cliff-dwellings are less resilient, but still stronger than standard Imperial building techniques. Since the Empire and the corporations have resettled Gorothis, none of the main o'bekis have been struck by large earthquakes. Thus, the Imperial and corporate personnel have little real idea of just how potentially lethal the planet is. The pressures that they have built are strong, certainly, and do a very good job of keeping out the hostile environment, but a large quake will probably breach them and a true megaquake will shatter them like eggshells under a stormtrooper's boot-heel. The Imperials do not know this, of course, and few Gorothises are of a mind to tell them.

The edges of the tectonic plates are marked by many volcanoes. Currently, there are several thousand active volcanoes on Gorothis Prime. Each of these volcanoes goes through periods of activity and quiescence; however, each seems to follow its own cycle, at its own rate. At any given time, there are hundreds or thousands of volcanoes erupting somewhere around the planet. Normally, the material spewed into the atmo-

sphere by so many volcanoes would obscure sunlight, turning the planet frigid. In the case of Goroath, however, the immense clouds of dust generated by volcanoes are the only thing saving the planet from a run-away overheating greenhouse effect. The two conflicting trends — global cooling and global warming — are more or less balanced for the time being.

Most volcanic eruptions are so-called “quiet” events. “Quiet” in this context still means potentially lethal, of course. During a “quiet” eruption, flows of lava pour from the volcano, while clouds of gas, particulates and steam are vented into the atmosphere. The gas clouds can be poisonous — particularly on Goroath, where they contain hyperbarides — but the major threat comes from the lava flows, which can pour downhill at speeds of up to 60 kilometers per hour (equivalent to a Move of 21!). Any character or vehicle engulfed by a lava flow suffers an attack of 6D speeder scale damage each round. Fortunately, quiet eruptions are *usually* heralded by tremors and minor earthquakes, giving sufficient warning to get out of the flow-patterns of released lava.

Explosive eruptions are much more dangerous since they often occur with no warning whatsoever. An explosive eruption occurs when a volcano basically “blows its top.” The concussion can be as violent as a nuclear detonation or an orbital bombardment by Star Destroyers. A typical explosive eruption might have the following statistics:

Blast Radius: 0-1/3/7/10 km

Damage: 10D/8D/5D/2D (starfighter scale)

Regardless of how they erupt, volcanoes poi-

son the atmosphere around them, both with hyperbaride salts and with more familiar but nonetheless poisonous compounds. Within 100 kilometers of any volcano, the atmosphere is Type III. Depending on prevailing winds (in other words, depending on the gamemaster’s wishes and story necessities), this “dead zone” can extend virtually anywhere, even into a Gorothite o’beki.

For rather obvious reasons, there are no Gorothite o’bekis near any active volcano. Unfortunately for the “client-workers,” however, several cracking plants and other facilities are near volcanoes since the magma chamber beneath the volcano is often an excellent source of hyperbarides.

Geography

Goroath has several major oceans, and countless lakes too small to show on a planetary map. The largest can be found in the western hemisphere: T’Ples, which can be roughly translated from the Gorothite as “Harrowmere,” or “Lake of Trials.”

Second to Harrowmere is the T’Klin S’rek (“Firecomb Sea”) — named for the chain of active volcanoes that line it to the northwest — in the eastern hemisphere.

The average depth of oceans on Goroath is 300 meters; in most, however, there are at least some deep “holes” or chasms, plunging to depths of more than twice that depth.

The deepest point on the ocean floor is the Ulan Bight, in the Ul’Husk Ocean in the eastern hemisphere, which is over 1,300 meters deep.

World in Torment

Tales tell us of our world as it once was, an idyllic garden. The sky was clear, the water pure, the breezes gentle. Food was plentiful. Life was glorious. Our world heaped bounties upon us, like a mother caring for her children.

Where are those bounties now?

Dark and sullen, the sky looms and glowers above us, hiding the face of the sun. The water is fouled; it burns the bellies of our children. The winds rip at us, like the claws of a predator. The foods we once ate are now death. Life is a short respite from death.

Look, off-worlder. Over there. See the mountain? See how it gouts fire into the sky? See how the great burning reflects from the clouds, turning them the red of your blood? See those clouds of ash, of smoke? Clouds of poison, off-worlder — deadly poison to you, and no less to my children. Watch how the wind carries

them, like shades of doom passing silently across the face of my world.

Can you smell the taint in the air, even through your breath mask? I can. It is sharp, piercing, bitter — a smell of death, not just for individuals, but for entire species.

Feel the vibrations through your feet. The world shakes and shudders, like a b’del racked by fever. Sometimes the shudders become convulsions. Mountains fall. Continents shift. Chasms open in the ground. Our homes collapse, are engulfed.

Rarer now are the spasms which collapse the land. But the ground is never still, never satisfied with the changes it has wrought. It quivers always, reminding us of the past we have lost.

Can anyone tell us what we did to deserve this punishment?

Storm Season

Those Navy vacheads think they're so hot with their TIE fighters. Out there in space, you can be as sloppy as you like because there's nothing to run into. If you want to try *real* flying, take the controls of an airspeeder and take it for a run through the mountains. During storm season. At night. You'll see those vacheads' faces turn as white as a stormtrooper's helmet.

You're on instruments most of the time, even during the day. Visibility's low, particularly downwind of volcanoes or geysers. There's so much garbage in the air you can hear it rattling off the airframe. Depth perception's lousy — I know a couple of good pilots who flamed in when they took their eyes off their instruments and misjudged their altitude.

The winds are harsh, gusty, and unpredictable. One second you've got a 50-klick

headwind, the next it's a 75-klick tailwind, and the next it's a downdraft that wants to slam-dunk you like a nega-ball.

And then there's the repulsorlift instability. Even with all the mods to our birds, it's harsh. Lift can fluctuate by 10 percent with no warning at all. Thrust, too, but that's not so critical unless you're in close formation. When it really gets fun is when you have asymmetric instability. If you're a millisecond slow in reacting, you're in a corkscrew, the ground comes up fast, and you might not even have time to punch out.

You can't let your attention wander for an instant, particularly in the mountains. Our orders are to keep to a nice, high altitude — but what pilot worthy of the name isn't going to go for a tear through the canyons when nobody's looking?

That's what I call flying!

The oceans are abnormally warm — on average, 18–22° Celsius. This temperature does not change significantly with depth, even in deep holes such as the Ulan Bight, implying that the temperature is a result of geothermal, rather than solar, heating.

Before the Scouring, the planetary oceans — which were much larger than they are today — were considerably cooler, ranging in temperature from perhaps 1° Celsius to 12° or so. When the ocean temperatures rose, countless species of aquatic life died because they were unable to adapt to the rapidly-changing conditions.

Rising temperature was not the only threat to aquatic life, however. As a result of the Scouring, a significant portion of the hydrosphere boiled away or evaporated. This concentrated salts — predominately sodium chloride, but heavy metal salts (including hyperbaride salts) were present as well. This, too, killed off many aquatic species that thrived in salt concentrations of 3% but were poisoned by salt concentrations of 12%.

Further, many more compounds were being introduced into the oceans as a result of the asteroid strikes. Volcanoes spewed hyperbaride-rich lava flows that eventually cooled in the oceans — but not before some of the salts they contained dissolved in the water. "Hard rain" precipitated particulates out of the atmosphere, forming rivers which leached even more poisons from the tortured lands. These streams and rivers carried their burdens of heavy metals and other toxins into the oceans.

There are several dozen species of aquatic life that have adapted to the harsh conditions in the oceans. All of these have evolved ways of filtering

out the poisonous contaminants, often concentrating the hyperbaride salts into hard shells or exoskeletons.

Mountains

There are many high mountain ranges on Goroth Prime. The highest peaks can be found in the "girdle" of mountains that surrounds the o'beki of Graith. The mountain known as M'Nis ("Skyfang" in the Gorothite tongue) soars to an altitude of 8,100 meters, and there are half-a-dozen other peaks in the region almost as lofty.

For some reason, the mountains of the western hemisphere are not as tall as those of the eastern. On the other side of the planet from Graith, the highest peak is known as Teldanus ("Overlook"), with a height of 7,350 meters.

"Volcanic Badlands"

Large areas on Goroth Prime are categorized as "volcanic badlands" — like the Yar'En ("Firelands"), west of Graith — which combine the worst features of deserts and volcanic plains. These volcanic badlands are rugged expanses of lava-rock where nothing grows. Black, rough and striated with deep chasms and knife-edge ridges, the badlands are almost unbelievably ugly and daunting. Formed by the upwelling of lava from vents in the surface or from impact craters, they are typically characterized by rock so rough and harsh that the jagged protrusions will cut through the soles of any footwear but specially-made "rock boots."

In some isolated places, however, the black lava rock is smooth as polished marble, creating the impression of pools and waterfalls frozen

forever into black solidity. Here, for whatever reason, the upwelling lava cooled more rapidly than normal, thus avoiding the jagged, almost crystalline surface typical of the badlands.

The rock of the badlands is hotter than normal rock. It ranges in temperature from warm to the touch, to hot enough to sear flesh on contact (approximately 25° to well over 100° Celsius). Because of this heat, the air above the black rock roils and shimmers with convection patterns. Powerful “thermals” — upwelling columns of heated air — represent additional risks to atmospheric flight over badlands. The air over badlands is considered Moderate difficulty terrain for flying vehicles.

Hotsprings bubble to the surface in some regions of the badlands. The water — highly contaminated with poisonous metals — ranges in temperature from 30° or so to boiling. Geysers — either continuous plumes of steam, or periodic fountains of boiling water — are also relatively common.

Polar Caps

Even 4,000 years after the Scouring, the effects of the bombardment have not fully run their course. The average surface temperature on Goroth Prime is still climbing by a degree or two every few decades. As a result, the planet’s polar ice-caps are shrinking and will continue to shrink for many years into the future.

The water from the melting ice caps has to go

somewhere, of course. At the moment, it forms “polar oceans” — bodies of water that surround the ice caps. As the melting continues, these “polar oceans” will certainly spread.

Climate

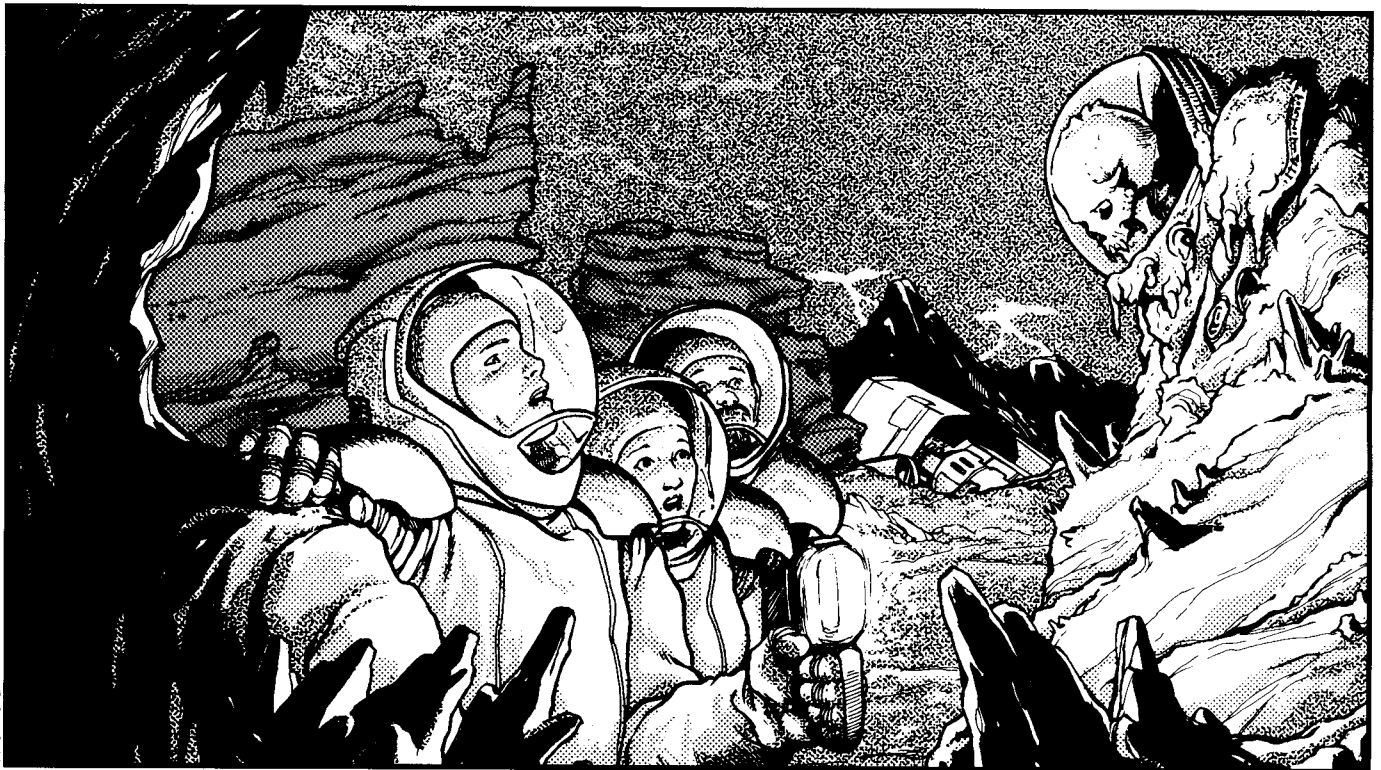
The Scouring has drastically changed the climate of Goroth. The world has warmed dramatically. Clouds constantly hide the sun, and violent lightning storms lash the mountains.

On the equator, at sea level, the average daytime high temperature is 35° Celsius, dropping to 12° at night. Since the planet’s axis is perpendicular to the plane of its orbit, there is no seasonal variation. This temperature drops relatively steadily with altitude — approximately 7.5° for each additional 1,000 meters.

The average temperature declines as one approaches the poles. At the heart of the polar caps, the average daytime high hovers around freezing, with nighttime lows plunging to -30° Celsius, or even lower. Wind chill drops the effective temperature even further — perhaps as low as -50° or -60°.

Cloud cover is unbroken; the sun doesn’t shine directly on the surface of Goroth Prime, bathing the world in a continual twilight during “day.”

Precipitation is highest near the equator. Average annual rainfall on the equator is 250 centimeters. In the enclave of Graith, an average of only a dozen days go by in a year without at least some rainfall. Nearer the poles, the average an-



Mike Vilardi

nual rainfall drops to 50 centimeters.

In the mountains, windstorms are common. Their violence often comes as a terrifying surprise of off-worlders. Wind-shear, microbursts and high-velocity gusts that can exceed 120 kilometers per hour make atmospheric flight through the mountains a frightening and dangerous experience. During a windstorm, add +2D to the difficulty number for any roll involving flying movement. Lethal windstorms can blow up with almost no warning. Among the taller mountains, windstorms are an almost daily occurrence.

The Ring

The ring that surrounds Goroth Prime is so tenuous that it is almost invisible. Only when it is backlit by the day-side of the planet can it be seen clearly. Unlike a true asteroid field, Goroth's ring is composed of countless tiny particles, the largest not much bigger than a grain of sand. This makes it impossible to "fly between them." Any ship that flies into the ring at any significant speed will be "sandblasted" by the particles. While the ship will probably not suffer serious damage, sensors and shields will take a beating, greatly reducing their effectiveness until circuits are replaced.

The ring is a flattened torus (a donut-shape), many times wider than it is thick. The inner edge of the ring is about 1,000 kilometers above the surface of the planet, and the ring extends out to about 3,000 kilometers above the surface. In contrast, the flattened torus is perhaps 10 kilometers thick at its thickest point. The ring is aligned with the planet's equator.

The ring material carries an immense static charge. As the concentration of material shifts,

sometimes titanic static discharges — like immense lightning bolts — arc from one part of the ring to another. The largest of these bolts create enough of an electromagnetic pulse to ionize the controls of ships within the ring (6D ionization damage).

Sometimes the pulses are strong enough to penetrate the atmosphere and wreak havoc with unshielded systems on the planet below. Vehicles that are not specifically shielded to deal with conditions on Goroth suffer an attack of 6D ionization damage (speeder scale) when one of these discharges occurs.

Small static discharges in the ring are an almost constant event. In any given hour, there are probably a dozen or more small discharges somewhere in the ring, but they are small enough to be harmless (even if their appearance is spectacular).

On average, a major bolt will occur somewhere in the ring every 10 days or so. Also on average, any given spot on the equator of the planet will be flooded with an electromagnetic pulse once every one and a half local years or so.

It is important to note that the o'beki of Jerev (in the eastern atmosphere) is close enough to the equator to suffer from periodic electromagnetic pulse discharges. In the western hemisphere the o'bekis of Moren and A'Lenba are in the affected zone. The Empire built a spaceport at A'Lenba before the realities of the ring's discharges were fully understood. If the Imperials could do it again, they would certainly choose another site for one of the planet's major spaceports. Fortunately, Graith, the planetary "capital," is far enough north of the equator to be unaffected by the pulses.

Chapter Four

The Environment

Long-lasting consequences of the asteroid bombardment continue to complicate life on Gorothe Prime for natives and off-worlders alike. Off-worlders must always take precautions when traveling outside any of the corporate or Imperial pressures.

The Gorothe environment has a way of turning minor lapses of judgment into tragedies. On another world, for example, a traveler forced down in the wilderness by a malfunctioning airspeeder would have a reasonable chance of "living off the land" until help arrived. On Gorothe the crash survivor would be in real trouble. Not only would he not be able to breathe the air, drink the water or eat the local life-forms, but he might also have great difficulty summoning help. It is not a wise idea to travel the wilds of Gorothe without detailed planning.

Atmosphere

The air of Gorothe Prime is contaminated with a wide range of potentially-toxic compounds. Most of these are particulates — in other words, dust particles composed of hyperbaride compounds and other materials. Around active volcanoes, however, the air contains poisonous gases as well as particulates.

In O'bekis

Around Gorotheite o'bekis, the atmosphere is classed as "Type II" — in other words, simple breath filters are sufficient for off-worlders. In Type II areas, the only poisonous components of the atmosphere are particulates that can easily be filtered out. Breath masks range in price from 50 credits to over 500 credits. The only major difference is that the more expensive models typically last longer between filter replacements: 20 hours as opposed to one hour for the cheaper units.

Off-worlders can survive within Type II areas without breath masks for short periods. For each hour (or portion) that a non-Gorotheite breathes

Type II air without a filter, reduce his *Strength* by one pip. The symptom of this loss is a feeling of progressive weakness, like exhaustion but more pernicious. When a character's *Strength* is reduced to zero, he dies. Pips lost to atmosphere exposure return naturally once the character is back in good air (at a rate of one pip every four hours; this rate is doubled if the character is under the care of another character who makes a Difficult *first aid* roll).

Native Gorotheites do not suffer this effect because of their innate resistance to hyperbarides.

Within corporate and Imperial pressures, of course, the air is Type I: safe to breathe without any precautions whatsoever.

In the Wilderness

The situation is quite different outside the o'bekis, of course. Over the centuries, the Gorotheites have made great advances in purging their immediate environment of at least some of the toxins. Beyond the o'bekis, however, those toxins still remain.

Outside o'bekis, the atmosphere is classed as Type III. Here, the particulates are still present, but they are joined by poisonous gasses. Simple breath masks will remove the particulates, but they can do nothing about the gases, many of which diffuse through the skin. Off-worlders must wear fully-sealed envirosuits to totally avoid the effects of a Type III atmosphere.

The Type III atmosphere has two distinct effects on off-worlders. The first is a result of the particulates, and is the same as for Type II atmosphere within the enclaves: for each hour (or portion) that a character breathes in the particulates, he loses one pip from his *Strength*. This effect can be countered by a breath filter.

The gases in the atmosphere have another effect, however. For each hour (or portion) that a character's skin exposed to these gases, he loses two pips each from his *Dexterity* and his *Perception*. The symptoms of these losses are

disorientation, nausea, vertigo, blurred vision, tremors, and cramps. If any of these attributes reach zero, the character dies. Lost pips are recovered as described in the section above. This effect can only be countered by a full, sealed envirosuit. A breath mask provides no protection against these poison gases.

Note that these effects are independent. A character who breathes Type III atmosphere through a breath filter will not suffer the consequences of the particulates — in other words, he will not lose pips from his *Strength* — but he will lose pips from his *Dexterity* and *Perception* (with the standard symptoms) due to the poisonous gases. Thus, a breath mask is better than nothing, but is not enough to keep a character alive for long.

Native Gorothises are unaffected by particulates, but are affected by the poisonous gases. A Gorothise who enters a Type III atmosphere without an envirosuit loses one pip from his *Dexterity* for each three hours he is exposed. He regains lost pips at a rate of one per hour. Thus, a Gorothise will eventually die if exposed to Type III air, but nowhere near as quickly as an off-worlder would.

The Polar Caps

As a result of the planet's weather patterns, the air over the polar caps is almost as clear of contaminants as that within the o'bekis. On the ice-caps, the atmosphere is classed as Type II.

Hydrosphere

Goroth's hydrosphere, too, is poisoned: oceans, rivers and springs, as well as the rain itself. Water from different sources contains different concentrations of contaminants, however.

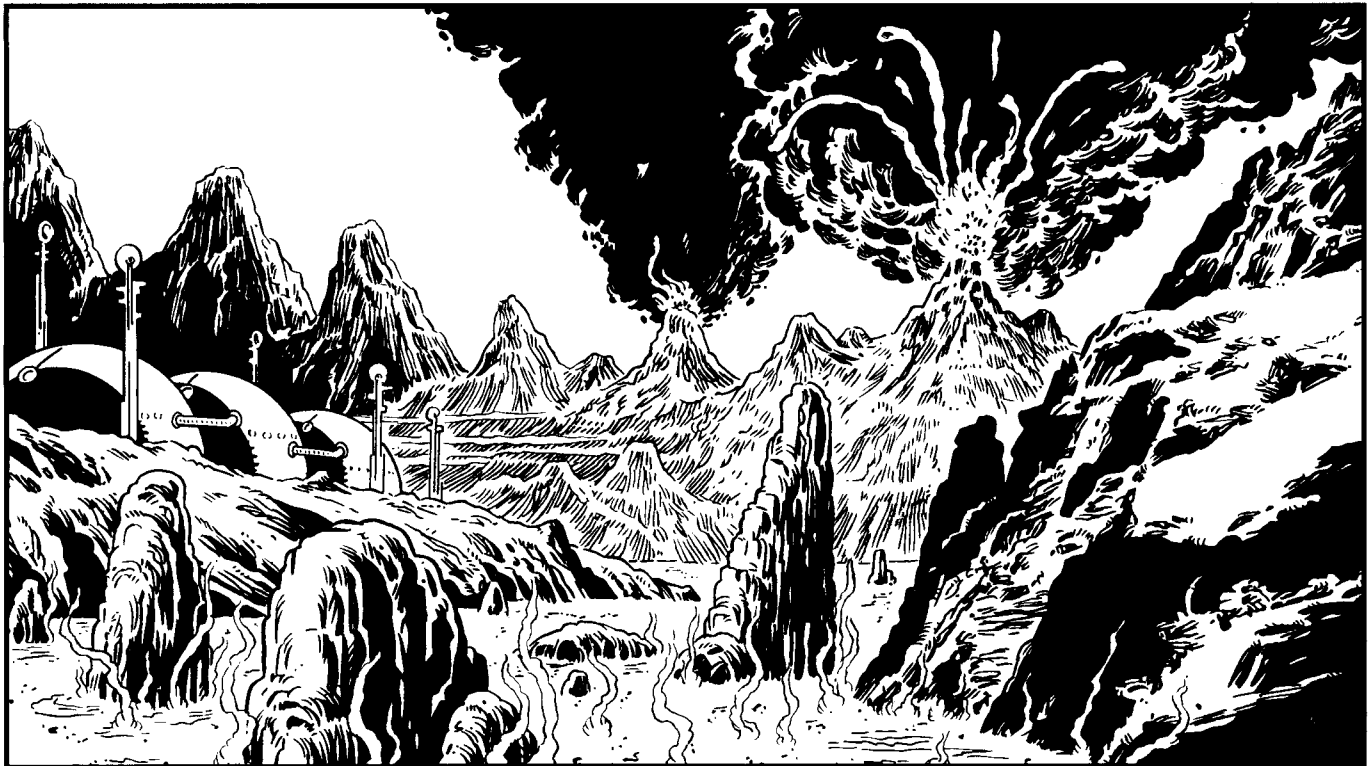
Oceans and Springs

Today, the oceans are brews of highly poisonous toxins. If an off-world, carbon-based life-form drinks unfiltered ocean water, he immediately suffers 6D damage. The symptoms of this damage are wracking cramps, burst blood vessels, and fever.

The water is toxic even to most native species, although not quite as lethally so. A native Gorothise suffers 4D damage when drinking unfiltered ocean water.

Relatively simple filters will completely remove the toxins, although nothing can be done to remove a disgusting metallic taste from the water. Boiling will not make the water safe to drink. An effective personal filter — about the size of a man's fist — costs 50 credits, and can process 100 liters of water before becoming useless. Larger and more expensive filters can handle greater volumes. All corporate and Imperial pressures have extensive filtering plants, of course, and all but the smallest Gorothise settlements have filters.

Water that bubbles up from natural hot springs (in the volcanic badlands and elsewhere) is generally just as toxic as ocean water.



Dan & David Day

Rain

The cleanest water on the planet is rainwater that has not yet had the chance to pick up contaminants from the ground. As always, “clean” is only relative: rainwater does precipitate out contaminants from the atmosphere itself, becoming “hard rain.” An off-worlder suffers 3D damage from drinking unfiltered rainwater; a native Gorothise suffers only 1D damage. Again, filters can render the water harmless, but boiling it is useless.

Rivers and Streams

Most rivers carry rainwater from the slopes of the mountains down to the oceans. As it passes over the riverbeds, the run-off picks up further contaminants from the land. Most river water is less poisonous than ocean water, however: off-worlders suffer 4D+2 damage from drinking unfiltered river water, while native Gorothises suffer 2D+2 damage. A few streams are fed by hot springs and are just as lethal as the oceans.

Ice Caps

Although few visitors realize it, there is a source of almost uncontaminated water: the polar ice-caps. If a character digs down a couple of centimeters into the ice-cap and melts the ice found there, the resulting water will be almost pure, inflicting “only” 1D damage to off-worlders and no damage at all to native Gorothises.

Radiation

Hyperbaride contamination is enough of a problem, but it is not the only one. The mantle of Gorothis Prime is rich in more familiar radioactives, and the hammer-blows to the crust have spread many radioisotopes across the surface of the planet. The level of beta and gamma radiation on the surface and in the atmosphere is not enough to cause short-term damage to off-worlders. Long-term exposure — on the order of years or decades — is another story; it’s why off-worlders all live in sealed and shielded pressures. For their part, the native life-forms have developed an innate resistance to this level of radiation.

Unfortunately, the radiation does have an effect on certain kinds of technology: specifically, repulsorlift drives and the sophisticated computers that form the “brains” of droids and other autonomous machines.

Repulsorlift Operation

Standard repulsorlift vehicles become extremely unstable in the atmosphere of Gorothis Prime. Add a penalty to the difficulty of any movement roll. Roll randomly on the table below to determine the added penalty:

Roll (on 1D)	Added Difficulty
1	+5
2	+10
3	+15
4	+20
5	+25
6	+30

This added difficulty represents the power surges, drops and fluctuations caused by the radiation. For a character who is unaware of this hazard, the gamemaster should allow an Easy *repulsorlift operation* test the moment he fires up an unmodified repulsorlift vehicle to recognize that he will be at serious risk flying the thing.

Repulsorlift engines can be modified to resist these fluctuations. These modifications are very extensive and exceptionally expensive. A pre-modified vehicle will cost double the standard price — for example, 13,000 credits for a modified Ikas-Adno Nightfalcon speeder bike.

Characters might decide to make the necessary modifications themselves. This requires a Difficult *repulsorlift repair* test, and takes a minimum of one day. The cost for parts is 35% of the vehicle’s normal new cost. Complicating factors — for example, lacking the proper tools — can add +5 to +20 (or even more) to the difficulty of the task, depending upon the gamemaster’s discretion.

A suitably modified repulsorlift vehicle negates the difficulty modifiers for movement rolls. However, these modifications are so extensive that they significantly change the operation of the vehicles. In other words, a modified repulsorlift vehicle drives very differently from an unmodified model. To reflect this, the gamemaster should always apply an “unskilled” penalty of -2D, as described on page 98 of *Star Wars, Second Edition*. Anyone piloting the vehicle without the correct specialization suffers the -2D penalty. As a matter of course, all Imperial and corporate pilot personnel on Gorothis will be specialized in the modified versions of repulsorlift vehicles.

Droids

The radiation flux on Gorothis Prime causes untold damage to the mental processes of unmodified droids. For each three hours that a droid is outside a shielded area (like a corporate pressure), it loses 1D from each of its *Knowledge*, *Mechanical* and *Technical* attributes. For “sentient” droids, including droid characters, the “symptoms” of these losses are disorientation, confusion, absent-mindedness, and wild swings of “pseudo-emotions.” The sensations are exceptionally disturbing, and no droid will willingly



Mike Vitarci

expose itself to them without a very good reason. When any attribute reaches zero, the droid is “hung” — totally catatonic, incapable of taking any action until repaired.

Unlike living characters, droids do not “heal.” Once a droid has lost dice from its attributes, it can only regain them by being repaired. This repair can be difficult and time-consuming, however, since each of the three classes of circuitry affected — equating to *Knowledge*, *Mechanical* and *Technical* attributes — must be repaired separately. The difficulty for each depends on the number of dice lost:

Dice Lost	Difficulty	Repair Cost*
up to -1D	Easy	5%
up to -2D	Moderate	10%
-3D or more	Difficult	20%

* Based on percentage of “new” cost

Time taken: One hour, then three hours, then 24 hours.

Like repulsorlifts, droids can be shielded against the radiation flux. This is very expensive, however. A pre-modified droid costs four times the listed price: thus, a modified fifth-degree droid costs 4,000 credits, while a modified R2 astromech droid costs 18,100 credits! It is this price differential that makes the use of “client-workers” much more economical on Goroth Prime.

Fortunately, characters can do the modifications themselves. This requires a Moderate *droid*

repair roll, and takes a minimum of one day. The cost for parts is 250% of the droid’s original “new” cost. Complicating factors, such as lack of proper tools, can add +5 to +20 (or even more) modifiers to the difficulty, at the gamemaster’s discretion.

A modified droid does not lose dice due to radiation.

Communications

Because of the radioactive contaminants in the atmosphere, standard comlinks are ineffective on Goroth Prime. In fact, their effective range is decreased by a factor of 250, depending on ambient conditions! Thus, a standard vehicle comlink will have a range of 800 meters (normally it has a range of up to 200 kilometers), while a personal unit will have an effective range of only 200 meters (normally it has a range of up to 50 kilometers)!

Unlike other forms of technology such as repulsorlift vehicles, there is no simple “technological fix” to overcome this problem. Where long-range communication is absolutely required, “land-lines” must be used: shielded fiber-optic lines. Characters will often have to go to existing land-line stations.

If fiber-optic lines are established, there is no range limitation. Theoretically, one station could communicate, without distortion, to another station on the other side of the planet assuming an unbroken land-line link exists. Of course, this

also means that cutting off communication is just a matter of snipping a few fiber-optic lines.

This has a significant effect on spaceport operation. Obviously, incoming starships are not connected to a spaceport's control tower by communication lines. Thus, an incoming ship cannot communicate with the ground — or vice-versa — until it reaches an altitude of less than one kilometer! Pilots used to being “talked down” by the control tower will feel pretty lonely on their first approach to Goroth Prime.

As a result, there have been many “near misses” between ships on approach and/or landing patterns — the Colonial Governor's office keeps the actual number confidential — but as yet there have been no mid-air collisions.

Natural Resources

These, of course, represent the reason why the Empire and now the Rebel Alliance have turned their attentions to Goroth Prime. While Goroth is a source for “strategic” heavy metals such as iridium, platinum and osmium, it is the hyperbarides that make the planet so valuable.

For many centuries, scientists have known of “super-heavy” hyperbarides that were as stable as more common elements, but possessed certain chemical and physical properties that made them unique. They are seldom found naturally, and are often synthesized from more common elements through an intricate and very expensive process requiring great temperature extremes, pressures and raw energy.

Hyperbarides came to be used in many high-energy applications because they could withstand higher temperatures, flux densities and levels of radiation than standard materials. Because of these qualities, hyperbarides are an important part of the high-yield turbolasers used by the Empire in its heavy capital ships and ground installations. Without a steady supply of hyperbarides, Imperial weapons manufacturers would have to rely on inferior materials.

The Empire has several hyperbaride synthesis plants on worlds throughout the galaxy. For strategic reasons, their locations are closely-guarded secrets. These synthesis plants are expensive to run, however. A source of naturally-occurring hyperbarides — like Goroth Prime — represents an immense cost savings.

There are a dozen or so strategically significant hyperbarides. The most important are the elements ilinium, vintrium, maranium, frasium, and hollinium. Pure hyperbarides are immensely valuable. A kilogram of pure frasium, for example, is worth one million credits or more to the right buyer. Compounds of hyperbarides, such as ilinium trioxide, are less valuable, but still worth significant sums of money: 250,000 credits or so per kilo. This value is a significant “draw” for smugglers throughout the Mid-Rim.

Obviously, it is in the Empire's best interest to keep a very tight lid on hyperbaride smuggling. Ships entering and leaving the Goroth system are subject to extensive searches and scans.

Chapter Five

The Gorothis

There is one sentient species native to Gorothis Prime, known to exobiologists simply as “Gorothis.” In contrast, the Gorothis refer to themselves as “B’Dellyi” (singular “B’Del”), or “The People.”

As intelligent species go, the Gorothis are relative “newcomers,” having achieved sentience less than a million years ago. In evolutionary terms, then, they have diverged less than the norm from related, but less intelligent and non-sentient species also native to Gorothis.

Biology

Anatomy

Gorothis are tall, broad humanoids, about 2.2 meters tall on average, with shoulders proportionately much broader than an average Human. A full-grown adult will mass about 150 kilograms. Females are slightly larger, on average, than males. The deviation between individuals, however, is greater than the average difference between genders.

Gorothis appear to be reptilian, with an elongated and slightly-flattened snout. They have sloping forehead. Their brain cases are large, bulging out and back at the rear of the skull. The positioning of their eyes provides true binocular vision.

Gorothis have several “wattles” beneath their chins. These appear to be simply loose flaps of skin; however, by tightening certain muscles in their necks, Gorothis can cause these wattles to distend, almost like a pouch under the throat. The skin of the wattles is tattooed in complex, helical designs of bright colors. These tattoos denote ancestry and status within Gorothis society, as well as identifying to which j’ber (roughly translatable as “clan” or “extended family”) the individual belongs.

Protected under protruding ridges of bone, Gorothis’ eyes are relatively small, almost “beady” in appearance. Evolved under much

brighter daylight than the Human norm, these eyes’ diamond-shaped pupils can contract to the size of a pin-point in an instant. Thus, Gorothis are less susceptible than many other species to the dazzling effects of bright lights or sudden flashes. When the creatures are out under the skies of Gorothis, their pupils are dilated so much that the surrounding iris — which is a bright and striking green in most individuals — is almost invisible.

They have no external formations surrounding their ears. Their timpani (ear-drums) are flush with the skin, about three centimeters in diameter. Gorothis have an excellent sense of hearing, much more sensitive than Humans’, although loud and sudden noises are very painful for them.

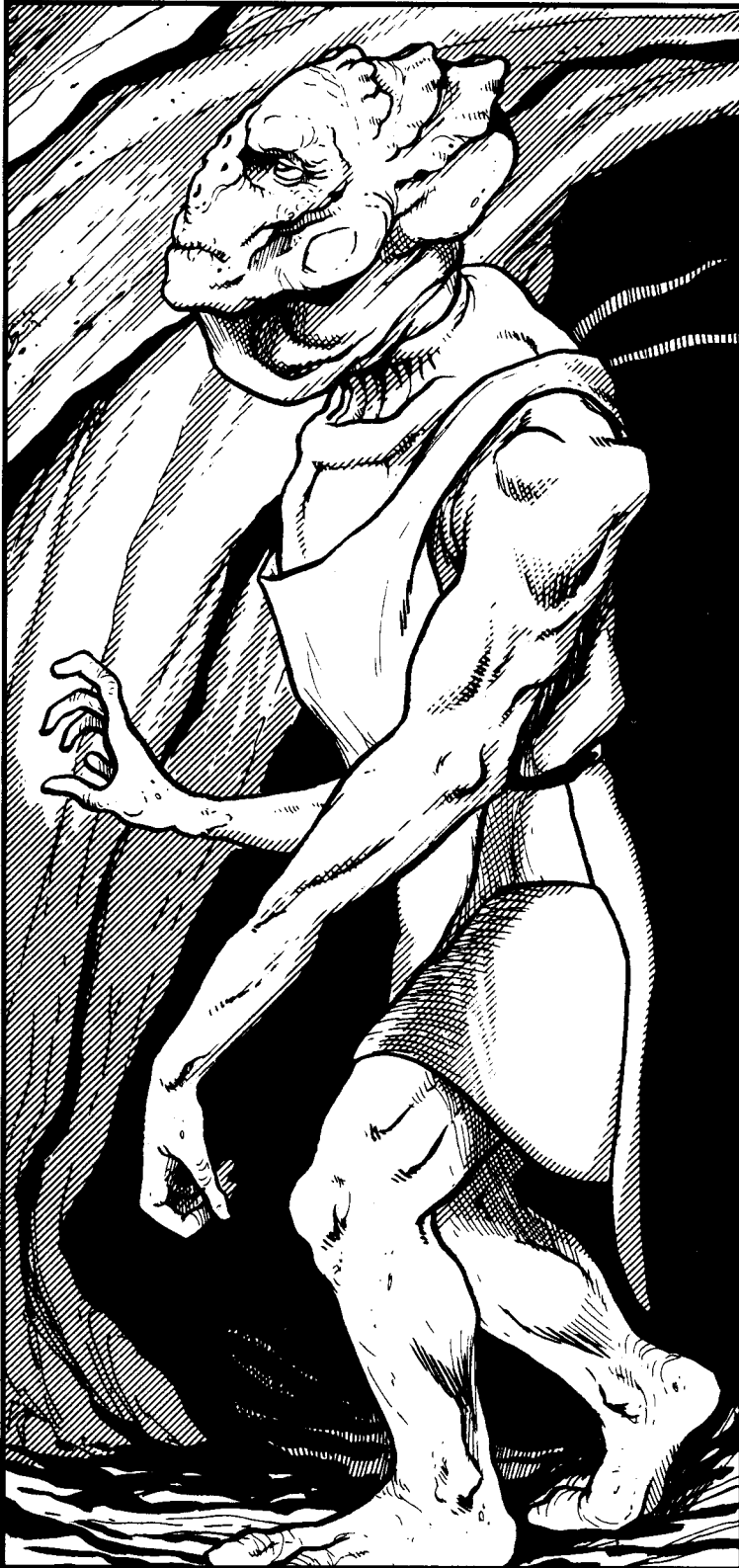
Gorothis are diurnal. They typically sleep for 12 hours each day, during the long Gorothis night. At need, however, they can go for several local days with no sleep whatsoever.

A Gorothis can open its jaws very wide — 45° or more. It has the teeth of an omnivore — sharp, knife-like cutting incisors in the front, and flat, grinding pseudo-molars further back. This shows the creatures’ ancestry. They evolved from omnivores, and were omnivores themselves until the Scouring. Only since then have the Gorothis become pure herbivores. Gorothis’ mouths are used only for eating.

They have four small nostrils, in the center of their forehead, between their eyes. These nostrils lead into a complex system of sinuses in the front of their skull, and thence to the trachea (which is separate from the esophagus along the whole of its length). These sinuses are filled with sensory nerves, which give the Gorothis a very acute sense of smell.

Gorothis speak by creating a resonance in their sinuses; they have no “voice-box” as such. When they speak their own language, their voices are dry and clicking, and their nostrils visibly close and open to create stops and plosives (“p,” “b,” “k” and similar sounds). When they speak

Basic, their voices are thin and reedy, with very pronounced stops and plosives. (A common complaint is that talking face-to-face with a Gorothite is like getting sneezed on repeatedly!) The Gorothite language evolved completely indepen-



dently of other languages, so the inherent difficulty for non-Gorothites to understand it is Difficult (see pages 76–77 of *Star Wars, Second Edition* for more information on the *languages* skill).

A Gorothite's skin is knobby in appearance, and mottled in color, ranging in hue from muddy brown to dirty green, with black markings here and there. These markings are as distinctive to other Gorothites as fingerprints are to Humans; to most Humans, all Gorothites look very much alike. Although it looks as though it should be hard and rough to the touch, their skin is actually very soft, with a texture reminiscent of velvet. Their normal body temperature is above Human norm — 40° Celsius, to be precise — and their skin feels warm and dry to the touch.

Gorothite arms are disproportionately long, and well-muscled near the shoulder, but becoming more slender toward the hands. They have two “elbows,” both of which are fully double-jointed (A Gorothite has no difficulty whatsoever scratching the center of its back ...).

Their hands are long and slender, with five triple-jointed digits. They have two opposable “thumbs,” one on each side of a narrow palm. Their three fingers are dexterous, and well-eneruated. Their sense of touch is more sensitive than an average Human's. This has a down-side as well, however: their fingers are very sensitive to pain, and Gorothites are cautious about touching anything that might hurt them.

Their legs, in contrast, are disproportionately short, and bow-legged to the point of appearing bandy. Their feet are broad and squat, with three thick digits. The soles of their feet are protected by calluses so hard as to resemble bone.

Despite their size, and their visible musculature, Gorothites are on average weaker than Humans. This is a consequence of the different (and less efficient) chemical makeup of their muscles. They also have considerably less stamina. Gorothites are quicker-moving than Humans, however — suprisingly “light on their feet” and agile for creatures of their size and mass.

Gorothites are more resistant to heat than Humans, able to function comfortably in ambient temperatures of up to 50° Celsius. They are more sensitive to cold than Humans, however. Temperatures that would be comfortable for Humans — between 15° and 25° Celsius — are uncomfortably cold for Gorothites. Thus, Gorothites do not relish any time they must spend within corporate or Imperial pressures. It is a point of personal honor to endure these temperatures without complaining, however, and without wearing additional clothes.

Gorothites usually wear simple robes, rather like shifts, woven from synthetic fabrics. They

prefer muted “earth-tones” (browns, blacks, light reds and so forth), although some individuals wear brighter colors as a kind of personal “fashion statement.” Style and color of garb is totally unconnected to personal or j’ber status. In fact, it took the Gorothites considerable time to understand even the concept of a uniform — and the fact that minor differences in garb denote gradations of rank and status — and even today few can easily distinguish an off-worlder’s rank by looking at his uniform. Conversely, most Gorothites cannot understand how off-worlders can be insensitive to the fine gradations of status denoted by their own wattle tattoos!

Gorothites normally go barefoot, except when walking on the knife-edged lava rock of the volcanic badlands. Here they wear thick-soled sandals made of a resilient synthetic material similar to duraplast.

Although it is not strictly necessary, most Gorothites wear simple breath masks when they leave their o’bekis. These filters are more to eliminate the foul smell from the air than to remove contaminants. Since Gorothites breathe through the four nostrils between their eyes, their masks will not fit Humans or most other humanoids. Conversely, Gorothites cannot use standard-issue Human breath masks without extensive modifications.

Apart from the minor size difference, there is no real visible distinction between male and female Gorothites. Their wattle tattoos make gender immediately apparent ... to Gorothite eyes, at least.

Nutrition

Far back in their evolutionary history, “pre-Gorothites” were predatory carnivores. As they climbed the evolutionary ladder toward sentience, however, they became omnivores. Since the Scouring, however, they have become pure herbivores.

Gorothites have no understanding of the “meal-times” given so much significance by Humans. A Gorothite will tend to “graze” throughout the day, eating small amounts every hour or so, rather than sitting down to two or three distinct meals. Eating has none of the emotional or social significance that it does for Humans — it is viewed as “fueling the body,” no more, providing no more pleasure than breathing. Few Gorothites can grasp how such a basic biological function can be hedged round with such bizarre traditions by other cultures. Feasts, dinner parties and family dinners have no place in Gorothite society. In fact, some Gorothites are mildly offended by the “salacious” (to them) attention Humans and other species pay to eating in public.

Like some herbivores, Gorothites have two stomachs — a small “rumen” and a larger “main stomach.” This paradigm is common to many native Goroth Prime life-forms. This is because a Gorothite’s digestive apparatus is not very efficient. When food is swallowed, it is initially kept in the rumen for several hours of “pre-digestion.” During this time, the Gorothite will frequently regurgitate some of the food and chew it again, exposing it once more to saliva. Further, a Gorothite will sometimes spit a wad of partially pre-digested food into his hand, and knead it in his palm, before re-ingesting it. This is just a fact of life for Gorothites; they cannot understand how Humans and others can find such a natural action as distasteful or disgusting. Regurgitating and kneading food in the presence of another is actually a sign of trust, and thus something of a compliment. It implies, of course, that the Gorothite trusts the other not to steal the pre-digested food from his hand.

If a Gorothite fears she will be without food for some time, she can stuff both her rumen and main stomach with food, then regurgitate and process the “stock” over three or four days.

Gorothites do not cook or otherwise prepare the mosses that make up their diet. The concepts of seasoning, spices and condiments are alien to their way of thinking. In their subterranean shelters and their cliff-dwellings, Gorothites grow these mosses on the walls of their living areas.

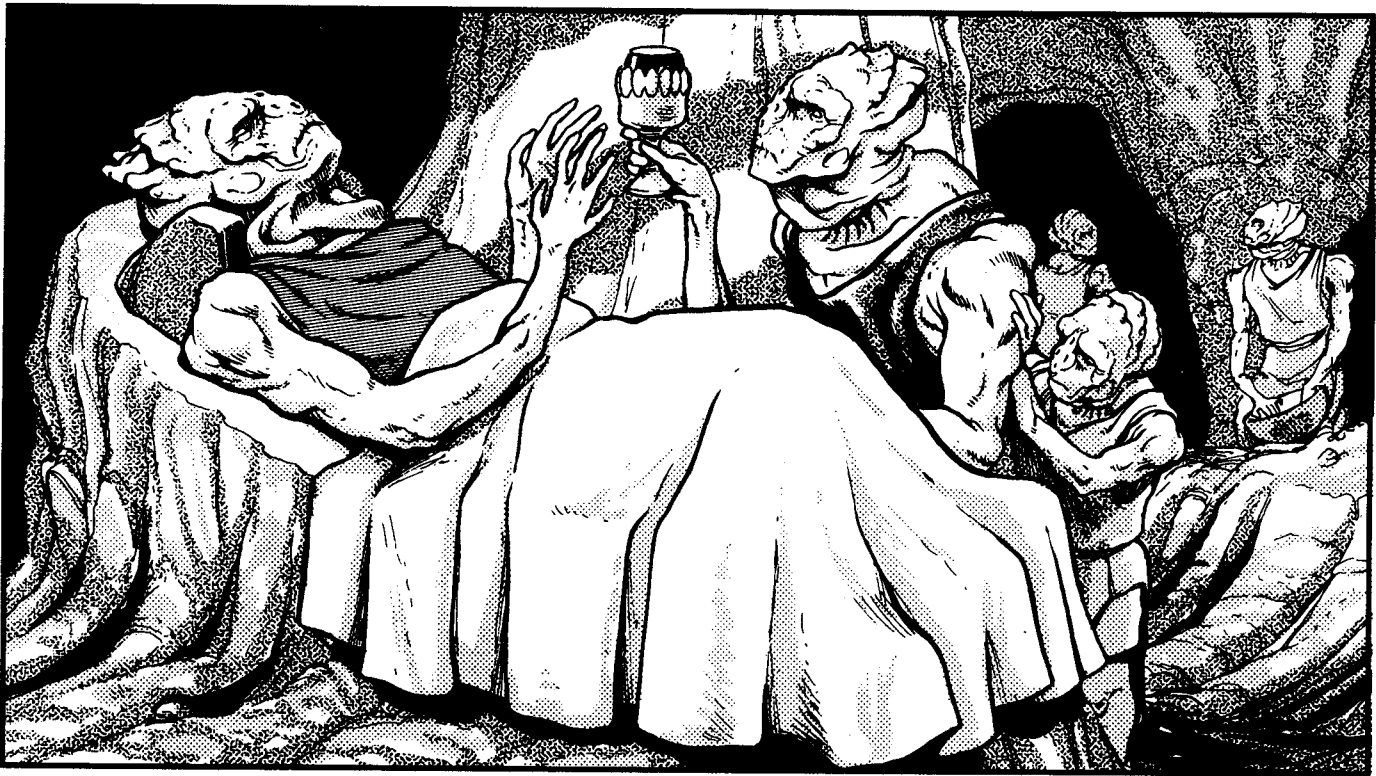
Gorothites enjoy a resistance to the hyperbaride contamination in their food; this does not mean that they require hyperbarides to survive, however. Gorothites can subsist perfectly well on Human foodstuffs, and those eaten by other carbon-oxygen-based life-forms (they just might not enjoy the flavors and textures).

Reproduction

Although they appear to be reptilian, Gorothites are closer to mammals in terms of reproduction. They are viviparous (they give birth to live young) and both the female and male parent lactate. The sound of a young Gorothite crying stimulates lactation in adults, regardless of whether the crying child is the adult’s biological offspring or not. Within family groups, all adults participate in feeding and nurturing children.

Sexual activity is an intensely personal and private thing for Gorothites; next to nothing is known about Gorothite mating practices, although it is believed that, like eating, mating is purely a biological matter with no special significance.

The gestation period averages about 200 local days (about 300 standard days). This period can vary by as much as 5%. Multiple births



Mike Vitarci

are unheard-of. The birthing process is also an intensely private affair. A female will give birth completely alone; even the biological father is excluded. Fortunately, complications are exceptionally rare in Gorothise childbirth. After giving birth, a female Gorothise is incapable of conceiving for about one local year (450 standard days).

Children are greatly treasured; any adult Gorothise would gladly give his or her life to protect a child. The high infant mortality that followed the Scouring was incredibly traumatic to the Gorothises.

The ideas of marriage and monogamous relationships are unheard of on Gorothis. Gorothises interbreed within their j'ber clan structures. To breed with a member of another j'ber brings immense shame on the individuals and both clans, and is thus exceptionally rare.

When exobiologists first realized this fact, they were amazed: would this behavior not lead to the reinforcement of recessive and dangerous genes? It was only after much study that the scientists realized that, with some notable exceptions — including the genes for hyperbaride resistance — such deleterious reinforcements are actually weeded out by a very efficient genetic “error-checking” mechanism. It is interesting and important to note that this “error-checking” occurs only during the reproductive cycle: specifically, during the first four cell divisions after the fertilization of a zygote. Beyond this period, the Gorothise genetic code is susceptible

to mutation. It is thought that this mutation process is the major mechanism through which variation is brought into the racial gene pool.

Maturity and Aging

Newborn Gorothises are helpless: blind, almost totally deaf, and incapable of coordinated movement. Without protection and nurturing from their parents and other members of the j'ber clan group, they would surely perish. Gorothises are “weaned” and start eating solid food at the age of one and a half to two local years (two to three standard years). This is mainly a cultural matter. Exobiologists believe that a young Gorothise could subsist on solid food at an age of one standard year.

Gorothise males mature by the age of 10 Gorothis Prime years (12 standard years), while females mature by age 12 (equivalent to 14 standard years). Culturally, they are considered adults — with all the concomitant rights, privileges and responsibilities of “B'Pen” (“Majority”) — at 13 local years (15 standard years). Only in the rarest of cases — and at the risk of great family disapprobation — will a Gorothise mate before reaching the age of B'Pen.

Once they are sexually mature, Gorothises show no outward signs of aging for several decades. Thus it is impossible to judge an adult Gorothise's age by her appearance unless one can decipher her wattle tattoos.

When an individual reaches the age of about

105 local years (126 standard years), however, a Gorothite undergoes rapid change. Within a span of five or six local years, a Gorothite's skin fades to a dusty gray, dries out, and starts to flake and crack painfully. Various creams and unguents, made from certain mosses, can relieve this pain for a time. Eyesight starts to deteriorate, and the Gorothite quickly becomes deaf. A Gorothite's legs become more bandy, posture begins to stoop, and muscle mass deteriorates.

By the age of 115 local years (138 standard years), a Gorothite will typically have lost 10% of his or her mass and an equal proportion of height. At the age of about 115 local years, a Gorothite's mental processes start to undergo serious deterioration. Left by himself or herself, a Gorothite would die of old age by 120 local years (144 standard years).

Aging Gorothites are not left on their own, however. A cultural tradition of euthanasia exists, an "easing of The Way." When a Gorothite feels his mind starting to go, he will summon his j'ber for a final celebration. Together, all members of the j'ber will celebrate his strengths and achievements, each one reciting at length how the individual's presence has enriched his or her own life. This is a joyful occasion, a time of great gladness, love and high-spirits. At the height of the celebration, the old Gorothite is given a "traveling cup" — a draught of poison — by those closest to him within the family. With his family standing around, he dies a painless death, "walking The Way to the next life." For an entire day, the celebration continues; then the body of the deceased is cremated and his ashes scattered to the winds with great honor.

Gorothites see this tradition as the culmination of a life well lived. The thought of dying alone, not surrounded by a loving family, is a terrible one for any Gorothite.

■ Gorothites

Attribute Dice: 12D
DEXTERITY 1D+2/5D
KNOWLEDGE 1D/4D+2
MECHANICAL 2D/4D
PERCEPTION 2D/4D
STRENGTH 1D/2D+2
TECHNICAL 1D/3D

Special Abilities:

Skill Bonus: At the time the character is created *only*, the character gets 2D for every 1D placed in the *bargain*, *search* and *cesa* skills.

Hyperbaride Immunity: As discussed in the section on the environment, Gorothites are less affected by the contaminants in the air, water and food of their world.

Smell: Gorothites have a highly developed sense of smell, getting +1D to their *search* skill when tracking by scent. This ability may not be improved.

Story Factors:

Family Bonds: Gorothites have a strongly-developed sense of family honor. Any action taken by (or against) an individual Gorothite reflects on the entire family. Gorothites would rather die than bring dishonor to their family.

Parental Instinct: Adults instantly respond to the cries of a young Gorothite, whether the child is a part of their family or not. They are driven to protect the child, even if this puts themselves at extreme risk.

Enslaved: Although the Colonial Government uses the term "client-workers," the Gorothites are effectively slaves of the Empire. Gorothites are officially restricted to their world. Attempting to leave Goroth Prime is a crime punishable by imprisonment. A Gorothite who has managed to escape the planet is considered a "fugitive from justice" by the Empire, to be incarcerated and returned to Goroth Prime if caught (if the Imperial forces who find her have the time and inclination to do so). Gorothites are considered a very minor problem and do not receive the same "attention" as a fugitive Wookiee would.

Move: 10/13

Height: 2.0–2.5 meters

Psychology

Gorothites are natural survivors — otherwise they would have died out soon after the Scouring. They are mentally resilient. While they are emotionally sensitive and as sentimental as other species, and certainly suffer fear and despair, they are undaunted by these emotions. Once a Gorothite has decided that a goal is worth attaining, she will soldier on toward that goal regardless of the obstacles in her way. The greatest "sin" in their mind-set is giving up or setting aside a task when the going gets difficult. Phrases like, "When the going gets tough the tough get going" are untranslatable into the Gorothite tongue ... merely because they are completely axiomatic, and thus unquestionable.

Interestingly, there is a strange undercurrent in the species' psychology that some sociologists have labeled "fatalism." This is not quite accurate — perhaps "a belief in predestination" is closer to the mark — but it is very difficult to describe this world-view. "Hope" is an alien concept to Gorothites. If a task is worth performing — if the goal is worthy — then a Gorothite will set himself to completing that task, regardless of whether he has any chance of success ... even if his own death is a foregone conclusion. If the task is truly worthy, then a Gorothite is undaunted by the prospect of his own death, unswayed by either hope or despair. If asked to put this concept into words, a Gorothite might explain that the gods have decreed that his people be tried in the forge of adversity, and thus that it is just that they face that adversity undismayed.

This does not mean that Gorothites are always hurling themselves into hopeless and quixotic quests. If the Scouring has taught the species anything, it is to be coldly pragmatic. Before a goal or course of action can be judged worthy or unworthy, all possible consequences must be weighed. Only if the consequences of success are obviously better than those of failure, or of inaction, will the task be undertaken. This explains why the Gorothites as a whole have not flung

themselves headlong into rebellion against the corporations and the Colonial Government. While freedom from oppression is a desirable goal, most Gorohtites realize that the consequences could be the extermination of the entire species.

Not all Gorohtites will agree on the worthiness or unworthiness of a particular goal or task, of course. There is as much personal variation among Gorohtites as among any other sentient species. Thus the difference in approach between the two major resistance groups, the Gor'Jen'Ar and the T'B'Dellyi'Mai. The leadership of the Gor'Jen'Ar believe that militant action will bring about extinction, while those of the T'B'Dellyi'Mai believe there is something to be gained for the species as a whole by terrorism, though it will probably cost the terrorists themselves their lives.

Society

Family and Interpersonal Relationships

J'ber, or "family" (more accurately, "clan family") is central to the society of the Gorohtites. A Gorohtite j'ber is a group of individuals connected by bonds of blood and honor.

At the height of the Gorohtite civilization (before the Scouring) these "extended families" tended to be very large, with hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of individuals.

Whole towns or cities were occupied exclusively by a single family. Traditionally, there was almost no mixing of blood-lines between different j'ber and different settlements. Sometimes a portion of one family would move on from the family holding — be it city, town, or large farming "croft" — to establish another settlement elsewhere. Settlements composed of the same family line would typically remain in close communication with each other.

In the early days of Gorohtite society, holdings occupied by different families would have little contact with each other. J'ber kept to themselves. Sometimes rivalries would develop, and from time to time small-scale warfare would break out between different family holdings. All in all, however, warfare was rare. The Gorohtites were — and remain — less territorial than many other sentient species. Territory and wealth are much less important than j'ber ties and honor.

Things began to change in the millennium before the Scouring. Contact between different families began to increase as the overall standard of living on the planet rose. With the introduction of more advanced technology, larger industries began to develop, and this necessitated an increased level of contact between different families and different holdings.

For several decades, this increased contact led to an escalation in rivalries between j'ber and holdings, and warfare became more frequent. Eventually, however, the generally pacific out-



Mike Vilardi

■ A cesa game in progress.

look of the Goroithite species allowed their society to settle down with a new and different equilibrium.

Certain families began to specialize. While one j'ber might concentrate on energy production — a growing issue as the civilization became more technologically advanced — another might focus its efforts on developing communications systems. Other j'ber concentrated on scientific research, while still others focused on food production. One family — the j'ber J'Kek — concentrated on what might be called “politics”: building contacts and alliances between other families.

Over the centuries — and under the benevolent guidance of the Old Republic's Bureau of Acculturation — the influence and stature of j'ber J'Kek increased until, almost unbeknownst to anyone else, it had emerged as a de facto planetary government. All other families recognized that in j'ber J'Kek was concentrated the most influence — and power — on the planet. Although some families resented this at first, such was the Goroithites' innate sense of pragmatism that they quickly came to accept the status quo.

With an effective planetary government, j'ber retained their traditional concentrations and specializations. J'ber P'Tel, for example, remained dominant in food production, while anyone interested in conveying cargo from one city to another would be well-advised to contact j'ber D'Reb.

Goroithites rejected the notion of “democracy” as it was commonly practiced — they acknowledged the J'Kek as the rightful leaders in the field of inter-j'ber relations and “laws.” It is for this reason that members of j'ber J'Kek — the traditional “political specialists” — led the planetary government for many generations, up until the Scouring itself.

During this period, some old traditions did start to break apart, however. While the proscriptions against breeding across j'ber lines still existed, the large, monolithic j'ber holdings began to fragment. Larger cities emerged, made up of sub-groups from thousands of j'bers. In areas other than politics, traditional specializations also began to fade. Competition began to emerge, and the Goroithites quickly learned the value of a free-market economy — and, incidentally, became sharp traders and negotiators.

The Hammer Falls

With the Scouring, Goroithite civilization fell apart and many j'bers ceased to exist. Others were fragmented, seemingly forever, as cities and towns were swept from the planet, and communications between holdings failed. One of the

families that was totally wiped out was j'ber J'Kek. Many Goroithites blamed — rightly or wrongly — the greed and ambition of Rel'Kan J'Kek D'rith Kalama for the fate that befell their world. Even now, Rel'Kan J'Kek is viewed almost as a being of evil incarnate, and one of the most venomous insults in the Goroithite tongue is to accuse someone of being tainted with “the blood of the J'Kek.”

Survivors of the cataclysm banded together out of necessity: tiny fragments of once-huge families, and individuals who were the sole heirs of once-proud bloodlines. For the centuries after the Scouring, constraints against the mixing of bloodlines were set aside. The only alternative seemed to be eventual extinction. Yet again, Goroithite pragmatism overcame tradition. New j'bers were formed from fragments and individuals of other j'bers, and they took new names. Once the birthrate began to climb again, however, and once the species' survival no longer seemed in such doubt, the old traditions came back into force, and remain in force today.

Communication between the different o'bekis was non-existent at first. In fact, many enclaves believed that they represented the last footholds of intelligent life on the planet. Eventually, however, communication between o'bekis was re-established.

Within individual o'bekis, the political situation tended to mirror the status quo before the Scouring. Individual j'bers had become the ruling parties, simply by establishing strong connections and alliances between differing j'bers. Once communications were re-established between o'bekis, much the same thing happened on a global scale. The “ruling families” of individual enclaves established connections among themselves, and eventually a single j'ber emerged as the effective “planetary government.” To this day, that family — j'ber D'Trel, based in the o'beki of Graith — retains what serves for power in the Goroithite political system.

The Present Day

J'ber is still the most important facet in any Goroithite's life. This is reflected by the species' naming convention. The j'ber name is always given first, indicating precedence. This is followed by a “matronymic” — a name that indicates who the individual's mother was (before the Scouring, this second name was a patronymic, indicating an individual's father). Finally comes the individual's personal name. Thus, the name D'Trel B'Far Talis identifies the individual as one Talis, offspring of B'Far, of j'ber D'Trel.

On the matter of names, many Goroithites recognize that their names are hard for off-worlders to remember and pronounce. Some



Mike Vliardi

■ Gorothise Planetary Police, known as "Gops," lead a recalcitrant Gorothise to a slave-labor work camp.

Gorothises will take nicknames that they believe — often mistakenly — will be easier for off-worlders to recall. Thus, D'Trel B'Far Talis might be known among those off-worlders who slave beside him as “client-workers” as “Before Talis.”

Before the Scouring, j'bers were traditionally patriarchies. The eldest male in any sub-unit of a family would be the leader of that group, and all others would defer to him. J'bers as a whole would have a leader, the oldest male still living in the j'ber's ancestral holding. When inheritance became an issue — not often, except for names, because of the j'ber structure — patrilineal inheritance was culturally dominant.

The “gender polarity” of authority has changed since the Scouring. No Gorothises know why although some ethnologists wonder whether it might be a result of blaming Rel'Kan J'Kek — a male — for the Scouring. Today, all families are matriarchies and inheritance is matrilineal. Because of the fragmentation of j'bers and the destruction of most ancestral holdings, the tradition of an overall j'ber leader has largely been lost.

Individually, a Gorothise will defer to any member of his or her j'ber who is older. If there are no members of one's j'ber around, a Gorothise has the choice — but not the obligation — of deferring to any older Gorothise, regardless of j'ber. In practice, younger Gorothises will almost always be polite and show at least some deference to their elders, regardless of j'ber. This will rarely extend to obedience, however, outside of one's own j'ber.

K'Ji'Kur (“Beholding”)

Gorothises have a tradition that they refer to as K'Ji'Kur, or “beholding,” which is similar in some ways to a Wookiee “life-debt.” If one Gorothise helps another in a major way, to his own detriment, the individual so helped might declare that she is K'Ji'Kur to the other. This is like a one-time debt, which the individual who has declared the K'Ji'Kur owes to the other, to be repaid in kind at the first opportunity. This “repayment” of the K'Ji'Kur may, but does not have to, extend to the individual giving her life for the one to whom she is K'Ji'Kur.

It is important to note that it is always an individual's choice whether or not to declare a K'Ji'Kur. No one can ever be forced to do so, and a K'Ji'Kur declared under duress is not binding. Still, an individual who does not declare a K'Ji'Kur when it is apparent to others that she “should” do so is shamed and that shame extends to her j'ber. Thus, Gorothises will almost always defer to “peer pressure” on this issue.

A K'Ji'Kur does not have to be declared at once, so individuals will often take the issue to

the matriarch of their j'ber for advice, then follow her suggestion.

K'Ji'Kurs are not declared within a single j'ber, but only between individuals of different j'bers. Members of the same j'ber are considered, to some extent at least, to owe an “innate K'Ji'Kur” to all family-members anyway. A Gorothise will very rarely declare a K'Ji'Kur to an off-worlder, and only if he personally believes the debt is immense. There is no family shame in not declaring a K'Ji'Kur to off-worlders.

Religion

Before the Scouring, the Gorothises had several religions, the basic tenets of which were largely compatible despite contradictory creation myths and the like. Pre-Scouring Gorothises were as non-territorial with regard to “philosophical real estate” as they were to terrain and these religions co-existed peacefully. Religion was each individual's personal business, and none of these faiths advocated conversion.

Members of a single j'ber sub-group usually (but not always) shared the same religion, although different groups within the same j'ber were sometimes drawn to different faiths. The most popular religion at the time combined a limited pantheism with the concept of transmigration of souls. Members of this faith believed that they had lived many lives before this one, and that their current incarnation on Gorothis Prime was a reward for right action in previous incarnations. Remember, at this time Gorothis Prime was a “garden spot.” They were also taught that a fiery “netherworld” awaited those who transgressed in this life.

The old faiths were among the many things obliterated by the Scouring. When the survivors emerged into an environment that reminded them all too much of the mythical netherworld, they re-examined their beliefs. What sins could the entire world have committed that would condemn everyone to this place?

In the decades immediately after the Scouring, the old tradition of j'ber specialization re-emerged in one interesting area: that of religion. The matriarch of one small j'ber — the V'Sook, limited at the time to the enclave of Graith-announced that she had finally come to understand the Gorothises' place in the universe. Calling her philosophy M'Nes, or “True Faith,” she taught that the Gorothises were being tested. The entire species was being tried in the crucible of suffering and pain. Enduring would strengthen the B'Dellyi — not only in body, but also in spirit — to the point where the gods would judge them fit and worthy to transcend to an existence even more wonderful and fulfilling than the paradise they shared before the Scouring.

This transcendence can only be achieved as a species, V'Sook M'Alra Vin claimed, not by individuals. Either all Gorothites would transcend, or none would. The entire B'Dellyi must face steadfastly the travails that beset them and endure patiently. Only through patience — and the justice of the gods — could the Gorothites hope to move on.

M'Nes spread rapidly. Perhaps it should not have been surprising how many people took to this new “religion.” After all, it provided a spiritually-satisfying answer to the great question of why the gods would inflict such great suffering on the B'Dellyi. Many Gorothites found it easier to accept the Scouring as a kind of divine test, rather than as a senseless catastrophe.

Over the centuries since the Scouring, the religion as first preached by V'Sook M'Alra Vin has spread across Goroth Prime, becoming more or less the central planetary religion. Most Gorothites have been exposed to its tenets at some point in their lives, either as part of their upbringing or later in life. This does not mean that all Gorothites fully believe it or accept it, however. Some have taken it completely to heart and base their lives on it. Others deny it vehemently, decrying it as the ultimate abdication of personal responsibility. Most Gorothites fall somewhere in the middle, however, giving the faith little thought in their day-to-day lives, but falling back on it as a kind of spiritual touchstone when they need reassurance and courage.

The j'ber V'Sook remains the M'Nes Brin (“Receptacle of the True Faith”). All females of the j'ber are “Mothers of the True Faith” — K'Kela Mey; priestesses by another name.

From the “birthplace of the Faith” — the o'beki of Graith — the V'Sook j'ber has spread to all other o'bekis on the planet. In every Gorothite settlement, there is a “Sanctuary of the True Faith” — M'Nes K'Lar, a small building where anyone, whether an adherent of the religion or not, is free to come and meditate in peace and quiet. The K'Kela Mey are always available for personal counseling sessions, where they offer advice and spiritual support to those who are troubled or in need. K'Kela Mey also speak at regular J'Nes B'Sar (“Truth Gatherings”), where members of the religion come to listen to words of spiritual comfort and support. The priestesses use these J'Nes B'Sar to reinforce the tenets of their religion — that patient endurance, and submission to the “tests” declared by the gods are the only routes to transcendence.

The M'Nes is an important facet of Gorothite life. The K'Kela Mey — and the V'Sook j'ber as a whole — are very influential across the planet. While supposedly staying out of politics — “avoiding base distractions,” according to the V'Sook

matriarch — actually the V'Sook j'ber has the ear of many P'Dar'Ken'Al (council-members) as well as the P'Dar Ib'Al (local council-members) in the various o'beki governments.

These P'Dar'Ken'Al recognize that j'ber V'Sook wields a significant amount of temporal power arising from their spiritual influence. After all, there are some Gorothites who take every pronouncement from the K'Kela Mey as absolute, incontrovertible truth. There are many others who are not so vehement in their belief, but are still influenced by the faith's teachings. The P'Dar'Ken'Al recognize that they could not hold power if the V'Sook so much as hinted to the faithful that the councilors were no longer worthy of leading the populace. This recognition takes various forms, of course. Some councilors fear that being removed from office by a popular ground-swell would put an end to the good they can do for their community. Others fear for the loss of personal privilege and status it would entail.

For these reasons, even though they have no official place in government, members of j'ber V'Sook are actually very influential in the political sphere.

Imperial Involvement

This fact has not been lost on the Colonial Government. Governor Limoth recognized early on that the central tenet of the M'Nes — “submit patiently to the trials that beset you, or you will decrease the chances for all B'Dellyi of achieving transcendence” — is just the message that he would like to send out to the Gorothite population.

After all, if rebelling against one of the “tests” sent by the gods — in this case, the Imperial occupation — is a sin against the entire species, then would peer pressure not help to keep malcontents in line?

Subtly, the Colonial Government has been supporting j'ber V'Sook and M'Nes. Governor Limoth is quietly funding the V'Sook, allowing them to build new and larger sanctuaries. M'Nes has been granted tax-free status, and priestesses pay personal tariffs at lower rates. In the “client-worker” barracks associated with certain Imperial facilities, rules against public meetings have been waived exclusively for J'Nes B'Sar (this has led to certain resistance cells trying — with various degrees of success — to disguise their meetings as “Truth Gatherings”). And, whenever Colonial Governor Limoth makes public appearances or vidnet-broadcast speeches, he is very careful to speak reverently and respectfully of M'Nes.

In return for these “concessions,” the K'Kela Mey openly denounce resistance movements like the Gor'Jen'Ar — and especially the T'B'Dellyi'Mai

— as sinners who are compromising the chance for all B'Dellyi to transcend. It is important to note that some members of j'ber V'Sook are fully aware of what is going on and that they are implicitly supporting, and even collaborating with, the Empire for their own personal benefit. Many members of the j'ber, however, are not this cynical ... or realistic, depending on one's point of view. They truly believe in their religion, and they see the Colonial Governor's cooperation with the M'Nes Brin simply as proof that "The Truth" can be recognized and respected by off-worlders as well as Gorothises.

It would be easy to conclude that members of the resistance movement must be apostates, or atheists. Certainly, many K'Kela Mey decry them as heretics and sinners! In fact, however, there are many resistance operatives and sympathizers who believe in the central tenets of M'Nes. It is just the interpretation of those tenets with which they disagree. The Imperial occupation is definitely a test set before the B'Dellyi by the gods, the resistance members believe ... but how is one supposed to pass that test? By submitting passively? Or by overcoming the obstacle by fighting the Empire? Both courses of action can be viewed as "facing the challenge," but which choice will lead the species to transcendence, and which will bar them forever from the next level of existence? Thus, while membership in the resistance is incompatible with the rigid orthodoxy perpetuated by j'ber V'Sook, it is not necessarily incompatible with belief in the tenets of M'Nes.

Species Personality

It is often simplistic — and dangerously misleading — to stereotype or "pigeonhole" an entire species in terms of personality. For example, the stereotypical description of Humans might include brashness, rampant individualism, and a tendency to act before thinking. Yet there are many Humans who do not fit this categorization: who are self-effacing, good team-players, and often paralyzed by second-thoughts when a decision has to be made.

Such is the case with other species as well, including the Gorothises. The B'Dellyi are not quite as unpredictably variable as Humans, but still they show a great range of individuality. Even so, many off-worlders — specifically, many corporate and Imperial personnel — seem to subscribe to a simplistic, "If you've met one Gorothise, you've met them all" attitude.

There are certain factors present in the personality of most Gorothises. They are a traditionally thoughtful people. Most Gorothises would rather err on the side of thinking too long before taking action — of over-analyzing consequences

and alternatives — than on rushing into something unprepared. In general, however, they are pragmatic enough to recognize that, sometimes, a decision simply has to be made even if all the information is not yet in.

Intelligence is highly valued: not necessarily "book-learning" and education, but the nimbleness of mind necessary to analyze novel situations and put familiar facts together in new ways. This is not to say that learning is denigrated, however. Education is valued, but the ideal remains a combination of knowledge and supple intellect.

Logic puzzles — tests of mathematical and spatial reasoning, acrostics and a local variation on the concept of crosswords — are extremely popular; children are taught to work simplified versions of these puzzles before they can read. Gorothises cannot see the attraction of "trivia games" — involving nothing more than recalling unconnected facts on cue — that so intrigue many Humans. Neither do they see the attraction of most forms of gambling, since the luck element almost always overwhelms whatever skill is involved.

Cesa

A popular one-on-one game is called cesa, played with ornately-carved pieces moved around a 10-by-10 array of alternately-colored squares. The rules, mainly relating to how different pieces can move, are relatively simple, but years of dedication are necessary to learn how to play well. The vast majority of Gorothises play cesa (at one level or another), approaching it as anything from a hobby to an absolute, all-encompassing obsession. Cesa leagues and ladders exist in all o'bekis, and even within the "client-worker" barracks of Imperial facilities. Soon after the Imperial occupation, the Colonial Governor experimented with broadcasting top-rank cesa games over the vidnet (hoping, theoretically, that the Gorothises might be too busy watching the games to plot rebellion). The plan fell flat. To Gorothises, there was no attraction whatsoever in watching two others play a game of cesa; all the pleasure comes from actually playing oneself. Thus, even when two local cesa masters are squaring off for a game in a neighborhood kefa house, no Gorothises will go out of their way to watch the match. This attitude extends to all sports.

Gorothises never expect off-worlders to be able to play cesa and are pleasantly surprised to encounter a stranger who has bothered to learn the game. One of the best ways for an off-worlder to quickly earn a Gorothise's respect is to beat him in a game of cesa.

Cesa

Cesa is a *Perception*-based skill.

Time Taken: A few minutes to several hours

This skill is used to play the game of *cesa*, to understand its mechanics, and to talk intelligently about the game. When a character plays *cesa* with another, make opposed rolls using both characters' *cesa* skill. Note that the *gambling* skill does not cover *cesa*.

Humor

Most Gorothis are thoughtful and introspective. They never laugh or smile — their anatomy simply does not permit it — and many off-worlders assume they have no sense of humor. In fact, they have a strong cultural sense of humor, but it runs along different lines from that of other species. Slapstick, pratfalls, practical jokes, “shock” or obscenity-based humor are simply not funny to a Gorothis. Instead, the species' humor is quite formal and cerebral — “dry,” to most off-worlders — revolving around multi-level puns and wordplay (much of which cannot be translated into Basic), logical ambiguities, and what might be called “humor of the absurd” (“dueling non sequiturs,” as one Ithorian once described it).

The culture makes a very strong distinction between subjects where humor is appropriate, and those where it is not. Inappropriate levity is shocking, and sometimes interpreted as an insult. A Gorothis would never make a joke in the face of imminent doom, as might a Human.

Friendships

Gorothis tend to develop extensive networks of friends, within their own j'ber and outside it, that extend throughout the o'beki where they live. As communication channels between enclaves proliferate, so do links in these “friendship trees.” Most Gorothis are wary about establishing friendships with off-worlders simply because they assume that all “aliens” are part of the Empire that oppresses them.

Once they come to grasp the concept that an individual off-worlder is not part of the Empire — a galaxy-trotting gambler, a smuggler, or a Rebel agent, for example — Gorothis have no ingrained problem with accepting him or her into their friendship tree.

Gorothis see friendship as a strong and reciprocal bond. If a friend asks for a favor, you are entitled to grant it. Of course, a friend will never ask for something you are not able or willing to grant, since doing so would overstep the bounds of friendship. Off-worlders often cannot understand why Gorothis are not more frequently taken advantage of by “friends.” The reason is simple to the B'Dellyi: one who tries to take

advantage is no longer a friend, and thus not worthy of any concessions whatsoever. Friends keep no secrets from each other — none at all. Conversely, nothing (short of torture) will convince a Gorothis to reveal to non-friends something told in confidence by a friend.

Gorothis enjoy spending time in the presence of friends and family. They do not share the fixation many species have with “small talk,” and talking just to “fill space.” If there is nothing important to say, Gorothis will say nothing. When friends get together — perhaps over a mug of kefa, a local beverage — they will often sit for minutes or hours without speaking, enjoying a comradely silence. A Gorothis aphorism encapsulates it well: “The words of a friend's heart are spoken in silence.”

Motivations

In general, Gorothis are not motivated by the desire for and the acquisition of wealth. They are not acquisitive and they cannot understand why anyone would become obsessed with conspicuous consumption or why anyone would respect or envy such a display. Happiness does not come from possessing items — so the Gorothis believe. Satisfaction comes from within — from the spirit — and how does the possession of inanimate objects have any effect on that? The keys to happiness are self-worth and self-esteem, so claim the Gorothis.

These tenets are reflected in all facets of Gorothis life. Even the richest and most influential natives on the planet live in spartan warrens, caves or cliff-dwellings, with next to no furniture, and no works of art or status symbols to distinguish them from the poorest and least influential.

For large portions of the species' cultural history, in fact, there was no currency in use. “Commerce” at the time was more or less on the barter level, with the “planetary economy” comprised of a hideously-complex net of interrelated obligations, K'Ji'Kurs, debts and favors.

“Wealth,” to a Gorothis, is identical to “self-value” or “self-worth.” According to the Gorothis world-view, self-worth is bolstered by the respect of others, and by the influence one wields. Not power, as such, but *influence* — and there is a major difference. Power is enforced from without; if you have power, people give weight to your words mainly to avoid the consequences that would arise if they did not. Influence, however, is internal; if you have influence, people give weight to your words voluntarily because they respect you. The greater one's influence in society and the further that influence spreads, the more important and the “wealthier” one is. Thus, the matriarch of j'ber V'Sook is arguably the “wealthiest” Gorothis on the planet. The president of the

P'Dar'Ken, though she has more power, has less influence than she, and so is less "wealthy."

Things are starting to change, however. The Imperial occupation is beginning to "corrupt" some Gorothites. For the first time in their species' history, the Gorothites are seeing the application of true power, as opposed to influence, and some natives are starting to covet it. New, too, is the realization that personal wealth — in the monetary sense — sometimes confers power. Again, as a pragmatic people, there are some Gorothites who are beginning to take these twin realizations to heart, and are starting to explore how they can turn the new system to their personal benefit. For the first time, some Gorothites are starting to acquire and treasure possessions that reflect this new hierarchy of power.

Politics

The key native "governing body" is the P'Dar'Ken. Democratically elected, this comprises the Rel'Kan (president) and 12 P'Dar'Ken'Al (council-members). The Rel'Kan serves a five-year term, while the P'Dar'Ken'Al serve four-year terms. Elections for the P'Dar'Ken'Al are staggered, with half the P'Dar'Ken coming up for re-election each two years. This is to avoid the chaos of a major transition; there will always be six P'Dar'Ken'Al

with at least two years of experience in government. There are no limits on the number of terms a Rel'Kan or P'Dar'Ken'Al can serve. Elections are direct, with each Gorothite getting one vote, conducted electronically.

For the last five years, the Rel'Kan of the P'Dar'Ken has been D'Trel B'Rar Jok. The Rel'Kan votes on the P'Dar'Ken only to break a tie. Her main duty is to chair meetings, and to act as intermediary and liaison between the P'Dar'Ken and the Colonial Governor.

Local Councils

Each o'beki on the planet has its own P'Dar'Ib ("local council"), established along the same lines as the P'Dar'Ken. The only exception is the "capital" of Graith; the P'Dar'Ken is considered to "double" as the P'Dar'Ib for this o'beki. Local council-members are P'Dar'Ib'Al.

Officially, the P'Dar'Ib are subordinate to the P'Dar'Ken. On a world where the native government actually had some real power and influence, there would undoubtedly be constant wrangles over the division of authority and responsibility between the different levels of government. Since all Gorothite government officials are nothing but figureheads, it hardly matters.

D'Trel B'Rar Jok

Type: Gorothite Politician

DEXTERITY 3D+2

Dodge 4D+2

KNOWLEDGE 4D

Bureaucracy 5D, bureaucracy: Goroth Prime 7D, survival 5D, willpower 5D+1

MECHANICAL 2D+1

PERCEPTION 4D

Bargain 4D+2, cesa 5D, persuasion 4D+2

STRENGTH 2D+1

TECHNICAL 1D+2

Special Abilities:

Hyperbaride Immunity: Gorothites are less affected by the contaminants in the air, water and food of their world.

Smell: Gorothites have a highly developed sense of smell, getting +1D to their *search* skill when tracking by scent.

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 5

Move: 10

Equipment: Comlink, datapad

Capsule: Rel'Kan D'Trel knows she is just a figurehead with no real power. Still, she does not let this dismay her — not too often, anyway. She is dedicated to using whatever little influence she has with the Colonial Governor to better the lot of her people. Although she privately agrees with the agenda of the Gor'Jen'Ar, she avoids all involvement with the resistance, fearing that if the Colonial Governor finds that a Gorothite politician is part of the underground the entire P'Dar'Ken will be eliminated. This, of course, would end her influence, and her opportunity to help her people.



The Black Market

The black market? No such thing on Goroth, my friend. Believe me. Why would I lie to an off-worlder such as you?

The P'Dar'Ken and their advisors, the members of the Colonial Government, have declared the black market to be illegal. For any law-abiding B'Del such as myself, that's reason enough not to involve myself. And, since all B'Dellyi are law-abiding, there *can* be no such thing as a black market. Do you understand?

Well, if you insist, perhaps we can speak hypothetically. If there *were* a black market, it would have to make great efforts to escape notice from the Colonial Government and from the "Gops." Not familiar with the term? You are new to our home. I speak of the Goroth Planetary Police; they protect us from ourselves, did you not know?

And there are the informants. It's been said that some would suborn B'Dellyi to act as informants. Against their own people, can you imagine? It's just as well there's nothing for them to find, of course. But I digress.

How much easier would it be for the Gops to find would-be informants among off-worlders, hm? Too many off-worlders seem to

view the B'Dellyi as "primitive lizards" ... if I overheard the term right. I understand that, in some cases, such a term might be considered an insult.

Currency control is very tight for the B'Dellyi. The Colonial Government — at the request of our own P'Dar'Ken, of course — monitors the income and outlay of individual B'Del. If an individual's expenditures were to exceed his registered income — which never happens — then that individual would *have* to be involved in the non-existent black market. Do you understand?

Thus, almost all transactions — were any to occur — would have to be based on value for value. Barter.

Take the problem you bring to me. Hypothetically speaking, lightning guns could conceivably be available from various sources. Not that I know any such sources.

But, if I *were* to know where such items could be found, I would have to ask this question ... what service could you provide me in return for the goods you desire? Think of that offworlder, and then, perhaps, someone whom I would not know could help you out.

Economy

The economy is centrally managed by the Colonial Governor, through the P'Dar'Ken. The Colonial Governor is guided in all economic decisions by representatives of the major megacorporations.

Most goods and services are provided by nationalized companies, their prices and tariffs set by the Colonial Government. There are still some independent sources for goods and services, but they are few and so small as to be irrelevant in the grand scheme. If they ever were to grow large enough to be noticed, they would be nationalized, too.

Predictably, there is a strong "underground economy." This is based largely on the old concepts of barter and influence, rather than on money (the Gorohtites have come to learn that transactions involving credits can sometimes be tracked and taxed). The Colonial Governor has yet to figure out how to tax a barter economy.

When it comes to hard goods, even the underground economy must buy from the nationalized companies initially. For example, the only manufacturers of effective Gorohtite-style breath masks are under the direct control of the Colonial Governor. The underground economy shelters a healthy trade in second-hand breath masks —

and in jury-rigged "knock-offs," nowhere near as effective, yet still better than nothing — but anyone wanting a new model must deal with the Empire.

It is very difficult for off-worlders to buy anything through the underground economy. This is largely because Gorohtites have learned to be very cautious about admitting any involvement to non-natives. The Colonial Governor is not above sending snitches and spies out to investigate the black market economy. Off-worlders will find it easier to sell goods into the black market, but not too easy. Since it is a crime to buy goods in this manner, a Gorohtite will be careful about buying from off-worlders he does not fully trust.

Generally, the prices for services and new items, bought directly from nationalized companies, are 10-50% higher than standard prices elsewhere in the Empire. Thus, a pair of macrobinoculars will be priced around 110-150 credits, rather than 100 credits. There is also a 10% tax levied on every official transaction. Therefore, the minimum cost for those macrobinoculars will be 121 credits, of which 11 credits go directly to the Colonial Governor's coffers.

Prices through the underground economy vary widely: basically, whatever the market will bear. Sellers recognize that they are risking their free-

dom, and thus factor a kind of “hazardous-duty pay” into their prices. The issue is complicated further by the fact that much of the underground economy operates via barter. Off-worlders who do not fully understand the Gorothite perception of “value” will be at a severe disadvantage in any bargaining situation. As a guideline, the gamemaster should add a modifier of +5 to a Gorothite character’s roll — whichever side of the issue he is on — when a Gorothite and an off-worlder are engaged in *bargaining*. Obviously, no taxes are levied on black-market transactions.

The vast majority of Gorothites are “client-workers,” employed either directly by the megacorporations or by nationalized companies. All wages are set by the Colonial Governor and are chronically low. An average Gorothite will earn 1,000 credits a month, but perhaps 700 credits of that will be “withheld at source” for taxes and “mandatory expenditures.” Some jobs pay slightly better — the corporations will typically use raises and bonuses in an attempt to motivate some workers, not quite understanding that money is not a motivator for many Gorothites.

Those natives who work on-site at the various Imperial facilities receive room and board in mass barracks and are charged an average of 250 credits a month for the privilege. Thus, an on-site worker might clear 50 credits a month, while a “client-worker” employed by a nationalized company in an o’beki might clear 300 credits a month. From this 300 credits, however, he will have to pay for his own room and board.

Culture

The Gorothite species has never engaged in graphic or visual arts. They have created no paintings, sculptures, and other physical art objects. One could argue that a Gorothite’s wattle

tattoos are a form of graphic art, but the natives themselves do not think this way.

In contrast, the Gorothites have a passion for music. The majority of adult Gorothites play at least one musical instrument, and many are proficient at half a dozen or more. Gorothites play for their own enjoyment and edification, not for the enjoyment of listeners (this parallels their lack of interest in spectator sports).

Individuals will play by themselves, or gather together in informal groups ranging from quartets to large orchestra-sized groups. Traditional instruments run the gamut from simple percussion instruments, to wind instruments, to bowed or plucked stringed instruments. Some of these instruments are hideously complex. For example, the xantha — a virtuoso’s instrument if ever there was one — combines elements of a 24-string lute and a bassoon. The player simultaneously plucks the strings and stops the sound-holes of the wind instrument while blowing into a goose-necked mouthpiece emerging from the back of the sound-box.

Gorothite music is highly complex. There are more than 100 formal “forms,” each of which must follow many strict and complicated rules. Polyrhythms abound, and the whole thing is based on a 22-note musical scale. Off-world listeners have described Gorothite music as sounding like a large number of assorted womp-rats being loudly tortured inside an echo-chamber ... but more so.

Written, the Gorothite language uses meaning-based ideograms — symbols that reflect the meaning of a word, with no direct connection to phonetics. Thus, reading and writing Gorothite is a Very Difficult task for off-worlders. “Spoken Gorothite” and “written Gorothite” are two totally different specializations of the *language* skill.

Chapter Six

The Present Situation

The present situation represents a complex dynamic, an equilibrium that balances the needs and goals of a large number of factions ... an equilibrium that might not be as stable as many think and hope. It is attractive to describe any situation in terms of “good” and “evil,” of “right” and “wrong.” All too often, this is much too simplistic a way to view things, however.

Observers wedded to a “black/white, us/them” dichotomy will lump the corporations together with the Colonial Government and the Imperial military presence. Similarly, they will automatically consider all parts of the Gorothite underground to be on “the same side” as the Rebel Alliance. Both these simplifications are misleading, however, and policy based on such simple views of things will inherently be flawed. Opportunities will be missed; unwise decisions will be made.

Examine the Imperial-allied factions a little closer for a moment. Should the corporations, the Colonial Government and the Imperial military complex be considered “fellow travelers”? Probably not; in the absence of a concrete outside threat, *definitely* not.

The corporations are embroiled in intense “market warfare” among themselves. The Empire as such is sometimes useful to them, sometimes a hindrance. Corporate representatives will flout Imperial regulations when they can get away with it, abide by them when they have to and use them as a competitive advantage whenever the opportunity arises.

So, too, is there a significant schism between the Colonial Government and the military complex, and between certain underground organizations and the Rebel Alliance. Overall the situation is more complex than it might first appear. To oversimplify, and then to make decisions based on those simplifications, is to invite disaster for any faction.

Imperial Involvement

The Colonial Government

Officially speaking, the Colonial Government serves an entirely “advisory” function. According to the Interim Constitution put forward by the Empire and signed — under some duress — by the Rel’Kan (the Gorothite president), the native P’Dar’Ken is the planetary government, sovereign and supreme. The Colonial Governor and the administrative branch “advise” the P’Dar’Ken, and provide support, resources, know-how and other services at their behest. Again officially, the Colonial Governor, the administrative branch and the corporations are all present on Goroth Prime at the invitation of P’Dar’Ken. The Imperial and corporate representatives have no rights on Goroth Prime; they have only privileges, freely granted by the P’Dar’Ken, and revocable at any time.

Reality is quite different, of course. The Colonial Governor and the bureaucracy make up the only government that matters. The Rel’Kan and the P’Dar’Ken’Al (“Councilmembers”) go along with the fiction that they are allowing the Imperials to stay purely because if they did not they would be replaced by natives who did go along with the lie.

There are two “factions” within the Colonial Government that might be described as the “executive” and the “administrative” branches.

The Executive Branch

The executive branch comprises the Colonial Governor himself — at the moment, one Marsh Limoth — and his personal staff. It is the executive branch that makes policy, and mediates between the corporations, the military and the Imperial government on Coruscant.

The present Colonial Governor is relatively new to Goroth. Marsh Limoth — the “Right Honorable Marsh Limoth,” to use his proper title — is a member of one of the traditional “Great Houses” of the Old Republic, the son of Senator

Garlan Limoth, one of the original supporters of Palpatine. Senator Garlan Limoth withdrew his support soon after Palpatine declared himself Emperor, it may be remembered ... and almost immediately thereafter died in a tragic accident. Marsh Limoth, however, never repudiated his personal support of Palpatine, turning against his own father when Garlan began making "unwise" statements soon before his tragic death.

As a reward for his loyalty, Marsh Limoth was assigned as a "Personal Assistant" to the Moff of the Trans-Nebular Sector, Nebin Cray — much to the frustration of Cray, who had no desire for a "Personal Assistant," much less one appointed directly by the Emperor. Still, Cray knew which side his havla was buttered on, and made no complaints. When the original Colonial Governor assigned to Goroth expressed a desire to resign, it was Cray who proposed that his own Personal Assistant might be the perfect person to take over that duty. Cray's "sacrifice" in giving up such an efficient assistant for the greater good of the Empire has raised the governor's stock with some factions of the Imperial bureaucracy!

Marsh Limoth's loyalty is, and always has been, to Emperor Palpatine. (If Goroth is used in a campaign that takes place after the Battle of Yavin, his loyalty is to the Empire as a whole.) He is a "true Imperial," and takes much pride in the fact.

Despite scurrilous claims to the contrary, he is not "feathering his own nest" on Goroth. He is doing what he truly thinks is best, fostering the "greatest good for the greatest number" within the Empire. He serves because he believes in what he is doing, not for personal aggrandizement and profit. It helps, of course, that he has inherited quite a large fortune and so will never have to worry about money.

He scorns the bureaucrats of the administrative branch. They are opportunists, plain and simple, he believes. They have no honor, no belief in the Empire, and are doing their jobs merely to enhance their own prospects. It galls Limoth no end that the administrative branch is not fully under his control. Although he was appointed directly by the Emperor himself — albeit through various levels of intermediaries — he does not have hiring and firing control over the administrative personnel. They were given their jobs by the distant Imperial bureaucracy, which cares little for the troubles of a "petty Imperial governor on an insignificant subject world."

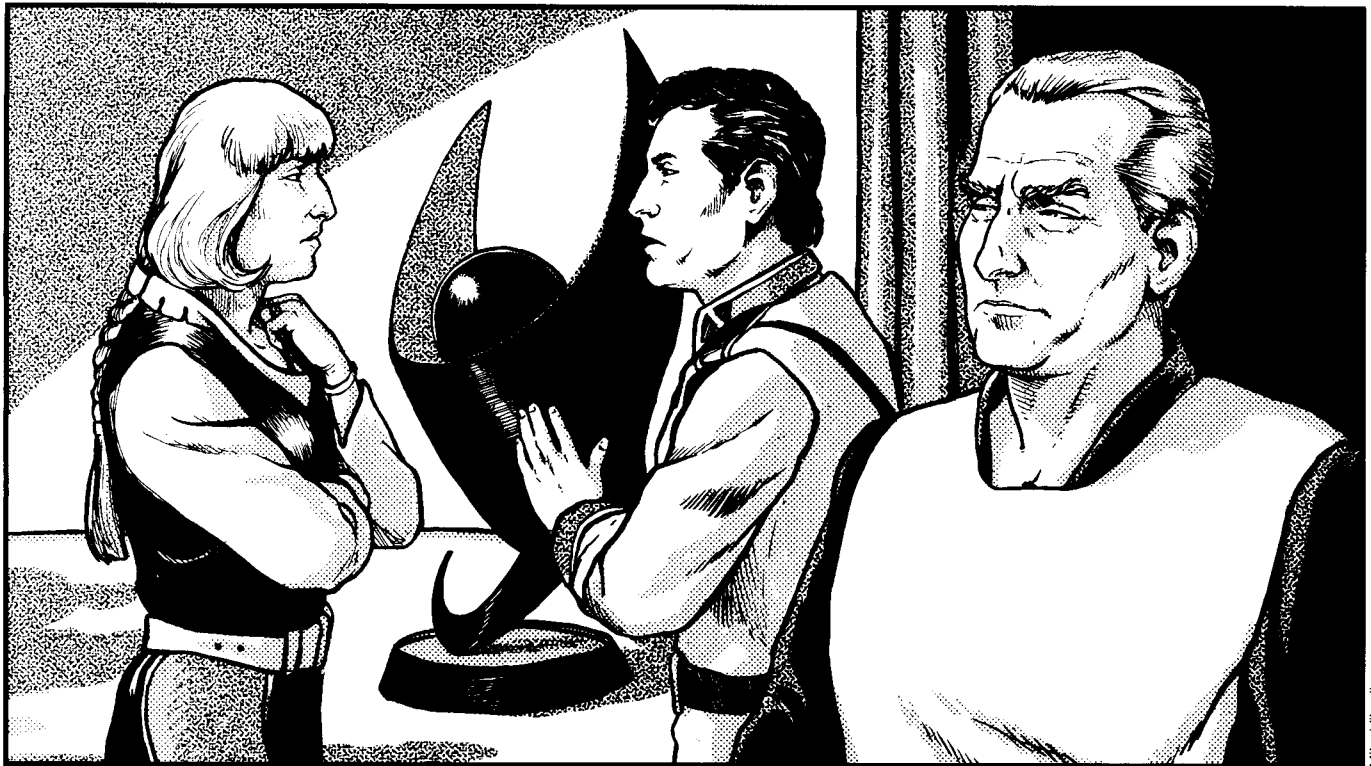
■ **Colonial Governor Marsh Limoth**

Type: Hard-nosed Imperial Loyalist

DEXTERITY 2D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 4D, bureaucracy: Goroth executive branch 5D, business 4D, value 3D, willpower 5D



Mike Vilardi

■ Colonial Governor Marsh Limoth (right), Crela Nen (left) and A'Lenba Prefect Del Obarren (middle).

MECHANICAL 2D**PERCEPTION 2D**

Bargain 4D, command 4D+2, persuasion 3D+2

STRENGTH 2D**TECHNICAL 2D****Character Points:** 4**Move:** 10**Equipment:** Hold-out blaster (3D), datapad, comlink

Capsule: Although he is in his early 50s, Marsh Limoth looks like a man 20 years younger. He is handsome, in a hard kind of way, with chestnut hair and eyes so dark they seem to be unrelieved black. He rarely speaks, preferring to listen — but when he does speak, it is always to say something that cuts to the heart of any issue. He is a “true believer” in the Empire, and in the Emperor himself; loyalty is the keystone of his being. He is entirely pragmatic about his actions on Gorothe Prime — not “evil” in the slightest; he feels empathy for the “client-workers” (sometimes, at least), but cannot let his emotions get in the way of what will benefit the trillions of sentient beings that are part of the Empire.

He loves his young wife, Hola Limoth, and his two children. It is impossible to continue to classify Marsh as “evil” after one has seen the pure and simple joy he feels playing with his children.

The Administrative Branch

The much larger administrative branch is responsible for executing that policy — for making the wheels of government run smoothly. Currently, the Director of Administration — the most powerful member of this faction — is one Crela Nen. There are currently more than 2,000 bureaucrats, middle-managers, time-and-motion experts, support personnel and “data-pushers” on the payroll of the administrative branch, in contrast to a total of 95 members of the executive branch. When the Colonial Government was established in Graith, there were fewer than 1,000 administrators; under the leadership — and incessant lobbying — of Crela Nen, this number has more than doubled in 10 years, and is still increasing.

It is the administrative branch that actually gets things done on Gorothe Prime. Without its support, Marsh Limoth would be as much a figurehead as Rel’Kan D’Trel B’Rar Jok, president of the P’Dar’Ken, with as little real power.

Members of the administrative branch are typically “career bureaucrats.” Few of them feel any real loyalty to the Emperor. If Palpatine were to fall and be replaced by someone else, their jobs would be largely unchanged: no matter whether the political structure is called “Empire” or “Republic” (or “Theocracy” or “Commonwealth” or whatever), *somebody* would have to continue to do what they have been doing.

Since his arrival on Gorothe, Marsh Limoth has been trying to “bring the bureaucracy to heel” — to extend his personal power and influence far enough to actually affect what the administrative branch is doing. Predictably, the administrators

— led by Crela Nen — have been fighting this (with considerable success). The last time Limoth tried to enforce his will on the bureaucracy (by eliminating paid overtime, of all things!) things just “coincidentally” started to fall apart. His personal computer system crashed, and none of the Management Information System experts — all part of the administrative branch, of course — could find anything wrong. Memos sent from the Colonial Governor’s office never arrived at their destination or arrived in the electronic in-boxes of the wrong people. Even the climate control in Limoth’s personal quarters started having problems; one night, the temperature dropped so low that frost formed on the furniture. It was *merely coincidental*, of course, that, within hours of Limoth’s rescinding his restriction on paid overtime, all these problems “spontaneously” cleared up.

■ Director of Administration Crela Nen

Type: Self-serving Imperial Bureaucrat**DEXTERITY 2D****KNOWLEDGE 2D**

Bureaucracy 6D, bureaucracy: Imperial administration 7D+2, business 5D, streetwise 4D+2, willpower 6D

MECHANICAL 2D**PERCEPTION 2D**

Bargain 4D, command 4D, command: Imperial bureaucrats 5D, con 3D+2, investigation 3D+2, persuasion 3D+2

STRENGTH 2D**TECHNICAL 2D****Character Points:** 1**Move:** 10**Equipment:** Datapad, comlink

Capsule: Crela Nen has been part of the Imperial bureaucracy most of her long life. She is petite of figure, with a nose like a hatchet, and green eyes that seem to glint like polished permasteel. She is in her 50s but has the ambition, energy and drive of a person in her early 20s. Crela Nen’s only loyalty is to Crela Nen. She will do whatever it takes to further her (considerable) ambition. She is far from stupid, however. Sometimes it is necessary to compromise and to knuckle under to superior force, and Nen can infallibly recognize those times. When the opportunity presents itself, however, she is tenacity and political savvy incarnate.

Military Presence

In Orbit

Even before the Era of Rebellion, Gorothe was classed as a “strategic system,” and thus to be protected. Now that the Rebel Alliance has won some significant gains, the Empire has increased the force defending Gorothe.

There are always two Imperial Star Destroyers in high orbit around the planet. One — the flagship, the *Valor* — is in an equatorial orbit; the other is in a polar orbit with a higher perigee. The *Valor* is always on-station; Gorothe is its assigned patrol area, and only a major emergency else-

where in the sector would be enough to draw it away. The second "slot" in the task force is filled by various ships; every two months, a new ship is rotated in to serve a tour.

The *Valor* has less than its normal complement of TIE fighters in its hanger bays, merely because 40 of the small vessels are deployed on the planet below: 24 at Graith, eight at A'Lenba, and eight more scattered around at other o'bekis. This leaves the *Valor* with 32 TIEs in its hangers, including 12 interceptors and 12 TIE bombers.

The second ship in the task force has its entire complement of 72 TIE fighters — again including 12 interceptors and 12 TIE bombers — ready for any space action that might be required.

The *Valor* is commanded by Admiral Val DeGoort.

■ **Admiral Val DeGoort**

Type: Imperial Admiral

DEXTERITY 2D+1

Blaster 3D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Bureaucracy 3D+2, bureaucracy: Imperial navy 4D+2, planetary systems 4D, tactics: fleets 5D, willpower 4D

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 5D, capital ship gunnery 3D+2, capital ship piloting 3D+2, capital ship piloting: Imperial Star Destroyer 5D, communications 3D+2, sensors 3D+2, starship gunnery 3D+2

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Command 5D

STRENGTH 2D+1

TECHNICAL 3D+2

Computer programming/repair 4D, starship weapon repair 4D

Force Points: 2

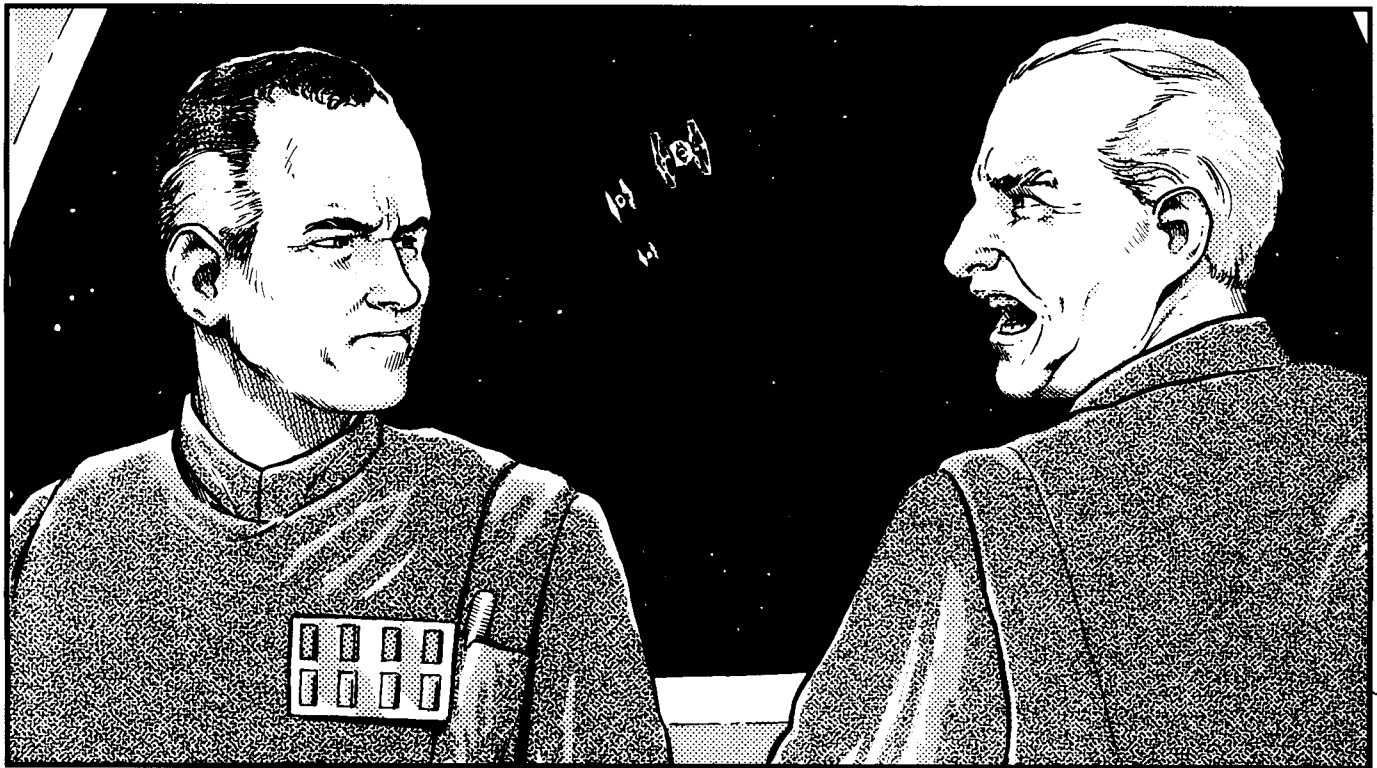
Character Points: 8

Move: 11

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

Capsule: During his 25 years in the Navy, Admiral Val DeGoort has proven his competence and his leadership qualities countless times. He is respected — almost adored — by his crew. Unfortunately, it does not take much to ruin — or at least blight — a naval career. DeGoort made one mistake — just one — and it can be argued that the mistake was not even really his. Regardless, the Navy's bureaucracy holds him personally responsible for an incident where DeGoort's *Valor* collided with another Imperial Star Destroyer during a close-approach coordinated-action exercise. This single demerit in his docket was enough to see DeGoort shuffled off to a low-priority, "penal" assignment: the defense of Goroth.

DeGoort believes that through perfect execution of his present duties he can expunge this demerit from his record. Thus, he has become a stickler for Imperial regulations. He will follow every order he is given to the absolute letter. Personally, he rather likes and even respects Colonial Governor Marsh Limoth — almost as much as he despises Crela Nen. However, that affection does not extend to respect for Limoth's performance. He does not believe that a Senator's son — particularly



Mike Vilardi

■ Admiral Val DeGoort (right) and General Anderton Kloff.

a disgraced Senator's son — should be in charge of a strategic system like Goroth. That post should be held by an Imperial Navy officer.

Planetside

On Goroth, the Imperial military presence is under the command of General Anderton Kloff, a hard-nosed but well-respected Imperial Army officer. All military personnel are under his chain of command. Those TIE fighters rotated to ground-based station are also under General Kloff's command — so says the dispatch from Marshall VeNiste, Army Sector Commander for the Trans-Nebular Sector. The fighter pilots chafe under this, of course: what do "mudworms" know about fighter tactics, and who is Kloff to give them orders? Still, Admiral DeGoort has instructed them that they must obey Kloff's orders.

There is strong inter-service rivalry between the pilots and the Imperial Army troopers. This rivalry is more or less friendly, though; pilots and troopers often relax together, a time for exchanging vastly exaggerated war stories.

In contrast, the rivalry between the pilots and the Goroth Planetary Police approaches downright hatred. Each force views the other as pampered prima donnas with no understanding of what real warfare entails. Goroth Planetary Police and pilots stay well out of each other's way; when they do not, arguments invariably erupt. On at least one occasion, a confrontation degenerated into a brawl. (The pilots explain the serious drubbing they received as just a matter of being outnumbered!)

There is rivalry too between the Imperial Army troopers and the Goroth Planetary Police, but this is more respectful, and has never degenerated into violence.

■ General Anderton Kloff

Type: Arrogant Army Officer

DEXTERITY 3D+2

Blaster 4D+2, blaster artillery 4D+2, brawling parry 4D, vehicle blasters 4D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Intimidation 3D+2, survival 3D+2, tactics: ground assault 7D, willpower 4D

MECHANICAL 3D

Communications 4D, walker operation 5D

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Command 5D, command: Imperial Army troops 7D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D

TECHNICAL 3D

Demolition 4D, walker repair 4D

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 10

Move: 10

Equipment: Blaster pistol (4D), reinforced blast helmet (+1D physical, +1 energy to head), comlink, datapad

Capsule: General Kloff is a "lifer" in the Imperial Army. He initially commanded an AT-AT, but quickly climbed the ranks. Unlike many senior officers, he has not forgotten what it is like being a "line sol-

dier," out there in harm's way. He is an unyielding disciplinarian, but he is also scrupulously fair. His men personally dislike him, considering him an emotionless automaton, but professionally they have the highest respect for him and would follow him to the ends of the universe if he ordered them to do so.

Kloff, predictably, considers the Navy to be a bunch of effete "vacheads" who have no understanding of warfare. ("The Navy takes the glory, the Army takes the real estate," is one of his favorite aphorisms.) He has read Admiral DeGoort's docket, and has written the officer off as a general screw-up. Kloff is lobbying the High Command to have the entire military operation in the Goroth system put under his command: not just the ground forces, but the orbiting Star Destroyers as well. Taking this to its logical conclusion, he is also applying pressure — subtly and very carefully — to have himself elevated to the position of Colonial Governor instead of "that data-pusher, Marsh Limoth."

Laws

Officially, the entire body of law on Goroth Prime is promulgated by the P'Dar'Ken. As the sovereign ruling body, the P'Dar'Ken is the only organization on the planet with the right to enact or enforce laws. It is thus purely a "coincidence" that the laws on Goroth exactly match the details of Imperial martial law ...

The P'Dar'Ken has "requested" the Colonial Governor to enforce the laws it has promulgated: to handle investigation, enforcement and all aspects of the justice system. The Colonial Governor has "reluctantly" acquiesced to this invitation.

Society on Goroth is tightly-regulated. Cynical off-worlders have said that anything not prohibited is obligatory; things are not quite that bad, but they are close. The laws of Goroth break down into five main categories.

Curfew

It is strictly illegal for native Gorothites to be abroad on the surface after sunset, except for "client-workers" who are on shift and under the supervision of security personnel. Strictly speaking, Gorothites are not even allowed to travel freely through their underground "neighborhoods" between sunset and sunrise; they are supposed to remain within their personal residences. This law is not strongly enforced in the Gorothite o'bekis and Imperial patrols are rare in the subterranean residences.

Officially speaking, this curfew extends to all non-military personnel. The Colonial Governor has waived this for non-native employees of rights-holding corporations, but this waiver is a privilege, not a right, and can be revoked without notice and without appeal. Off-world visitors are also officially covered by the curfew. Enforce-

ment is spotty and arbitrary, however. Some off-worlders are free to wander around after dark; others — those that the Colonial Government suspects of having “anti-Imperial leanings” — are hassled unmercifully if they are abroad during the hours of curfew.

Public Meetings

All “public meetings” of native Gorohtites — officially defined as “more than 12 individuals” — are strictly illegal. This law has been waived solely for J’Nes B’Sar (“Truth Gatherings”). Within the subterranean neighborhoods and the cliff dwellings, this law is not universally enforced, again simply because patrols are irregular. Enforcement is arbitrary on this score as well.

Weapons

It is strictly illegal for native Gorohtites to own any weapon — any weapon at all. This law is strictly enforced when it comes to ranged weapons: blasters especially, but slug-throwers as well (particularly armor-piercing guns like the “Hammer” medium slug-thrower, described later). Any Gorohtite found in possession of a ranged weapon will be instantly arrested and thrown in jail for a long, long time. If the armed Gorohtite is in a “sensitive” area, security personnel are well within their authority to summarily execute the “dangerous criminal.” Summary executions are rare — they tend to rile up the natives, after all — but they do occur from time to time.

Strictly speaking, this prohibition extends to melee weapons as well, even to knives. Enforcement is more lax here, and very arbitrary; after all, a knife is a tool, with more potential uses than gutting an Imperial representative. Some Gorohtites — particularly those in the various underground movements — have recently taken to carrying “walking staves” with them. These are “survival tools” (so the Gorohtites claim). Typically they are staffs made of light metal alloys, about 1.5 meters long, with a broad hook on the top and a sharp point on the bottom. They claim that they carry these for “safety” when walking on the rugged surface of the planet. After all, staffs can be used for balance; the hook can be used to give aid to a fellow who has fallen down a crevice or cliff; and the point has a myriad of uses, such as for additional traction on steep hills. Of course, a “walking staff” can also be used as a weapon (STR+1D damage, Easy difficulty) . . . but a law-abiding Gorohtite would *never* think of doing so!

Corporate security personnel who have been “bonded” — in other words, run through a background check by the Colonial Government — are allowed to carry personal weapons up to and

including blaster rifles and grenades. Other corporate personnel are limited to “sidearms” — nothing larger than a standard blaster pistol; heavy blaster pistols and blaster rifles are prohibited.

Non-corporate off-worlders are officially prohibited from bringing any ranged weapons on-planet with them. Enforcement of this restriction is quite arbitrary, however. Many Imperial personnel will turn a blind eye to a sporting blaster carried for “personal defense” unless the civilian involved is suspected of “anti-Imperial leanings.”

Predictably, there are no restrictions whatsoever on military personnel, on-duty or off.

Armor

Native Gorohtites are forbidden to own or wear armor of any kind, even a blast helmet. Possession of armor is considered *prima facie* evidence of terrorist activities, warranting a long jail term or even summary execution, depending on the circumstances.

Bonded corporate security personnel can wear any form of unpowered armor. Other corporate personnel are officially forbidden to wear armor — although possession is not illegal — but again this is rarely enforced. Off-worlders not associated with a rights-holding corporation, too, fall under the same law. Again, most Imperial personnel will turn a blind eye to a light blast vest for “personal security.” Possession of any powered armor is a serious offense.

Treason

The largest category of laws deals with “treasonous activities.” The way Imperial martial law is set up, “treason” is defined entirely by the ranking officer involved — on Goroht, Colonial Governor Limoth himself. He is free to define whatever he sees fit as “treasonous,” and can change that definition arbitrarily, without warning. There is no process of appeal; if the Colonial Governor says you have committed treason, that is all there is to the matter.

Certain activities are always classed as treasonous: attempting to harm Imperial or corporate personnel, attempting to damage Imperial or corporate assets (the size or value is irrelevant, whether it’s a datapad or a hyperbaride cracking plant), and attempting to enter a restricted area.

Theft, depending on what is stolen, might be classed as treason, as might speaking out against the Colonial Government, the Empire, or even the rights-holding corporations. At the Colonial Governor’s whim, any of the infractions described above might be classed as treason, depending on the circumstances. Thus, a native Gorohtite on the surface after dark might be charged with

breaking curfew, or with treason, depending on how the Colonial Governor wants to handle it.

The punishment for treasonous activities is almost always termination — with or without due process.

The Justice System

The administration of justice is handled by both the Imperial Army and the Colonial Government. Officially, the Colonial Governor has jurisdiction and authority over all facets of security on Gorothe. General Kloff, however, is loath to leave all security and justice issues in the hands of a civilian — particularly a civilian like Marsh Limoth. Kloff has argued — with some success — that issues of “military security,” as opposed to “civil security,” are under his jurisdiction. Limoth has had to accept that ... but there are frequent wrangles over just where military security ends and civil security begins.

Both the Colonial Government and the army run jails (the army calls them “stockades”). The civilian jails are within the Colonial Government pressure complexes at each enclave; the military stockades — considerably smaller — are within the Imperial Army barracks at each o’beki.

“Due process,” when it comes to justice, is whatever the individual with jurisdiction (either Limoth or Kloff) says it is. There is no presumption of innocence, and no appeals process. Designates of Limoth and Kloff can — and do — make decisions on the spot, incarcerating people who break the laws, or even executing them. Sometimes, both individuals will perform “show trials,” which are broadcast over the planetary vidnet — often to demonstrate that there is actually a justice system at work, but sometimes to “send a message” to the populace. The verdict is always whatever the individual with jurisdiction wants it to be.

The Corporations

Market Warfare

The corporations who hold exploitation rights are in competition with each other, plain and simple. They are constantly squabbling with each other for position, and for even the slightest market benefit. Alliances and rivalries constantly spring up between different corps, shift like weathervanes in variable wind, and dissolve on a moment’s notice. Most of the rivalries and squabbles are more or less above-board; there are many ways — proxy fights, propaganda, economic warfare, and so forth — for corporations to compete without breaking any laws (moral and ethical guidelines are another thing altogether, of course!).

This does not mean that the corporations will

not stoop to dirty tricks, industrial espionage, suborning of competitors’ assets and even limited sabotage if there is something to be gained and if they think they can get away with it.

Generally, the corporations approach their relationship with the Empire in terms of “hang together or hang separately.” Corporations will generally side with other corporations in any disagreement with the Colonial Governor or the military ... unless there is an advantage to be had by doing otherwise, of course.

TaggeCo

TaggeCo has the largest and most influential presence on Gorothe Prime, and tends to compete based on sheer weight of assets and resources. TaggeCo’s local manager — Dimone Irv — tends to handle problems by whistling up more personnel and other assets from regional division headquarters. The fact that she almost always gets what she asks for indicates that her corporation holds her in high esteem.

■ Dimone Irv, Executive Vice-President, Operations

Type: Business Executive

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 5D, bureaucracy: TaggeCo 7D, business 5D, business: TaggeCo 7D, languages 4D+2, streetwise 5D, willpower 5D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 5D, command 4D, investigation 4D, persuasion 5D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 2D

Computer programming/repair 3D+2

Character Points: 3

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, datapad

Capsule: Dimone Irv has reached her current position through sheer managerial competence, not through the backstabbing that so often accompanies a rise in the corporate ranks. She is not naive about corporate politics, however; she simply does not choose to use underhanded tactics if more traditional methods will serve. Various rivals have found out, to their detriment, that if forced into it, Irv is an absolute expert at corporate maneuvering, however.

She is in her late 30s — young for such a responsible position — and is quite attractive in a hard kind of way, with silver-blond hair and hazel eyes that seem to miss nothing.

Karflo Corporation

On Gorothe Prime, Karflo Corporation may be “number two,” but it is certainly trying harder. For various reasons, the senior executives of Karflo are unwilling — or perhaps unable — to divert as many assets to Gorothe as TaggeCo. Still, under the auspices of the Managing Director, Leito Retinol, Karflo-Gorothe is doing very well for



Mike Vierardi

■ Dimone Irv (second from right), Leito Retinol (right), Cambion Bayrd (second from left) and Boto del ibn Garl (left).

itself. Because Retinol cannot whistle up additional resources at whim, like his counterpart at TaggeCo, the Managing Director has learned to cope with setbacks and challenges on his own. He has learned well: Karflo's productivity per employee is several times better than TaggeCo's. Retinol is currently negotiating a "strategic alliance" with Cambion Bayrd, Director of Operations at Trigdale Metallurgy, to pool their resources in an attempt to oust TaggeCo from the number one spot. Both Retinol and Bayrd think Dimone Irv is ignorant of their maneuvering; in reality, however, she knows exactly what stage the negotiations have reached, and how they will probably turn out.

■ **Leito Retinol, Managing Director**

Type: Business Executive

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 2D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 5D+2, bureaucracy: Karflo 7D+2, business 5D+1, business: Karflo 6D+2, plant operation 8D, scholar: hyperbaride theory 10D+2

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 4D, command 5D, persuasion 5D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 2D

Character Points: 1

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, datapad

Capsule: Little is known about Leito Retinol's background. His resume is considered a classified docu-

ment by the corporation ... which, of course, has spurred considerable activity in the rumor-mill about him. It is known (through unofficial sources) that he once worked for a company called Dynamic Synergetics Inc., although nobody has been able to find out anything about that company. It is undeniable, however, that Leito Retinol understands the hyperbaride extraction and cracking process better than most engineers!

Retinol is in his mid-40s, a tall, slender, aristocratic-looking man with short gray hair and a nose like a hawk's beak. He likes to dress in black. His office in the pressure complex is filled with mementos from across the galaxy, including (mounted on the wall behind his desk) a short spear, tipped with a primitive stone point. He is a good manager; if his superiors had to find one thing to criticize about him, they would probably say that sometimes he is just a little too clever for his own good.

Trigdale Metallurgy

As a secondary rights-holder, Trigdale is definitely a "second-class corporate citizen" on Goroth. During the bidding for rights, the company did not have the resources to acquire primary rights, and now it does not have the resources to support adequately the rights it *did* acquire. So believes the Director of Operations, at least. Director Cambion Bayrd is frustrated. He has full profit-and-loss responsibility for the Goroth operation. If it succeeds, he's a hero; if it fails, he's a pariah.

Unfortunately, he is not receiving the support from headquarters that he needs to make the operation a success. This is why he is breaking very strict Trigdale guidelines in negotiating a strategic partnership with Karflo. Even though a major infraction like this would normally be a firing offense, Bayrd is not really worried. He has no intention of sticking with the agreement he negotiates, at least not in the long term. He expects a short-term benefit ... and then he will unilaterally dissolve the joint-venture. Certainly, his actions would still be considered in violation of corporate guidelines, but if he is called on the carpet he will just point to the real gains Trigdale will undoubtedly have made from his maneuvering. After all, he reasons, it is always easier to get forgiveness than permission!

■ Cambion Bayrd, Director of Operations

Type: Corporate Executive

DEXTERITY 2D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 4D, bureaucracy: Trigdale 5D, business 5D, business: Trigdale 7D, streetwise 4D, willpower 6D+1

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 2D

Bargain 5D, con 5D, persuasion 6D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 2D

Character Points: 5

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, datapad

Capsule: Cambion Bayrd's nickname, both inside and outside Trigdale, is "Goodtime Cambie." His broad, florid face is always split in a beaming smile, and he always seems to find humor in everything. He works hard, everyone admits, but he plays even harder. It is all too easy to categorize Bayrd as something of a buffoon who owes his elevated position to connections, not to personal skill.

Writing him off as such would be a severe mistake. Bayrd's outgoing, sometimes-buffoonish, demeanor conceals a mind as sharp as a laser-scalpel and a will as hard as durasteel. He is a master at backstabbing, character assassination, and, should the need arise, could easily manage an executive coup. Bayrd is in his early 50s, a rotund character with thinning ginger-red hair. His slitty eyes are bright green.

Vaufthau Processing Industries

Definitely "low man on the spirit-symbol pole," Vaufthau seems to be totally outclassed by the other primary and secondary rights-holders. Some people wonder what the corporation is doing on Goroath at all. After all, Vaufthau's experience is in secondary and tertiary manufacturing, and in urban construction. Never before has it shown any corporate interest in primary resource extraction and processing.

Vaufthau's presence on Goroath is entirely due to the local administrator, one of the few

Sullustans to have earned a position of authority in the company. He successfully lobbied his superiors to give him the resources necessary to acquire secondary exploitation rights, and to follow up on them. Currently, under Boto del ibn Garl's leadership, the Vaufthau operation is engaged in extensive industrial espionage, targeting virtually all the other corporations on Goroath.

■ Boto del ibn Garl, Local Administrator

Type: Sullustan Corporate Executive

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Bureaucracy 4D, bureaucracy: Vaufthau 5D, business 5D, business: Vaufthau 7D, languages 3D+2, streetwise 4D, value 4D, willpower 4D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, con 5D, investigation 5D, persuasion 5D

STRENGTH 1D+1

TECHNICAL 1D+2

Computer programming/repair 4D+2

Special Abilities:

Enhanced Sense: +2D to search and Perception in low-light conditions.

Location Sense: +1D to astrogation when jumping to a location the Sullustan has visited before. A Sullustan can always remember how to get back to someplace he has visited.

Character Points: 13

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, datapad

Capsule: It was far from easy for ibn Garl to claw his way up the "corporate ladder." He has had to sacrifice a lot to make it ... including his morals and his ethics. Those few colleagues who know what he is truly capable of believe he will climb even higher.

Ibn Garl is secretive in the extreme, never letting his left hand know what his right is doing — or, some cynics would say, that he even *had* a right hand. His attitude could best be encapsulated by the phrase, "All's fair in love and war ... and business is the highest form of war."

The Slave Trade

The Colonial Government is the body that handles the "client-workers," under the authority of the Empire. Officially, the "client-workers" are direct employees of the Colonial Government, which in turn brokers their services to the various corporate and pan-corporate facilities that use them. The corporations pay the Colonial Government for the services of the client-workers, who then pay the workers themselves. Somewhat predictably, the rates that the corporations pay to the Colonial Government are highly classified. Presumably, however, the Colonial Government is pocketing some profit from the deal.

While the client-workers are considered direct employees of the Colonial Government, it is the corporations who are responsible for their safety and for security issues involving them. If a corporation forces its client-workers to operate

in unsafe conditions — “unsafe,” in this context, presumably meaning “in danger of imminent death” — the Colonial Government may levy fines and punitive damages. These payments are to reimburse the Colonial Government for the potential loss of revenue-generating employees. So, too, are the corporations responsible for keeping the client-workers “in line.” Corporations can be held responsible by the Colonial Government for any damage or disruption caused by client-workers on contract to them. Thus, it is in the corporations’ best interest to keep the client-workers under tight control, and at least somewhat safe.

Although most client-workers on Goroath are Gorothites, recurring rumors claim that members of other species can be found in the client-worker ranks. If there are off-worlders among the client-workers, presumably they, too, are in the direct employ of the Colonial Government, and contracted out to the corporations.

The Underground

There is no single, monolithic “resistance movement” on Goroath Prime. Instead, there are several distinct organizations. Most share similar goals, but they disagree on just how to turn those goals into reality. Three of the most important “underground” organizations are discussed below.

Predictably, the Colonial Government is very interested in stamping out the existing underground organizations. Membership in a resistance “terrorist” group is definitely considered high treason, and is punishable by death.

Gor’Jen’Ar (“Committee for Free Goroath”)

The Gor’Jen’Ar is undeniably the most conservative — its members would probably say “rational” — of all the resistance groups. It is also the largest and the most respectable throughout Gorothite society. Interestingly enough, the Colonial Government considers Gor’Jen’Ar the most significant danger to the Imperial occupation.

Goals

The central goal of the Gor’Jen’Ar is the removal of the client-worker system, and the establishment of the P’Dar’Ken and the Rel’Kan as the real planetary government of Goroath. Unlike some other resistance groups, the Gor’Jen’Ar does not necessarily countenance the expulsion of the Empire from the planet. After all, the Empire represents a source of valuable resources, technology and knowledge that can accelerate the rebuilding of Gorothite society. It is only the relationship between the Gorothite people and the Empire that must change.

History and Organization

The Gor’Jen’Ar was the first organized resistance outfit to emerge after the arrival of the Empire. It is organized into cells of three. Each member knows the two other members of her cell, the three members in the cell directly below her (but not the members of the cells below her cell-mates). She also has a way to contact — but does not know the identity of — a member in the cell one layer up the “tree” from her.

The leader of the Gor’Jen’Ar is someone known as S’Ten Gali Ak’Ar. Only the six or so most senior members of the Gor’Jen’Ar have ever met Ak’Ar face to face. The rest of the members do not even know whether their ultimate leader’s name is real, or a *nomme de guerre*.

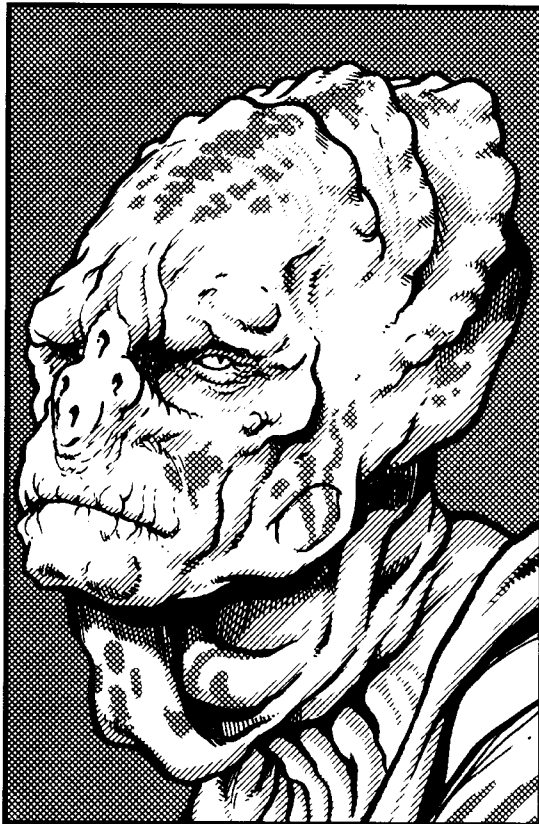
Only Ak’Ar — and perhaps not even her — knows exactly how many members the Gor’Jen’Ar has. Estimates range from several hundred to well over 2,000.

Recent Activity and Future Plans

Under the leadership of S’Ten Gali Ak’Ar, the Gor’Jen’Ar is trying to walk a very narrow and precipitous edge. Unlike some of the other resistance groups, the Gor’Jen’Ar recognizes and acknowledges that insurrection represents a very great risk: not only to the insurrectionists themselves, but to Gorothite society as a whole. Push the Empire too far, and the response might be genocidal ...

Still, the Gor’Jen’Ar is taking action, but cautiously. Rather than blowing things up, Gor’Jen’Ar members are trying to educate the rest of the known galaxy about the truth of events on Goroath. They are suborning visitors, smugglers and entrepreneurs to take “manifestos” with them when they leave and publicize them when they visit other worlds. Eventually, the Gor’Jen’Ar members hope, public pressure and condemnation will force the Empire into relenting. So far, little has happened, however. The Gor’Jen’Ar is starting to escalate its program, but again very carefully. Members are now trying to suborn employees — preferably middle managers — of the rights-holding corporations, swaying them to the Gorothites’ side. If enough corporate executives and managers are “converted,” maybe the “pressure from within” will force a change.

The Gor’Jen’Ar is also behind some “accidents” which have destroyed or damaged important corporate resources (and killed one “clumsy” corporate security investigator). On principle, the Gor’Jen’Ar has no qualms about killing or destroying “for the cause.” The only thing that worries them is the potential for overwhelming and brutal response.



Mike Vilardi

S'Ten Gali Ak'Ar

Type: Gorothise Philosopher/Warrior

DEXTERITY 3D+2

Brawling parry 4D+1, dodge 5D, firearms 4D, melee combat 4D, melee combat: walking stave 5D, melee parry 4D+2

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 4D+2, cultures: Gorothise 6D, streetwise 4D, streetwise: Graith 7D, survival 5D, survival: Gorothise badlands 6D+2, tactics: squads 8D

MECHANICAL 3D

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Bargain 4D+1, cesa 6D+2, command 4D, command: Gor'Jen'Ar members 6D, hide 5D, investigation 4D, persuasion 6D+2, search 5D+2, sneak 4D+1

STRENGTH 2D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Special Abilities:

Hyperbaride Immunity: Gorothises are less affected by the contaminants in the air, water and food of their world.

Smell: +1D to search skill when tracking by scent.

Force Points: 2

Character Points: 3

Move: 12

Equipment: "Hammer" slug-thrower (3D+1), walking stave (STR+1D), comlink, breath mask

Capsule: S'Ten Gali Ak'Ar (her real name) is an example of the strange contradictions that hardship can create. By nature and choice, she is a philosopher and a student of the universe; by necessity, she is a warrior and a kind of "politician-in-exile." She is a true leader. If circumstances were different, she would prefer to lead her loyal followers from the front line, taking on herself every risk. She recognizes, though, that her real value is in her tactical and psychological expertise, although it pains her, particularly when her group suffers casualties.

She lives in the subterranean neighborhoods of Graith, under several false identities. The Imperials have tried to track her down on several occasions, but other Gorothises—even those not members of Gor'Jen'Ar—willingly mislead the troopers and cover S'Ten's tracks.

T'B'Dellyi'Mai ("People's Freedom Action Council")

S'Ten Gali Ak'Ar, leader of the Gor'Jen'Ar, quietly believes that the T'B'Dellyi'Mai is a greater danger to the Gorothise people as a whole than is the Empire. Conversely, most members of the T'B'Dellyi'Mai consider the Gor'Jen'Ar members to be sell-outs and cowards of the highest order, writing their piddly little manifestos and dealing with off-world scum, rather than breaking skulls and breaching pipes.

Goals

The stated goal of the T'B'Dellyi'Mai is to make Gorothise ungovernable for the Empire, and to make it no longer economically feasible to extract hyperbarides. They will achieve this goal through out-and-out terrorism: sabotage, selective assassination, and civil insurrection.

History and Organization

The current leader, E'Sar G'Go B'Kul, was once a student—perhaps "disciple"—of S'Ten Gali

Ak'Ar, leader of the Gor'Jen'Ar. E'Sar became disillusioned (or maybe "impatient" is the better word) with Ak'Ar's long-term planning.

"Why depend on off-worlders?" B'Kul argued. "Off-worlders have brought only trouble. Gorothise should be for Gorothises only; Gorothises should depend on Gorothises only."

Several years ago, he broke from the Gor'Jen'Ar, taking many of that organization's young firebrands with him.

He has created the T'B'Dellyi'Mai as a more militant group than the Gor'Jen'Ar, although it follows a similar structure: it has the same cells-of-three structure (although E'Sar is less stringent about keeping to that format). The T'B'Dellyi'Mai has fewer members (probably less than 1,000) but it has "chapters" in all of the major o'bekis and is thought to have "loyalists" in the client-worker barracks of many Imperial facilities.

Recent Activity and Future Plans

Over the last several years, the T'B'Dellyi'Mai

E'Sar G'Go B'Kul

Type: Gorothite Terrorist Leader

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 5D, brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 5D, firearms 5D, grenade 4D+2, melee combat 5D, melee combat: walking staff 6D, melee parry 5D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Alien species 3D, cultures: Gorothite 7D, intimidation 5D, streetwise 5D, streetwise: Graith 7D, survival 5D, survival: Goroth badlands 7D, tactics: squads 6D

MECHANICAL 3D

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Cesa 5D+2, command 4D, command: T'B'Dellyi'Mai members 5D, hide 6D, investigation 4D, persuasion 5D, search 4D+1, sneak 5D+1

STRENGTH 2D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Demolition 5D

Special Abilities:

Hyperbaride Immunity: Gorothites are less affected by the contaminants in the air, water and food of their world.

Smell: +1D to *search* skill when tracking by scent.

Force Points: 2

Character Points: 9

Move: 13

Equipment: Lightning gun (5D+2), Hammer slug-thrower (3D+2), walking staff (STR+1D), 2 grenades (5D), comlink, breath mask

Capsule: E'Sar G'Go B'Kul is young, arrogant and very aggressive. Patience has always come hard for him, and this is reflected in the operations of the T'B'Dellyi'Mai. Still, he seems to have an intuitive grasp of insurrection and terrorist tactics. The fact that his group still exists and that he still has his freedom is sufficient evidence of this.

He hates off-worlders with a passion, generalizing from his experience with the Imperials and the corporations — a kind of “If you’ve seen one off-worlder, you’ve seen them all” attitude. The only way he might trust off-worlders is if they come bearing a stash of heavy weapons. He is currently hiding out somewhere in the cliff dwellings of Graith.



Mike Vliardi

has been behind maybe two dozen significant incidents of sabotage. This does not count perhaps a hundred incidental acts of trivial “monkey-wrenching.” Water filters feeding corporate pressures have been compromised. Stockpiles of important raw materials have been burned or blown up. Most seriously, a bomb was planted aboard an Imperial cargo GEV that was carrying replacement security personnel to a hyperbaride extraction site; the bomb was discovered before it went off, but only through sheer luck.

The T'B'Dellyi'Mai intends to escalate its campaign of violence and destruction as soon as it can get its collective hands on more weapons and demolition equipment. Leader B'Kul has heard Ak'Ar's dire warnings of genocide many times, but he always discounts them as the fear-mongering of a coward.

K'Len J'Bar Kasoon (“Rightful Vengeance of the Mother”)

The newest major resistance group is K'Len J'Bar Kasoon, or “Rightful Vengeance of the Mother.” As the overblown metaphysical title

might imply, this group is less grounded in the ugly realities of the Imperial occupation than the T'B'Dellyi'Mai. As the T'B'Dellyi'Mai split off in protest of the “inaction” of the Gor'Jen'Ar, so has K'Len J'Bar Kasoon split off from the T'B'Dellyi'Mai to protest their “lack of faith” in the religious pronouncements of their leader, B'Yen Do V'nel.

Goals

The central goal of K'Len J'Bar Kasoon is to rid the planet of all off-worlders *right now!* This “Grand Task” comprises three main parts: to make Goroth ungovernable for the Empire (here, they agree with the T'B'Dellyi'Mai); to rouse the entire Gorothite populace in armed insurrection; and to mobilize the “spiritual forces” of the planet itself.

History and Organization

This last purpose is based on the rather unconventional religious beliefs of B'Yen Do V'nel, the venerable — and quite possibly senile — last survivor of the once-numerous j'ber B'Yen. Some of his enemies have speculated that if perhaps he

were not the last survivor of the j'ber, he would do the "polite thing" and "walk the Way to the next life."

B'Yen has taken the orthodoxy of the "True Faith" as preached by j'ber V'Sook, and added a strange twist. The Scouring and the Imperial occupation are all trials sent to test the Gorothis, he agrees. However, he says the way to "pass" the test is not to quietly endure.

"The Spirit of Gorothis helps those who help themselves," B'Yen believes. If the people of Gorothis march forth "in faith and honor" — presumably, with him in their vanguard — the mysterious "Life Spirit" of Gorothis itself will rouse itself and fight on their behalf. And how could mere off-worlders, mortal as they are, fight against a planetary Life Spirit?

B'Yen's task, then, is to rouse the entire Gorothis population to rebel against the Imperial oppressors. The only way he can see of doing this is through leading by example. If he and his followers strike hard and often — and spectacularly — against the occupation, then the rest of his people will get the idea and follow. To help him, B'Yen has gathered around him a central cadre of "true believers" — in other words, Gorothis as fanatical as himself — in his home o'beki of A'Lenba. Estimates of total membership in K'Len J'Bar Kasoon range from 50 or so, down to just B'Yen himself and a dozen close confidants.

Recent Activity and Future Plans

The central purpose of K'Len J'Bar Kasoon is to "raise the populace" — to attract attention to its cause and its campaign — not necessarily to cause direct and serious damage to the oppressors. After all, any damage they manage to inflict will seem irrelevant when the planetary Life Spirit is finally on the march! Thus, the organization's raids have been designed to attract attention more than anything else. Why, other than attention, would "terrorists" sneak into a vehicle emplacement and do nothing but paint a TIE fighter bright blue?

Of course, sometimes nothing attracts quite so much attention as a nice, loud bang. Over the last couple of months, K'Len J'Bar Kasoon has been blowing things up in and around A'Lenba. Their targets have not been predominately strategic, so the Empire is not really feeling much pain from their campaign. But you can bet the Imperials and corporate executives are a little edgy about what the terrorists might choose to blow up next.

■ B'Yen Do V'nel

Type: Gorothis Fanatic
DEXTERITY 1D+2

Dodge 3D, firearms 2D, melee combat 2D, melee parry 2D

KNOWLEDGE 2D+2

Alien species 3D, cultures 3D, streetwise 3D, streetwise: A'Lenba 5D, survival 3D, willpower 6D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 2D+1

Command 4D, command: "true believers" 6D, hide 3D, persuasion 5D, sneak 3D+1

STRENGTH 1D+1

TECHNICAL 2D

Special Abilities:

Hyperbaride Immunity: Gorothis are less affected by the contaminants in the air, water and food of their world.

Smell: +1D to *search* skill when tracking by scent.

Senile: B'Yen Do V'nel is a fanatic and dangerously incoherent. He is prone to be as dangerous to himself as the Imperial occupation troops.

Character Points: 6

Move: 8 (due to advanced age)

Equipment: Walking staff (STR+1D), breath mask

Capsule: When he talks about his revelations, B'Yen is incredibly persuasive. (True, unshakable belief is often persuasive, regardless of how nonsensical the subject of that belief may be!)

The only time that B'Yen seems to be truly alive is when he is preaching (and he preaches a *lot*). Between diatribes, he sinks into a sullen silence, looking around him suspiciously. He is a borderline paranoid, trusting only those "true believers" closest to him ... and not always all of them.

B'Yen is more than 123 local years old (he thinks). It seems that only his indomitable will is stopping him from dying of old age.

The Rebel Alliance

Up until the last year or so, the Rebel Alliance has had no real presence on Gorothis (although it has been keeping tabs on the situation through various channels). Now, however, the Rebel leadership has decided that Gorothis is strategically important enough to warrant "on-site monitoring."

Rebel strategists would love to wrest the hyperbaride supplies of Gorothis away from the Empire. Unfortunately, there is no way the Alliance could divert sufficient assets to take Gorothis and keep it. While a Rebel fleet could take out the two Imperial Star Destroyers in orbit — albeit with difficulty — it would not be long before reinforcements arrived to take Gorothis back.

Several strategists have suggested supporting the native resistance movement with equipment and even personnel. However, the Alliance must walk the same knife-edge as the Gor'Jen'Ar. Too little support or pressure, and the Empire's source of hyperbarides is left intact; too much support or pressure, and the Gorothis civilization is wiped from the face of the planet.

Goals

The Alliance has yet to decide exactly how to handle Gorothis. How much support for the underground and pressure on the Imperials would be too much? The only way to answer that question

Lt. Jered Pole

Type: Rebel Undercover Operative

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D+1, blaster: hold-out blaster 6D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 5D, melee combat 4D+1, melee parry 4D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 5D, business 4D, cultures 4D, languages 4D, streetwise 5D, survival 4D, willpower 4D

MECHANICAL 3D

Communications 4D, repulsorlift operation 4D+2, space transports 4D

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Command 5D, con 6D, forgery 4D, gambling 5D, hide 4D, investigation 6D, persuasion 4D, sneak 5D+1

STRENGTH 2D+1

Brawling 7D, stamina 4D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Demolition 5D, first aid 5D, security 6D

Force Points: 2

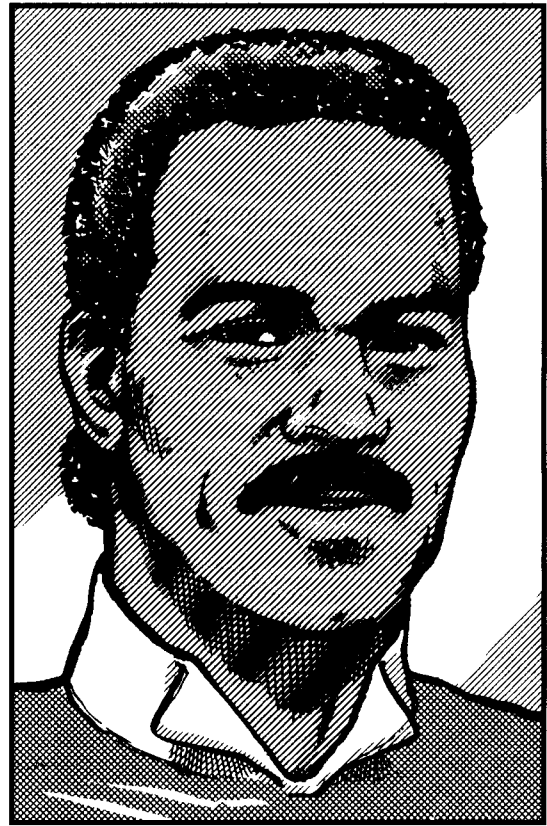
Character Points: 14

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink, breath mask, datapad, envirosuit, blast vest (+1 energy, +1D physical), V'Jar Technologies Silver Falcon rotorcraft

Capsule: Lt. Jered Pole is known as an up-and-comer within the Rebel Alliance — one of the “young warriors” who will guide the future of the Alliance. He is a trained and experienced mercenary who joined the Alliance two years ago for the “salary” of one credit per year — after all, it wouldn’t look good for a mercenary to work for free. When he heard about Operation Starbird, he was the first to volunteer.

Pole is on Goroth posing as a professional gambler by the name of Jerth Merin. He is a frequent player in the official casino in the Graith civilian pressure complex, and holds illicit, high-stakes sabacc games in his hotel room. He is currently discussing with Colonial Governor Marsh Limoth the possibility of a “syndicate” of his confederates investing in a lavishly-furnished new casino, designed to bring profit to both “Merin” and Limoth. Limoth is interested in at least hearing more, and so he has told security to turn a blind eye to “Merin” and his sabacc games.



Mike Vilardi

Jered Pole is in his late 30s, a smoothly handsome man with dark hair, olive complexion, and dark eyes. He moves slowly, almost lazily, as though he cannot be bothered to move fast. This is like the “lethargy” of an efficient predator, however. When necessary, he can move blindingly fast, and kill an enemy with his bare hands before his target can react.

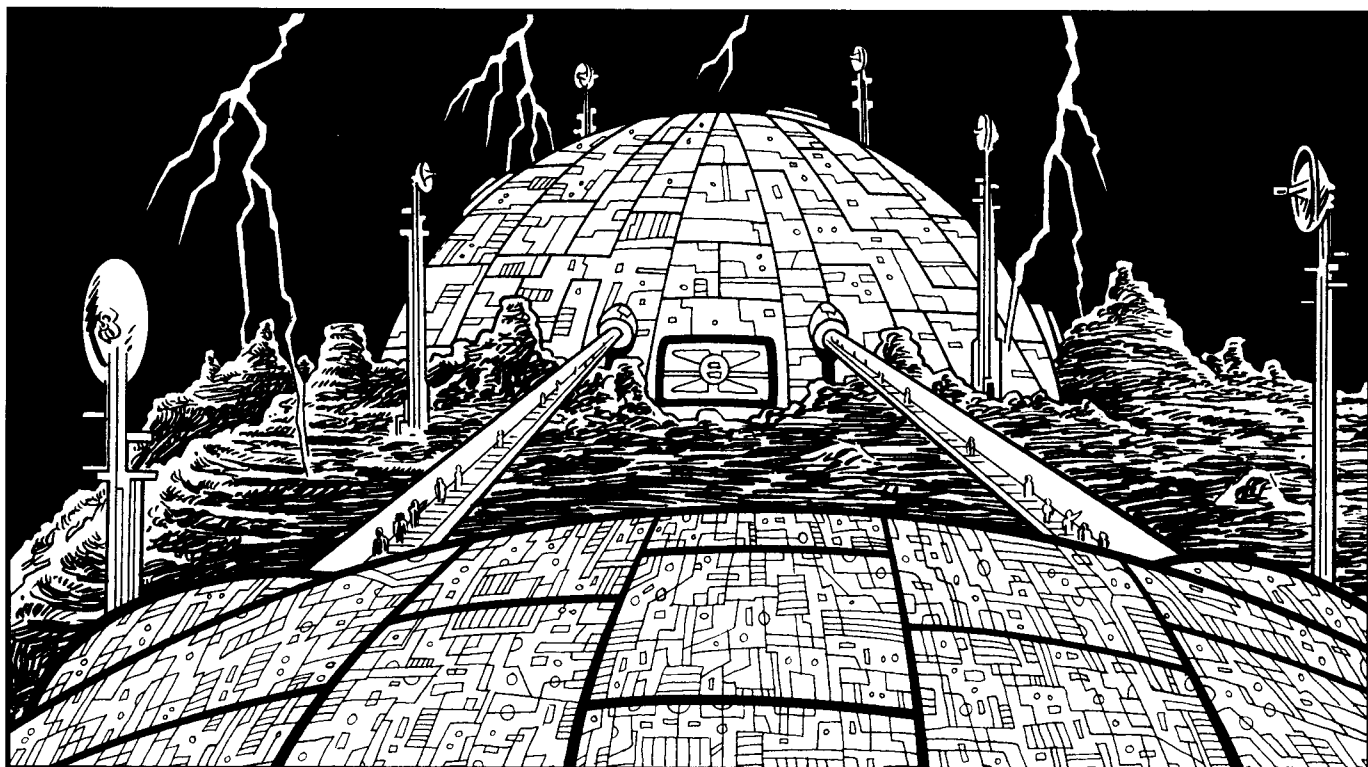
accurately, the Rebel leadership believes, is to have investigative assets on the planet. Thus, the Alliance has begun “Operation Starbird”: over the last six months or so, almost a dozen Rebel agents have made the trip to Goroth. They have traveled as salespeople, as management consultants, as entrepreneurs, even as professional gamblers (sometimes it is wise to hide a major crime behind the mask of a minor one). They are doing what they can to integrate themselves with the off-worlder population of Goroth, and develop communication channels with the natives where possible. Other operatives, acting as couriers, shuttle back and forth to the planet as “transient workers” and the like, returning their reports to the Rebel leadership.

The main goal for the forces on Goroth is to develop enough military and economic intelligence to let Alliance command determine a rational plan for handling Goroth. While doing so,

however, they have some autonomy. If they see an opportunity to strike a blow against the Empire — without compromising their own mission, or seriously risking the Gorothite population at large — they are free to take it. Similarly, they have the freedom to deal with the native resistance movements as they see fit. If it seems wise, they can provide support; if it appears that the Gorothites are going to do something stupid that will bring the wrath of the Empire down on their heads, they can move to stop it. Thus, depending on the situation, the Rebel agents might find themselves working with Gorothite freedom-fighters ... or sometimes against them.

Past Activities and Future Plans

The information-gathering phase of “Operation Starbird” is scheduled to be a standard year long. So far, the investigative assets have been in place and operating for only two to three months



Dan & David Day

■ A typical pressure with connecting movators.

(the first three months of the operation were spent setting up the basic network). After the year, the operatives' next task will depend entirely on Alliance command's decisions based on the information that has been gathered.

Several of the "Operation Starbird" agents have developed tenuous connections with the Gor'Jen'Ar. Starbird's on-planet commander, one Lt. Jered Pole, has authorized his people to support the Gor'Jen'Ar's "manifesto" projects wherever possible, and to aid in suborning or compromising corporate managers and executives. Several Gor'Jen'Ar members have sent word to Starbird operatives, asking for any and all intelligence Pole and his people have gathered. So far, Pole has been cautious about releasing this intelligence fearing it would compromise his own team.

Assets

There are currently nine or 10 Operation Starbird assets on Goroth Prime. The number fluctuates, as personnel rotate on-and off-planet, as required by their covers.

Some know each other's real and cover identities, locations, and personal missions. Others are known merely by code-names and details of blind-letter drops for message transfer. Still others do not know of each other's existence. These security provisions are decided upon by the Rebel commanders in ultimate charge of Operation Starbird. The on-site mission commander, Lt. Pole, is not thrilled that even he does not know the identities of all the agents supposedly under his control, but he also understands the need for secrecy.

Chapter Seven

Major Settlements

Common Elements

All of the major o'bekis have at least three major elements in common: pressures, movators and "people-movers."

Pressures

Whether corporate or Imperial, these follow the same basic design. Pressures are rigid, reinforced domes — either geodesic in design, or smoothly hemispherical. They are basically circular in floorplan, although sometimes they are combined in clusters, looking from the air like a group of soap-bubbles. They range in size from 20 meters in diameter to well over 100 meters in diameter. For all purposes, they are classed as walker scale.

Depending on the purpose of an individual pressure, it might be constructed of duralumin, an opaque and shiny metal, or of transparisteel, a translucent or even transparent synthetic. Duralumin domes have a *Strength* of 3D (walker scale) for resisting damage; transparisteel domes have a *Strength* of 2D. The more resilient — and more expensive — duralumin domes are reserved for critical emplacements (such as the Colonial Governor's residence).

All but the oldest and most primitive domes — the ones first constructed when the Imperials initially landed — have limited self-sealing features. A breach up to one meter in diameter will automatically seal itself with polyresin extruded from a network of high-pressure "capillaries." This process takes only six seconds. The polyresin seal is much less resilient than the original structure, however — after all, it is only designed to prevent contamination of the pressure's controlled atmosphere. A seal has a *Strength* of 3D+1 (speeder scale) to resist damage.

Most pressures have double-door airlocks that provide access to the outside. For domes without external airlocks, the only access is through the tubes of movators and people-movers that connect them to other pressures. These airlocks

are strongly-built (corporate and Imperial designers anticipated the possibility of terrorist attacks targeting them); thus, consider them as blast doors for the purposes of resisting damage (8D *Strength* in character scale).

The rooms and corridors within pressures are always compartmentalized, and always have chem-sniffers installed every dozen meters or so. If the dome is breached and a particular area is contaminated, airtight doors (*Strength* 3D, speeder scale) will immediately whoosh shut to contain the leak. Normally, these doors cannot be opened until the contaminants are removed by the air processing systems. Authorized personnel — ranking officers, or senior managers — can override this lock-out if necessary, although they will rarely risk their own lives by doing so.

Movators

These are moving walk-ways that pass through elevated tubes, connecting separate pressures. Movator tubes are built of transparisteel (*Strength* 2D, walker scale). They have no self-sealing systems; if a movator tube is breached, blast doors (*Strength* 3D, speeder scale) instantly slam shut at both ends, isolating the pressures (and possibly dooming anyone unfortunate enough to be riding the movator at the moment). A tube will contain one or two moving walk-ways. These belts normally move at a speed of 1.5 meters per second; if an alarm is triggered, the speed can be increased to 2.5 meters per second. This speed is added to — or subtracted from — the movement of a character riding on the belt (depending on whether he is moving with or against the motion of the belt). Movator belts are flanked by waist-high dividers, the duraplast handrails of which move at the same rate as the belts. These dividers are *Strength* 3D (character scale). They provide anywhere from no cover to 1/2 cover for a standing rider (depending on where the attack is coming from), and riders ducking down behind them can receive full cover.

Movators are not particularly resilient; they do not have to be since they are never exposed to the elements. Their mechanisms have a *Strength* of 3D+2 (character scale) for resisting damage, and heavy damage will wreck them until they are repaired.

“People-Movers”

People-movers travel through much the same elevated transparisteel tunnels as movators (*Strength* 2D, walker scale), and have the same blast doors (*Strength* 3D, speeder scale) that immediately slam shut if the tube is breached. The actual mechanism is considerably more sophisticated, however.

People-movers are actually small monorails — open or semi-enclosed autonomous vehicles running on a powered track imbedded in the floor. A people-mover tunnel — the same size as a movator tunnel — has room for only one track. In a complex, pressures are connected by a people-mover system that follows a roughly circular route. Depending on the length of this route, there can be two, three or even more people-mover “cars” running on the track. These cars are autonomous; each is controlled by a simple-minded, task-designated fifth-degree droid whose sole job is to avoid running down “organics” who might happen to wander into the way. On a people-mover route, there might be half a dozen or more “embark/debark sites” — locations where each vehicle will always stop, to let people on or off. In most systems, a car will stop at each and every stop, whether or not someone wants to get on or off, simply because doing it this way makes sure the multiple cars always stay the correct distance apart. Again depending on the length of the route and number of cars, a vehicle will stop at a given embark/debark site every two or three minutes.

In an emergency, authorized personnel — ranking officers, or senior managers — can “commandeer” a people-mover car, and override the droid’s normal programming. Even so, a car’s freedom of

action is limited by the fact that there are autonomous vehicles ahead of it and behind it on the closed route. There are facilities to remove cars from service and put new ones in: small side tracks off the main route run into maintenance areas. It takes at least 15 minutes to remove or replace a car.

People-mover vehicles travel at a standard speed of 50 kilometers per hour (Move: 18), accelerated silently by their linear induction motors.

There are two standard types of people-mover cars: passenger cars and cargo cars. Passenger cars are partially enclosed — more for aesthetic reasons than for any real requirement. Cargo cars, on the other hand, are open — simply flat load-bearing panels, with a droid at the front. Specific people-mover routes might have different types of cars — for example, there are recurring rumors that military installations can quickly put reinforced “armed response” cars into service — but if they exist, these cars are almost never seen.

■ Minas-Lergo PM-3B Passenger Car

Craft: M-L PM-3B Passenger Car
Type: People-mover vehicle
Scale: Speeder
Length: 9 meters
Crew: 1 (droid)
Passengers: 14
Cargo Capacity: 200 kilograms
Cover: 1/2
Cost: 10,000
Move: 18; 50 kmh
Body Strength: 1D+1

■ Minas-Lergo PM-7C Cargo Car

Craft: M-L PM-7C Cargo Car
Type: People-mover vehicle
Scale: Speeder
Length: 9 meters
Crew: 1 (droid)
Passengers: 2
Cargo Capacity: 5 metric tons
Cost: 8,000
Move: 18; 50 kmh
Body Strength: 1D+1

Graith

■ Facts at a Glance

Total Population: 25,200,000 (approx.)
Species Breakdown: Gorohtite: 99+%, Human and other: <1%

Overview

Graith is the most populous (and the most important) o’beki on the planet. It is home to the the P’Dar’Ken (the Gorohtite planetary council), the Colonial Government, and the site of the

corporate headquarters of the various mining rights holders. Like all major o’bekis, Graith combines elements of traditional Gorohtite settlements (“traditional” since the Scouring, at least) with cutting-edge Imperial hostile-environment outpost technology.

Graith is located in a deep rift valley in the middle of a high plateau, surrounded by high and jagged mountain-ranges. This valley is approximately 30 kilometers long, five kilometers across

at its widest point, and ranges from 200 meters to 500 meters deep. The valley is a jagged scar carved into the rock of the plateau. Its sides are steep — 45 degrees at their shallowest pitch — and in some areas vertical.

The Gorothis have carved narrow, switchback paths into the rock walls in many places (where the pitch allows, of course). Some of these have been widened and reinforced by the Empire to make the paths safe for low-altitude repulsorlift and ground vehicles. In many places, streams plunge from the cliff tops, arching out and down in graceful waterfalls. The water collects in the small lake known as V'Bren Goh ("Bitter Tarn"). From the lake, a narrow river flows roughly southward, to plunge into a sink-hole and join a larger, subterranean river that flows beneath the southern mountains.

Some of these waterfall streams have been diverted by simple dams and structures to provide water to the central filtration units that serve the Gorothis residences. The Imperial and corporate facilities are served by high-volume pipes that draw water directly from V'Bren Goh, and run it through more elaborate filter complexes.

Graith Locations

1. Starport

A military-grade facility, this is located on the plateau above the valley. The Empire would prefer to have their Starport nearer to the heart of things — for security reasons as much as for convenience — but the lay of the land prohibits this.

High blast walls surround the installation — purportedly to protect the enclave population from any mishaps, but actually to minimize security problems. There is a single gate allowing access through the blast walls, opening out onto the top of the cliffs at the beginning of the only major road leading down into the valley. Corporate employees sarcastically term this road "Grand Avenue," after the triumphal procession-route of that name on Chandrila.

The port is divided into two sections — an Imperial military facility, and the very much smaller civilian facility. Electrified security fences separate the two facilities, and the Imperial area is patrolled round-the-clock by a dozen Rim Security's K7 "Black Dagger" security droids (modified to resist the radiation flux).

■ K7 Security Droid

Type: Rim Security's K7 "Black Dagger" Security Droid
DEXTERITY 3D+2
 Blaster 8D, dodge 7D, running 5D
KNOWLEDGE 1D
MECHANICAL 1D
PERCEPTION 3D

Search 4D

TECHNICAL 1D

Equipped With:

- Two auto-balance legs
- Two arms
- Body armor: +2D energy and physical to all locations
- Internal blaster rifle (5D damage, ranges: 5-30/100/200)

Move: 12

Size: 1.7 meters tall

Cost: Not for sale

Additional security is provided by customs officials. They are equipped with breath masks, of course. Although generally armed just with blaster pistols and grenades, these personnel have access to extensive armories. Should the situation warrant, they can bring heavy weapons into play, up to and including E-web blasters.

■ Typical Gorothis Customs Official

Type: Gorothis Customs Official

DEXTERITY 2D+2

Blaster 4D+1, dodge 4D+1, grenade 3D+2, vehicle blasters 3D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Law enforcement 3D, intimidation 3D, willpower 3D+1

MECHANICAL 1D+2

PERCEPTION 2D

Search 5D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 1D+2

Security 4D

Character Points: Varies, typically 0–5

Move: 10

Equipment: Blast helmet (+1 energy, +1D physical), blast vest (+1 energy, +1D physical), blaster pistol (4D), comlink, breath mask

A central control tower, operated by military personnel, coordinates and controls all incoming and outgoing flights. In the military area, there are hangers and shelters for maintenance and repair of ships. However, unless undergoing work, all ships are parked in the large "duty hanger," ready to be "scrambled" at a moment's notice. At any given time, two 12-ship squadrons of TIE/ln fighters are stationed in TIE racks in the duty hanger. There are also usually a couple of *Tribune*-class shuttles.

On the civilian side, there are most of the facilities to be expected at a commercial starport: docking bays, service facilities, even a small (and well-policed!) tavern. At any given time, there are half a dozen or so transports of various types on the ground. Most transports are corporate-owned, bearing the livery of their megacorp. There may well be an "independent" ship or two, of course, either performing contract work for a smaller corp, or on Gorothis for the captain's own (perhaps shady) reasons.

All civilian vessels undergo an extensive customs search on landing, performed by well-trained military personnel. These same personnel conduct spotchecks on departure as well, examining

on average one in 10 ships. Ships wishing to depart must file a departure plan with the control tower, and receive a “boost time.” Ships that take off before their designated boost time are automatically considered to be in violation of Imperial law; three or four TIE fighters are launched to pursue, and force the ship to return for “processing.”

■ Tribune Shuttle

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems *Tribune*-class Shuttle
Type: Light shuttle
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 18.5 meters
Skill: Space transports: Tribune shuttle
Crew: 3, skeleton: 1/+10
Crew Skill: Space transports 4D
Passengers: 14
Cargo Capacity: 30 metric tons
Consumables: 3 weeks
Cost: 150,000 (new), but generally for sale only to the military and corporations
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2
Hyperdrive Backup: x15
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 1D
Space: 5
Atmosphere: 295; 850 kmh
Hull: 3D

Shields: 1D

Sensors:

Passive: 30/0D

Scan: 50/1D

Search: 75/2D

Focus: 5/3D

2. “Grand Avenue”

The major access route connecting the Starport and the o’beki itself, this road is steep but kept in excellent repair. There are no guardrails, however, and the faint-of-heart should avoid glancing over the edge.

“Grand Avenue” is 10 meters wide for most of its length. Around the clock, modified landspeeders and hover and ground vehicles shuttle back and forth along its length, ferrying cargo and personnel. An enterprising Gorothite j’ber has set up a pay-per-ride “taxi service” to shuttle civilian newcomers to and from the Starport. A one-way trip costs five credits per person (haggling is appropriate), with negotiated surcharges for cargo. As yet, Colonial Governor Limoth has made no moves to nationalize this service.

Into The Warrens

From the personal diary of Lt. Yrul Tash, Imperial Army

“The warrens.” That’s what we call them, me and my squad-mates. It doesn’t begin to describe what it’s like down there.

I know what’s in my personnel docket. My last CO let me have a look. It’s a clear record, no demerits, no discommendations, no reprimands. But I got transferred here anyway. Where’s the justice in that? I was born on Jalarren — big world, lots of space. You go out into the salt deserts, and you’re the tallest thing between you and the horizon. Open space!

For someone with my background, going down into the warrens is like torture — cruel and unusual punishment. There’s no space to move, no space to breathe. And everywhere you look, you’re surrounded by those lizards, looking at you with their creepy eyes. Whispering about you behind your back in that disgusting language of theirs. Probably planning just how to sucker you away from the rest of your squad and kill you.

Let me tell you what it’s like. The tunnels are low — which is weird, if you think about it. The lizards are bigger than we are, even in all our gear. But for some reason, they don’t mind having to bend almost double to get through

some of the corridors. You know, it’s almost as though they’re so primitive they don’t mind going back to walking on all-fours sometimes.

It’s dark in the warrens. There’s glowlights on the corridor walls, but they’re lizard glowlights — dim and too red. Everything looks like it’s soaked in blood. The corridors are narrow, twisting and turning, and combined with the darkness they cut visibility down to a few meters. That’s probably the scariest thing of all. No fire-lanes — if it came down to a fight, dozens of the lizards, *hundreds* of them, could be hiding around a corner five meters away, and even if you knew they were there, you couldn’t shoot them.

It’s hot, too. Hot and clammy. And the air smells. Well, I *imagine* it’d smell; we breathe suit air all the time we’re down there.

And there’s lizards everywhere. *Everywhere*. They try to get out of your way when you walk by — they pretend to be scared of us, most of them — but the corridors are so narrow, you have to brush by them. You feel their hands brushing against your armor, looking for a weak spot where they can drive a knife in.

People in the government say they’re pacified. They say the warrens are secured. I say come down with me on patrol one day and see for yourself. You’ll change your mind.

Under Pressure

D'Trel B'Krel D'Naz speaks of the pressures to his j'ber ...

It is cold inside the pressures. The air is thin, and the processing equipment strips the air of the scent of other B'Dellyi. It is a lonely, alien place to go.

The Humans — they so relish space: high ceilings, wide corridors. Such waste of precious space. They like their metal, too. Walls, ceilings, floors — all are metal, in many places. The lights — already too bright — glint and gleam off all that polished metal. It hurts the eyes. And the echoes: every sound seems to reverberate off the metal surfaces, never falling totally silent.

One can recognize the different Humans quickly. The security guards — they are always there, always watching — stand and move as though they are always ready to kill.

The government functionaries carry them-

selves with pride and arrogance, like members of a j'ber with much status.

The people of their “companies” are always looking around them, as though they anticipate ambush — not from the B'Dellyi, but from members of other megacorporations. One can almost smell their fear.

And then there are the other off-worlders — the gamblers and the traders. They are few, but they seem to fill the space with their talk and their laughter. Perhaps it is for them that the ceilings are so high, the corridors so wide ... they seem determined to take up as much personal space as possible.

I feel most at home in the markets. The B'Dellyi try to build narrow, low corridors with their stalls and barrows. When I walk through the markets, I feel B'Dellyi close by me, around me. I can smell the skin of my people.

3. Other Major Roads

These have also been widened and reinforced by the Empire.

4. Gorothise Cliff Dwellings

In many places along the cliff walls are complexes of caves; about half of Graith's natives make their homes in the caves. Gorothises prefer high population densities — much higher than Humans would relish — and do not need much personal space. As elsewhere on the planet, most of the Gorothises of higher status — personal or j'ber — live in the cliff dwellings.

5. V'Bren Goh (“Bitter Tarn”)

This small lake is fed by two major rivers, which are, in turn, fed by numerous cliff waterfalls.

6. Gorothise Subterranean Dwellings

Accessways to the subterranean complexes — appearing as low structures built from native rock — dot the valley floor. Population density is even higher in the subterranean areas than in the cliffs above them. Most businesses are run by and for Gorothises — restaurants, kefa houses, and the like — and are located in the subterranean areas, rather than in the cliff dwellings. These subterranean areas are divided into “neighborhoods.” Each neighborhood has one or two accessways to the surface. Small tunnels interlink some neighborhoods, although this is not a universal feature.

7. P'Dar'Ken Hall

This is a utilitarian building constructed on the surface (counter to most Gorothise traditions). It is built of native rock, reinforced and embellished here and there with metals and synthetic resins. It is not connected to any of the underground neighborhoods.

It was built at the instructions of Colonial Governor Limoth (apparently, he is more comfortable having the native government in a single building that could, as needed, be surrounded by troops). The members of the P'Dar'Ken and their immediate families live within this large building. There is also an audience hall, a large open area where the P'Dar'Ken actually holds its meetings.

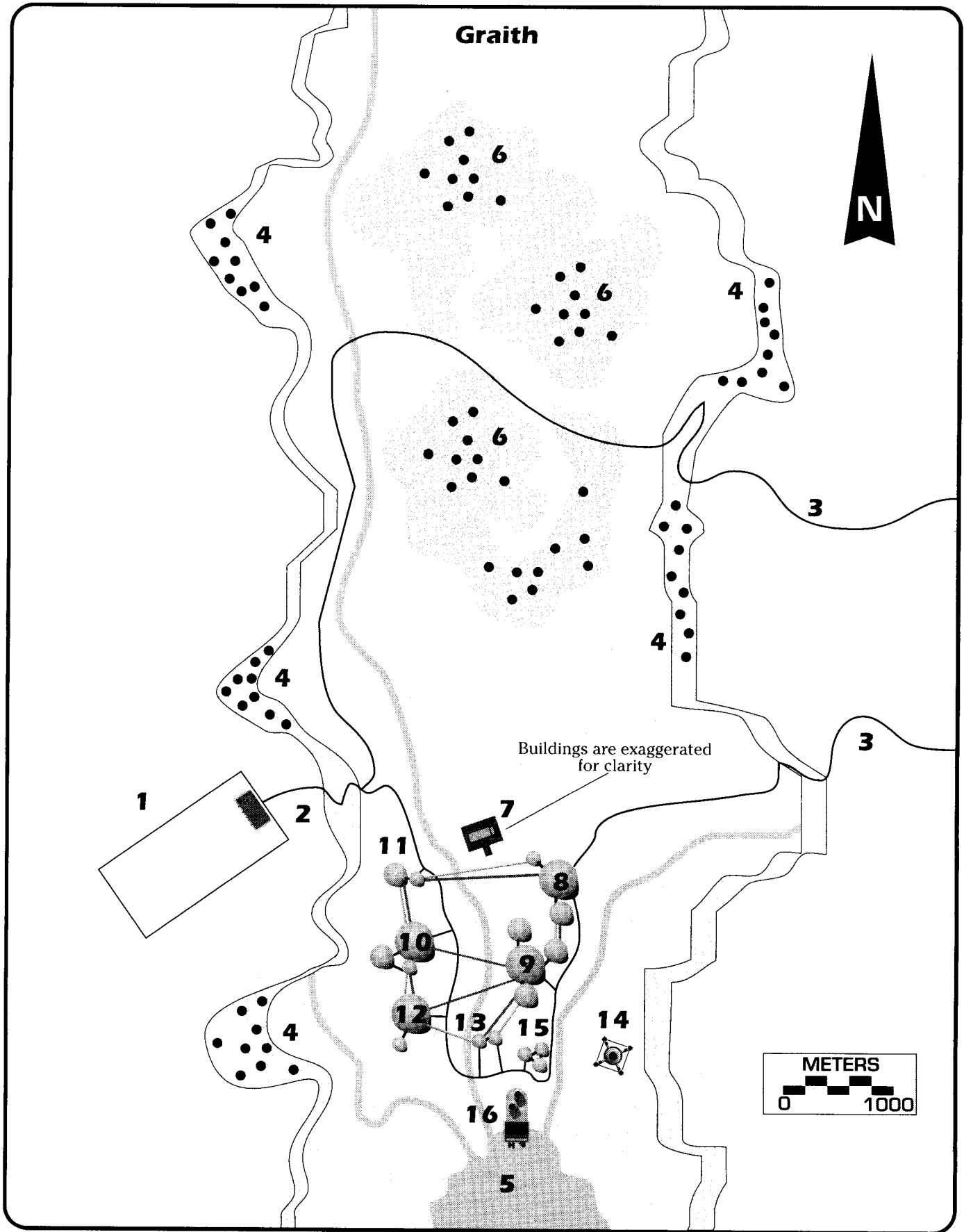
8. Colonial Government Pressure

This large, reinforced pressure complex is home to Colonial Governor Limoth, his wife and daughter, and the bureaucrats who run the real government of Gorothis Prime. Its current complement numbers over 2,000, but it can easily support an additional 1,000 beings on top of that.

The pressure is guarded around the clock by a squad of 24 Imperial Army troopers. They are armed with light weapons only, but have access to heavy weapons in an emergency. A detachment of 20 Gorothis Planetary Police is always ready to respond to trouble, however, and can be on-site in under five minutes from the moment an alarm is raised.

9. TaggeCo Corporate Facility

Unusually elaborate in design, this complex of pressures puts the Colonial Government facility



to shame (which is, in fact, quite representative of the way things work on Goroth). Corporate workers live in the outlying domes, while the central offices of the corporation are located in the central pressure. There are almost 1,000 TaggeCo employees in this facility alone. Security is provided by Imperial Army troopers, “seconded” to the corporation.

10. Karflo Corporation Facility

This is smaller than the TaggeCo facility, but still quite impressive. Although Karflo rivals TaggeCo in influence on Goroth, corporate policies keep the number of personnel relatively low. More functions are performed by computers and automated systems, which keeps the occupancy down around 500 people. Security is provided by Karflo’s own personnel.

■ **Typical Karflo Security Officer**

- Type: Security Officer
- DEXTERITY 3D**
- Blaster 4D, dodge 3D+1
- KNOWLEDGE 2D**
- Business 2D+1, business: Karflo Corporation 4D, intimidation 3D, streetwise 4D
- MECHANICAL 1D**
- PERCEPTION 2D**
- Bargain 3D, command 3D, search 3D+2
- STRENGTH 2D+2**
- Brawling 3D+2
- TECHNICAL 1D+1**
- Character Points: Varies, typically 0-5

Move: 10

Equipment: Blast helmet (+1 energy, +1D physical), blast vest (+1 energy, +1D physical), blaster carbine (5D), comlink, breath mask

11. Trigdale Metallurgy and Vaufthau Processing Industries Pressure

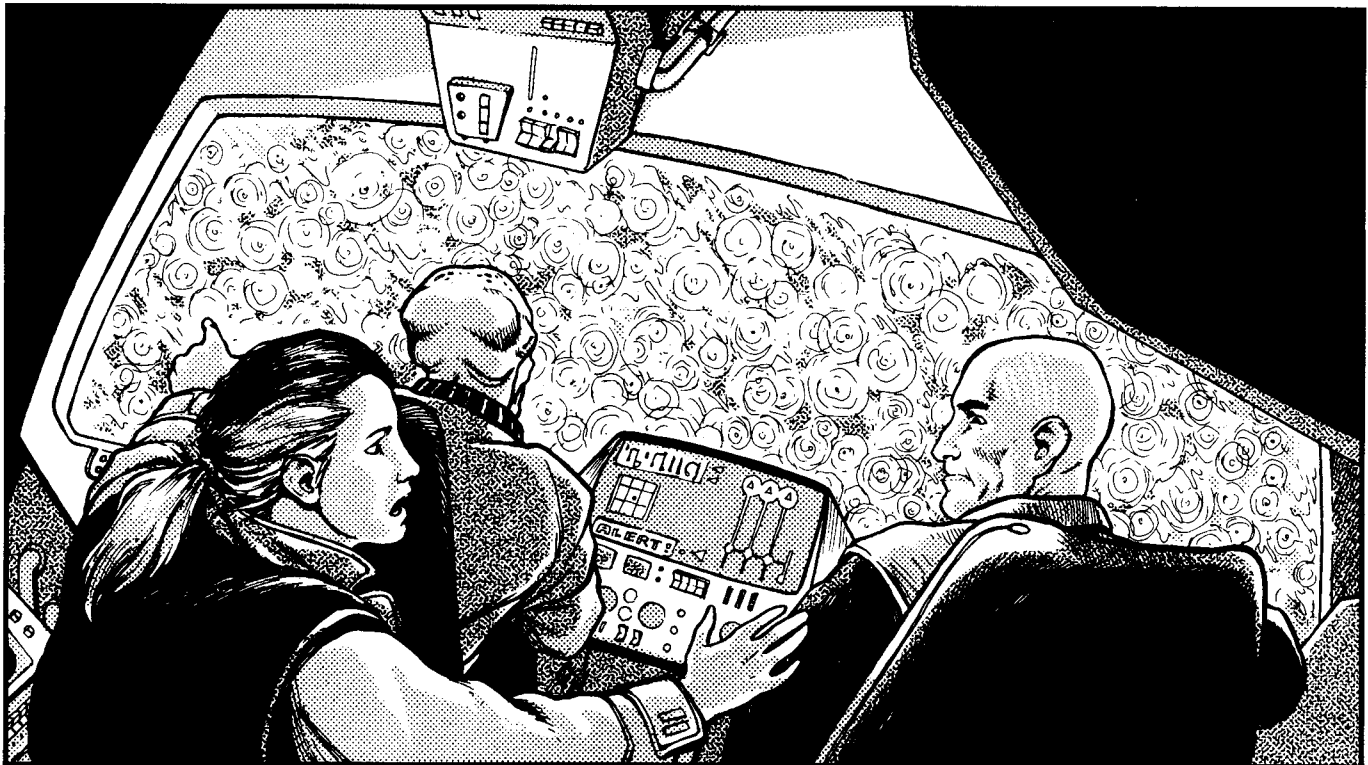
The two secondary rights-holders share a single pressure complex in Graith. Security is provided by Karflo security personnel on contract to the two corporations.

12. Multi-Corporate Complex

The half-dozen or so other corporations that hold subsidiary rights share a somewhat primitive complex near the Bitter Tarn. Security is provided by Imperial Army soldiers (for which the companies must pay the Colonial Governor).

13. Civilian Pressure

This complex contains rather spartan hotels, and “packaged” office complexes for traveling businesspeople and entrepreneurs. The Central Concourse includes a couple of restaurants, some stores and equipment suppliers, and a small — and exceptionally well-policed — casino. Unlike many casinos on other out-of-the-way worlds, the games here are all fair. Predictably, the Colonial Government slaps a “luxury tax” of 10% on all winnings. Further, a 2% “house fee” is taken from the wager of all games.



Mike Vilardi

■ Goroth’s harsh weather makes flying extremely dangerous.



Dan & David Day

Not all gambling in this complex is officially sanctioned, however. Professional gamblers sometimes visit Graith and set up high-stakes “floating” sabacc and other games in their rooms.

This is the only pressure where native Gorothites are free to enter and leave as they see fit. All of the businesses are run by Humans and other off-world species, although many of the menial tasks are performed by Gorothites. Security is provided by Imperial Army troopers on detached duty from the Colonial Governor’s garrison. Individual businesses can and do supplement their own security with personnel they hire on their own.

14. Power Generator

This facility uses geothermal power — of which Goroth has a surplus — to supply the energy needs of the entire o’beki. Separate circuits handle the corporate and Imperial pressures, and the Gorothite residences. If necessary, a computer command from the Colonial Government’s central system can shut down all power to the cliff dwellings and subterranean neighborhoods without affecting the power supply to the pressure complexes. Since it is of such strategic importance, the power generator is guarded by a detachment of 25 Goroth Planetary Police. Six heavy-weapon emplacements mount E-web repeating blasters. Air defense is provided by a single Jakan Arms 222 anti-vehicle emplacement. Two “Deathhawk” airspeeders are always on station, on the ground ready for a quick take-off.

■ Jakan Arms 222 Anti-Vehicle Blaster

Model: Jakan Arms 222 Blaster Cannon
Type: Medium Anti-Vehicle Laser Cannon
Scale: Speeder
Skill: Blaster artillery: anti-vehicle
Crew: 4, skeleton: 2/+10
Cover: Full
Ammo: Unlimited (fed directly from power generator)
Cost: 12,500 (new), 7,500 (used)
Availability: 2, R or X
Body: 2D+2
Fire Rate: 1/2
Fire Control: 2D

Range: 100-750/3/12 km

Damage: 3D+1

15. Military Barracks

This heavily-reinforced pressure complex houses the military personnel stationed in Graith. Occupancy varies, but at any given time there will probably be 750 or so Imperial Army troopers and an equal number of Goroth Planetary Police — plus support personnel — in residence. The Goroth Planetary Police have their own quarters and facilities.

Vehicular support is provided by six modified “Deathhawk” combat airspeeders, 12 Aratech 74-Z military speeder bikes, and two AT-AT walkers.

■ Barresin “Deathhawk” Combat

Airspeeder

Craft: Barresin “Deathhawk” Combat Airspeeder
Type: Modified combat airspeeder
Scale: Speeder
Length: 12 meters
Skill: Repulsorlift operations: airspeeder (unskilled: -2D)
Crew: 2 (1 can combine)
Crew Skill: Repulsorlift operation: airspeeder 4D, vehicle blasters 4D+1
Cargo Capacity: 10 kilograms
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level–250 meters
Cost: Not for sale
Maneuverability: 2D+2
Move: 350; 1,000 kmh
Body Strength: 2D
Weapons:

Double Laser Cannon (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 (co-pilot)
Skill: Vehicle blasters
Fire Control: 3D
Range: 50-300/800/1.5 km
Damage: 5D+1

16. Filter Complex

A central filter facility handles the water supply for the pressure complexes. Each pressure has its own secondary filters as well (in case the central facility is compromised). A detachment of 10 Goroth Planetary Police, supported by a dozen or so Imperial Army troopers, guard this facility round the clock.

A’Lenba

■ Facts at a Glance

Total Population: 11,300,000 (approximate)
Species Breakdown: Gorothite: 99+%, Human and Other: <1%

Overview

A’Lenba, too, is located on a high plateau surrounded by rugged mountains. Unlike Graith, however, it is not sheltered by a rift valley. Thus there are fewer cliff dwellings — although there are some built into low hills that overlook the

main enclave — and proportionately more subterranean “neighborhoods.”

Like Graith, A’Lenba has a major source of relatively clean water — a lake known as B’Nal (“The Promise”) fed by vigorous streams that flow north from the nearby mountains. From B’Nal, a broad river flows northwest.

1. Starport

Smaller than the main port facility near Graith, this is set up in much the same way. There is a

large military area, with a relatively tiny civilian and commercial zone. Security is much the same, although there are thought to be only three or four K7 “Black Dagger” security droids. The central control tower and the navigation beacons are under military control.

There are fewer vessels on the ground at A’Lenba; only two four-ship flights of TIE/In fighters are present at any given time (unless more arrive escorting a major military vessel, of course). *Tribune*-class shuttles arrive rarely, but there is still usually one or two small transports either on the ground or in transit. Civilian transports not directly owned and operated by megacorporations are rare at A’Lenba, but not unheard-of.

Customs procedures are similar to Graith’s, although some visitors have claimed that the personnel who conduct them are slightly less efficient than their colleagues from the capital. Some might be amenable to a little “redistribution of wealth” under the right circumstances, but this is far from certain and not a matter where failure should be taken lightly.

2. Lake B’Nal

B’Nal (“The Promise”) is small, but cleaner and purer than V’Bren Goh in Graith.

3. Gorothise Cliff Dwellings

These complexes are much less elaborate than those in Graith. Only natives of high status live in these desirable residences.

4. Gorothise Subterranean Dwellings

These are more extensive than those in Graith. They are dug deeper into the bedrock, so the “neighborhoods” extend down further. Generally speaking, neighborhoods here are interlinked more than those in Graith. Tunnels are usually narrower and lower; to non-Gorothises, they are very claustrophobic.

5. P’Dar’lb Hall

Again, the Imperial representative — the Regional Prefect, a Human by the name of Del Obarren — has decided that the P’Dar’lb (the local council) is better separated from the remainder of the Gorothise population. The building is constructed on the surface, totally counter to native ideas of architecture. It is an unpleasant, spartan place, and most members of the P’Dar’lb consider their stay here as roughly on par with a jail term.

6. Regional Prefect’s Pressure

Comfortable but far from sumptuous, this pressure houses Del Obarren, the Regional Prefect, and his staff. Security is provided by a detachment of 12 Gorothise Planetary Police. Obarren

does not go to anywhere near the same lengths as the Colonial Governor to pretend that he is no more than an “advisor” to the native government. Native Gorothises are never allowed inside this pressure, and corporate representatives — those with impeccable credentials, anyway — are occasionally allowed to visit, but are never welcome. Off-worlders not directly associated with the Empire or the corporations are barred from this complex under all but the most unusual of circumstances.

■ Del Obarren, Regional Prefect

Type: Cynical Imperial Functionary

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Alien species 3D+2, bureaucracy 4D, business 3D+2, willpower 4D

MECHANICAL 2D

PERCEPTION 2D

Command 3D, investigation 3D

STRENGTH 2D

TECHNICAL 2D

Security 2D+2

Move: 10

Equipment: Hold-out blaster (3D), comlink

Capsule: Many people describe Del Obarren as “cruel,” but this is not quite accurate: true cruelty involves a level of emotion that seems well beyond the capacity of the Regional Prefect. He is cold, hard, and utterly pragmatic, unswayed by guilt or any sense of ethics or morality. He is exceptionally good at what he does, however, and has his eye on the post of Colonial Governor, but is patient enough to wait for this prize.

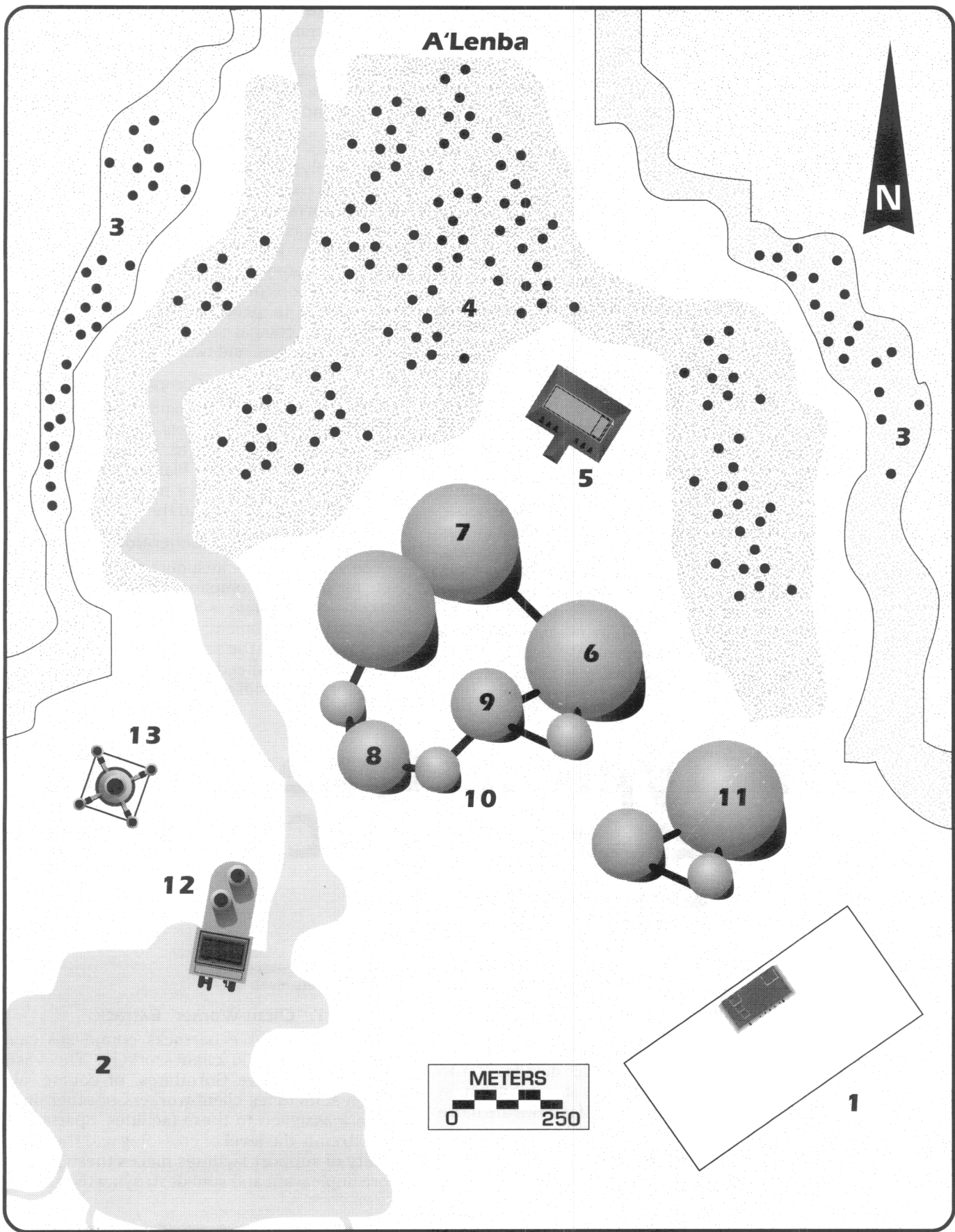
7. Primary Rights-Holders Complex

In this smaller o’beki, both TaggeCo and Karflo share a single pressure complex. Total occupancy is under 1,000. Predictably, no native Gorothises are ever allowed into this facility. Something of a power-play is underway between the corporate representatives and the Regional Prefect; currently, Imperial personnel are not welcome on the premises. That is fine with Obarren — for the moment — but Obarren vows that things will definitely change in the future.

Security is provided by Karflo security personnel. There is also a detachment of two dozen Imperial Army troopers near the site — but not too near — purportedly to provide “additional security,” but actually to keep an eye on corporate activities and to remind the corporations that the Empire is still intensely interested in them.

8. Secondary Rights-Holders Complex

As in Graith, Trigidale Metallurgy and Vauftau Processing Industries share a complex. These two corporations are making their own move in the power-play, trying to woo the Regional Prefect. Obarren and his close colleagues are frequent



guests at this pressure, enjoying the fine pan-Galactic cuisine of the executive dining rooms. Security is provided by Imperial Army troopers.

9. Subsidiary Corporate Complex

Much smaller and more spartan than the equivalent facility in Graith, this is shared by the subsidiary rights-holders. Primary security is provided by Imperial Army troopers but there is also a small detachment of Karflo security personnel on duty around the clock, just in case the power-play by TaggeCo and Karflo has unwanted repercussions for other corps.

10. Civilian Pressure

There is one “transients’ residence,” a couple of limited-service restaurants, one packaged-office facility, and a single tavern within this pressure. Although these businesses are run by the corporations — with native Gorothis performing all menial tasks, of course — there is a large Imperial presence. Imperial Army troopers are a common sight in the halls, and even in the tavern.

As with the civilian pressures in other o’beki, many native Gorothis run small businesses here. There is a thriving bazaar in the central concourse, where Gorothis sell craft goods, miscellaneous personal equipment (styluses, simple datapads, and similar items), and other cheap items from barrows and stands. For obvious reasons, there is little trade in foodstuffs with off-worlders.

Officially, all stalls and barrows must charge a sales tax. Most do when security personnel are watching. However, monitoring so many independent businesspeople — each barrow or stall is

almost invariably an independent concern — is simply too much work for the government bureaucrats. Predictably, restricted goods are not sold in the bazaars. However, the stalls and barrows are good places to make contacts, and arrange for meetings and transactions to take place elsewhere.

11. Military Barracks

As heavily-fortified as the equivalent facility in Graith, this complex is home to 500 or so Imperial Army troopers and perhaps 200 Gorothis Planetary Police — again, plus support personnel. Occupancy varies depending on activity. When the Colonial Governor visits — a rare occasion — the number of troops present almost doubles. Vehicular support is provided by four modified “Deathhawk” combat airspeeders, eight Aratech 74-Z speeder bikes, and two AT-ST walkers.

12. Filter Complex

The central filter facility handles the water supply for the pressure complexes. Each pressure has its own secondary filters as well, of course. A detachment of 10 Gorothis Planetary Police, supported by an equal number of Imperial Army troopers, guard this facility round the clock.

13. Power Generator

The setup here — including the separate circuits for pressure complexes and Gorothis residences — is the same as in Graith. Similar, too, is the security detachment: 25 Gorothis Planetary Police, supported by the same heavy weapons. One “Deathhawk” airspeeder is always on station, ready for a quick lift-off.

■ Typical Hyperbaride Extraction/Cracking Facility

Individual facilities vary quite widely, depending on their exact functions, and on the nature of their environment — specifically, the topography, and the proximity to the surface of rich hyperbaride deposits. Following is information on a “typical” facility. The exact details refer to the facility northeast of the crater in Yar’En, in the eastern hemisphere; other facilities are more or less similar, however.

■ Facts at a Glance

Total Personnel Complement: 7,500
“Client-Workers”: 6,150

Corporate Personnel: 850
Military Personnel: 500

1. “Client-Worker” Barracks

Each of the three barracks complexes can accommodate 2,500 client-workers. The vast majority are native Gorothis, of course, although sometimes client-workers of other species are assigned to these facilities. Spartan in the extreme, the level of crowding and the poor quality of support facilities makes these places more unpleasant and soul-destroying than some

Imperial slave camps. Air and water supplies are filtered because the environment here is so harsh that it will eventually kill even native Gorothites.

Work goes on around the clock at all Imperial facilities; workers operate on a 12-hour-on-24-hour-off regimen: three shifts per day. When off-shift, most workers stay in their bunks, trying to regain their strength for the next grueling day. There are no entertainment facilities beyond a single datapad for every 200 or so workers; it is linked to a small library of files. There are no exercise facilities.

The quality of health-care has improved of late, as the corporations and the Empire have come to realize that sick or dead workers are not overly productive. Each barracks has a small, understaffed and under-equipped clinic. "Goldbricking" is strongly discouraged, predictably; as soon as it has been determined that a patient is not going to die in the immediate future, he or she is returned to the duty roster.

Security is exceptionally harsh. The Empire recognizes that over 6,000 disgruntled workers represent a very real security risk. It handles the problem by breaking the spirit of the workers early on, and keeping it broken. Imperial Army troopers and even Goroth Planetary Police patrol the barracks complexes around the clock, even going so far as to "roust" workers occasionally during their sleep periods. Even the most minor break in discipline leads to a complete "lock-down": off-duty workers are confined to their bunks, under the blasters of armed guards.

Except for J'Nes B'Sar ("Truth Gatherings"), organized meetings of Gorothites are prohibited. Even talking to bunk-mates is discouraged. All sleeping and eating quarters are wired, and security personnel monitor the bugs on an irregular schedule. Client-workers can never be sure that their casual conversations are not being overheard.

2. Military Barracks

Although spartan by any other standards, the facilities for military personnel are orders of magnitude more comfortable and hospitable than those for client-workers. Military personnel work the same three-shift regimen as the client-workers (although they get several breaks during each shift). They are provided with elaborate entertainment and exercise facilities to keep them (more or less) happy while off-duty. A typical complement comprises 350 Imperial Army troopers, each equipped with his own envirosuit, plus 150 Goroth Planetary Police.

These personnel are responsible for both the control of the client-workers and the protection of the facility from hostile actions. To this end, they are equipped with E-Web repeating blasters

and other heavy weapons. Four gun emplacements atop the facility itself each contain a single Jakan Arms 222 anti-vehicle blaster cannon.

Attached to this complex are the storage and repair facilities for the vehicles necessary to defend the site. A typical vehicle complement includes four "Deathhawk" airspeeders, eight Mekuun Repulsor Scouts, and 12 Aratech 74-Z speeder bikes. Supplies are ferried in by modified Ubrikkian SuperHaul cargo skiffs, and the hyperbaride products are shipped out via the same route. There are usually one or two skiffs on the ground at any given time.

If the Empire believes a site to be at particular risk, the Naval presence in orbit will ship additional forces and vehicles in for support. Troop population will temporarily double, and there will be at least two AT-AT walkers on-site.

■ Mekuun Repulsor Scout

Craft: Mekuun Repulsor Scout

Type: Modified landspeeder

Scale: Speeder

Length: 8 meters

Skill: Repulsorlift operation: landspeeder

Crew: 1, gunners: 1

Crew Skill: Varies, but often repulsorlift operation 3D, vehicle blasters 3D+2

Passengers: 2

Cargo Capacity: 100 kilograms

Cover: Full

Altitude Range: Ground level-2 meters

Cost: 12,000 (new)

Maneuverability: 1D+1

Move: 105; 300 kmh

Body Strength: 3D

Weapons:

1 Heavy Repeating Blaster

Fire Arc: Turret

Crew: 1

Skill: Vehicle blasters

Fire Control: 0D

Range: 3-75/200/500

Damage: 4D

3. Corporate Personnel Facilities

This pressure is home to the corporate personnel responsible for managing and operating the plant. The facilities here are even better than those for the military personnel, but they still certainly fall short of what many of the corporate employees are used to.

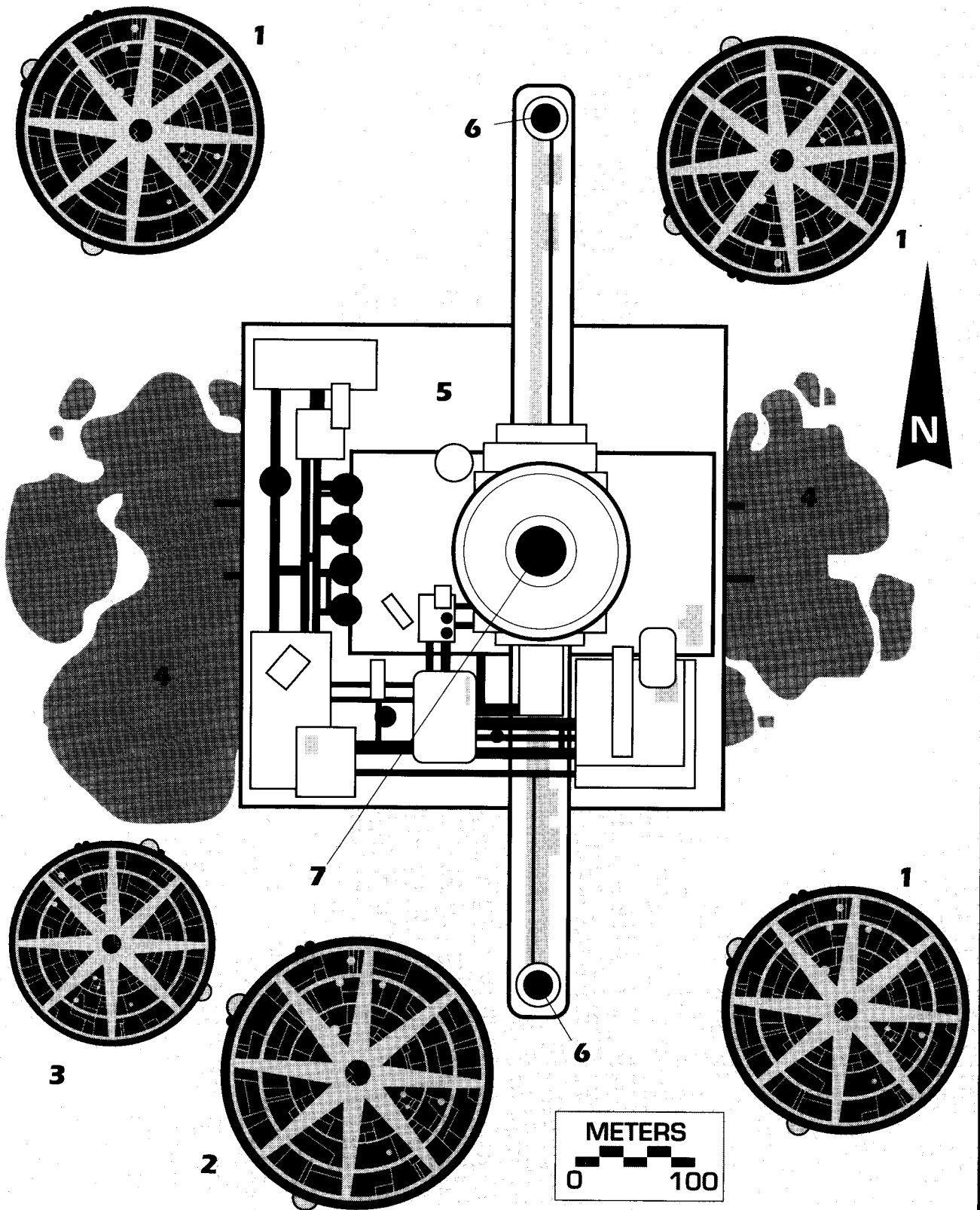
4. Cooling Pools

These pools of water are vital to the operation of the plant. Intake pipes draw (relatively) cool water into the facility, and matched outflow pipes return the water — and the waste heat it has picked up — to the pool. The pools are fed by underground streams so there is always a relatively fresh supply of water.

5. Main Plant Building

This is a harsh and ugly structure, its sheer

Typical Hyperbaride Extraction/Cracking Facility



walls rising almost 75 meters into the overcast sky. The machinery inside roars and hums every hour of the day. Vibrations can be felt through the ground for kilometers, and the volume level is above the threshold of pain within 100 meters of the site. Characters without suitable ear protection will suffer a +1D penalty to all difficulty numbers due to pain and disorientation.

6. Cooling Stacks

Like the cooling towers associated with old-style nuclear plants, these gout steam into the air as they pour waste heat into the environment. They rise 25 meters above the flat roof of the plant.

7. Exhaust Tower

While the cooling stacks give off nothing but (relatively) clean steam, this huge tower — an additional 100 meters tall — gouts forth black, billowing clouds filled with an evil brew of toxins: the waste products of the extraction and cracking process. Secondary reactions within this cloud burn with a dull, ruddy “deathlight” (“b’lenjor” in the Gorothite tongue). Static charge is high, and lightning often strikes from this cloud, hitting the lightning rods that top the exhaust tower and the cooling stacks.

Details on a hyperbaride plant built along roughly similar lines can be found in the *Star Wars* adventure, *Planet of the Mists*.



Mike Vliard

■ Even Gorothites must don full environment suits for working in the most polluted areas of Goroth.

Chapter Eight New Technology

The conditions on Goroath decrease the effectiveness of standard technology, or make new demands on it that it was not designed to counter. All the major factions, therefore, have had to develop new technologies — or, at least, to ring some significant changes on old technologies — to meet the challenges of the planet.

Vehicles

Repulsorlift technology is exceptionally unstable on Goroath because of the high radiation flux. Modifications can be made — as described earlier — but they are expensive. Pilots without experience with these vehicles suffer substantial penalties. As well as modifying old vehicles, the Empire and the corporations have developed new vehicles to meet the requirements of Goroath. Most of these vehicles are powered by batteries, regularly recharged with energy from geothermal plants. Some, however, actually burn high-energy carbon compounds for power.

Following are the details on some of these new vehicles. This list is not exhaustive, however, and gamemasters should feel free to introduce new vehicles that match the “flavor” of their campaigns.

Ownership/Operation Restrictions

All armed and armored vehicles on Goroath are limited to military use. Possession or operation of (or even coming too close to, under certain circumstances) such a vehicle is grounds for incarceration or worse. Vehicles under these restrictions are marked “Military” in the sections that follow.

Other vehicles can only be purchased by authorized employees of megacorporations that own exploitation rights on Goroath (in other words, other visitors and native Goroathites cannot own them). These vehicles are marked “Restricted” in the sections that follow.

Hover Vehicles

Generally known as “hovers,” these vehicles ride on a cushion of air created by lift engines, contained by a flexible “skirt.” They are generally not fast, and almost never very maneuverable, but they can handle almost as wide a variety of terrains — including water — as standard repulsorlift-driven landspeeders.

■ V'Jar be' Mun K'Raith (“Windstorm”) Hover Vehicle

Craft: V'Jar Technologies K'Raith Hover Vehicle

Type: Light hover vehicle

Scale: Speeder

Length: 6 meters

Skill: Hover vehicle operation: K'Raith

Crew: 2 (1 can combine)

Crew Skill: Varies widely

Passengers: 8

Cargo Capacity: 600 kilograms

Cover: 1/2

Altitude Range: Ground level–1 meter

Cost: 17,000 (new)

Move: 28; 80 kmh

Body Strength: 1D+1 (around skirt), 2D

Capsule: During the reconstruction, before the arrival of the Empire, j'ber V'Jar was already turning out the hover vehicles that would become the primary vehicle used by native Goroathites. V'Jar Technologies has since been nationalized, of course — after all, transportation is a strategic industry and thus must be “rationalized and monitored” — but its products, including the K'Raith, are still the only vehicles that can be purchased by native Goroathites.

The vehicle is small and simple. The skirt is made of light, flexible polynoreltin, and is the most vulnerable part of the vehicle. A ruptured skirt will totally immobilize the vehicle. Sometimes this bed is covered with a synthsilk tarpaulin.

■ Aratech 93-B Light Hover

Craft: Aratech 93-B Light Hover

Type: Light hover vehicle

Scale: Speeder

Length: 9 meters

Skill: Hover vehicle operation: 93-B

Crew: 2 (1 can combine)

Crew Skill: Varies widely

Passengers: 7



Dan & David Day

■ "Deathhawk" combat airspeeder (top), V'Jar be' Mun De' B'Den rotorcraft (middle), Mobquet Shark airspeeder (bottom).

Cargo Capacity: 2 metric tons
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level—1 meter
Cost: 25,000 credits (Restricted)
Maneuverability: 1D+2
Move: 42; 120 kmh
Body Strength: 2D

Capsule: This is the hover vehicle most frequently used by the megacorporations and the Empire for light hauling and personnel transport. It features an enclosed and pressurized command and passenger compartment (independently sealed, so breaching one will not compromise the other). The skirt is reinforced with thin plates of duralumin, making it more resistant to tearing (and, incidentally, to weapon fire). Theoretically, a weapon could be mounted, but there are no through-hulls for wiring and installation could well compromise the integrity of the pressurized compartments.

■ Aratech 101-C Medium Military Hover

Craft: Aratech 101-C Medium Military Hover
Type: Medium hover vehicle
Scale: Speeder
Length: 9 meters
Skill: Hover vehicle operation: 101-C Military
Crew: 2 (1 can combine), gunners: 1
Crew Skill: Vehicle blasters 4D+1, hover vehicle operation 3D+2
Passengers: 8
Cargo Capacity: 1 metric ton
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level—1 meter
Cost: 45,000 credits (Military)
Maneuverability: 1D
Move: 60; 180 kmh
Body Strength: 3D
Weapons:

Double Blaster Cannon (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Turret
Crew: 1
Skill: Vehicle blasters
Fire Control: 1D (can be used by co-pilot at fire control 0D)
Range: 50-250/500/900
Damage: 4D

Capsule: At first glance, the 101-C Medium Hover is identical to the 93-B Light Hover except for the addition of a servo-controlled turret mounted atop the passenger compartment. Internally, however, the differences are significant. The engines — both the lift and drive systems — are considerably beefed up (unfortunately, at the cost of some maneuverability). Additional armor has been added all around, including heavy plates of duralumin to protect the skirt. Normally the blaster cannons in the turret are fired by a gunner in the passenger compartment. In a pinch, however, the fire control system can be slaved to the co-pilot's controls. While operating the weapon, the co-pilot cannot combine with the pilot to drive the vehicle.

■ Aratech 109-Z Armored Cargo Hover

Craft: Aratech 109-Z Armored Cargo Hover
Type: Heavy hover vehicle
Scale: Speeder
Length: 12 meters
Skill: Hover vehicle operation: 109-Z

Crew: 2 (1 can combine)
Passengers: 12
Cargo Capacity: 4 metric tons
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level—1 meter
Cost: 47,000 credits (Military)
Maneuverability: 1D
Move: 42; 120 kmh
Body Strength: 2D+2
Weapons:

Laser Cannon

Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 (co-pilot)
Skill: Vehicle blasters
Range: 3-50/100/200
Damage: 4D

Capsule: The latest addition to the Aratech hover line, the 109-Z definitely shows its heritage. To a purist, its lines are less refined and more brutal than its smaller fellows; but to the tyro, it looks much like a bigger, bulkier version of the 101-C inexplicably missing its turret. Its single front-mounted laser cannon looks like an afterthought, a (distressingly accurate) impression that is only enhanced when one looks at the schematics. Added only because the Empire would not buy an armored cargo transport without any weapons, the laser cannon is next to useless in a scrap since a transport would most likely be running from trouble anyway, making its front fire arc useless. If used in harm's way, the 109-Z is always escorted by more combat-capable vehicles: 101-Cs, perhaps, or modified landspeeders.

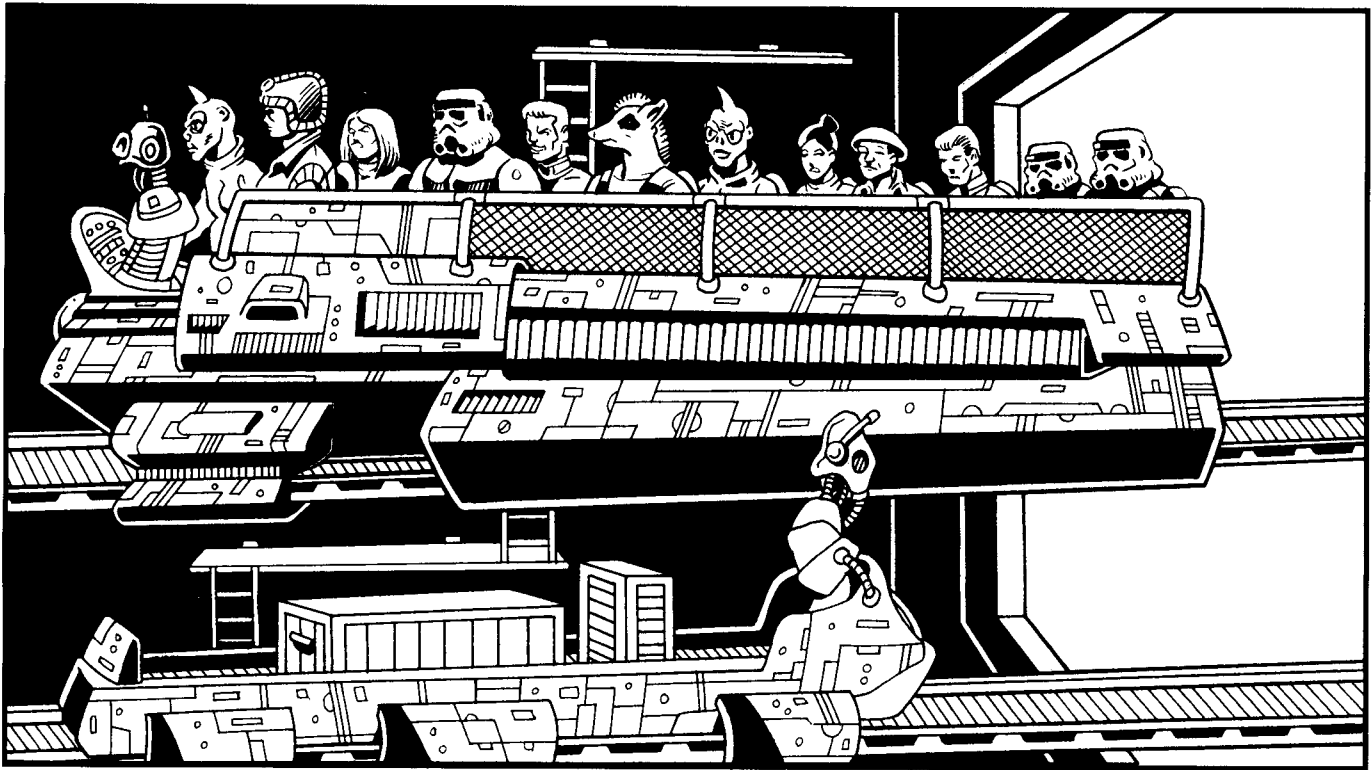
Repulsorlift Vehicles

Several modified repulsorlifts have already been described. Following are three task-specific repulsorlift craft built specifically for the Gorothe environment.

■ Ikas-Adno Fleetwing Landspeeder

Craft: Ikas-Adno Fleetwing Landspeeder
Type: Utility speeder
Scale: Speeder
Length: 4 meters
Skill: Repulsorlift operation: landspeeder
Crew: 1
Crew Skill: Varies widely
Passengers: 4
Cargo Capacity: 60 kilograms
Cover: 1/2
Altitude Range: Ground level—1.5 meters
Cost: 15,000 credits (Restricted)
Maneuverability: 2D
Move: 70; 200 kmh
Body Strength: 1D+2

Capsule: A light utility landspeeder, this resembles a four-seater version of the familiar Ubrikkian 9000 Z004 (in fact, Ikas-Adno is currently being sued by Ubrikkian for stealing the Z004's design). Unfortunately, Ikas-Adno seems not to have stolen Ubrikkian's counter-balancers; the ride on the Fleetwing is hard on the kidneys. Less adventurous corporate employees hate riding in Fleetwings because the craft is open and they must don envirosuits before going for a ride.



Dan & David Day

■ Minas-Lergo PM-3B passenger car (top) and PM-7C cargo car (bottom).

■ **Mobquet Shark Airspeeder**

Craft: Mobquet Shark Airspeeder
Type: Combat Airspeeder
Scale: Speeder
Length: 5 meters
Skill: Repulsorlift operation: airspeeder
Crew: 1, gunners: 1
Crew Skill: Varies widely
Cargo Capacity: 10 kilograms
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level–300 meters
Cost: 62,000 credits (Military)
Maneuverability: +1
Move: 350; 1,000 kmh
Body Strength: 2D+2

Weapons:

Double Laser Cannon (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Turret
Crew: 1
Skill: Vehicle blasters
Fire Control: 1D+2
Range: 50-100/150/200
Damage: 5D+1

Capsule: Only recently coming into service, the Shark is an ugly, ungainly-looking craft that — so pilots claim — handles like a crippled bantha. This is partially because the ugly, wart-like turret mounted behind the crew compartment was retrofitted from a Mobquet prototype — the P-34 — merely to meet the Empire’s Request for Proposal. (The P-34, it may be remembered, was never brought to market because of its own handling problems). Still, the twin laser cannons pack a serious punch, despite their relatively limited range.

So far, there are thought to be only a dozen or so evaluation units on Goroth Prime. If the evaluation works out, however — and Mobquet has several executives on-planet to make sure it does — the Shark will probably become popular for Imperial operations.

■ **Trask Industries 008 Heavy Landspeeder**

Craft: Trask Industries 008 Heavy Landspeeder
Type: Combat Landspeeder
Scale: Speeder
Length: 8 meters
Skill: Repulsorlift operation: landspeeder
Crew: 1, gunners: 1
Crew Skill: Varies widely
Cargo Capacity: 10 kilograms
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level–3 meters
Cost: 23,000 credits (Military)
Maneuverability: 3D
Move: 110; 315 kmh
Body Strength: 2D+1

Weapons:

Double Laser Cannon (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front
Skill: Vehicle blasters
Fire Control: 3D
Range: 50-300/700/1.1 km
Damage: 4D

Two Medium Blasters (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Back
Crew: 1
Skill: Vehicle blasters
Fire Control: 1D
Range: 50-300/450/850
Damage: 6D

Capsule: Again, the first evaluation units of the 008 are only newly-arrived on Goroth Prime, but already Imperial light infantry pilots are crowing about their new toy. Heavy and brutal-looking, the 008 is surprisingly quick for a landspeeder and it handles like a pilot's dream. The 008 was designed around its weapon systems. The fire control on the front lasers — which are operated by the pilot — is very sophisticated indeed. Imperial procurement officers are trying to convince Trask Industries to retrofit the same microtronics into the rear medium blasters. If there is one fly in the ointment, it is occasional reports that when all weapons fire simultaneously, the vehicle momentarily becomes unstable (possibly due to power draw-down in the lateral stabilizers).

Rotorcraft

■ V'Jar be' Mun De' B'Den ("Silver Falcon") Rotorcraft

Craft: V'Jar Technologies Silver Falcon
Type: Medium rotorcraft
Scale: Speeder
Length: 12 meters
Skill: Rotor vehicle operation: De' B'Den (Unskilled: -3D)
Crew: 2 (1 can combine), skeleton: 1/+15
Crew Skill: Rotor vehicle operation 3D+1
Passengers: 6
Cargo Capacity: 2 metric tons
Cover: Full
Altitude Range: Ground level–8,000 meters
Cost: 40,000 credits
Maneuverability: 1D

Move: 175; 500 kmh
Body Strength: 1D+2

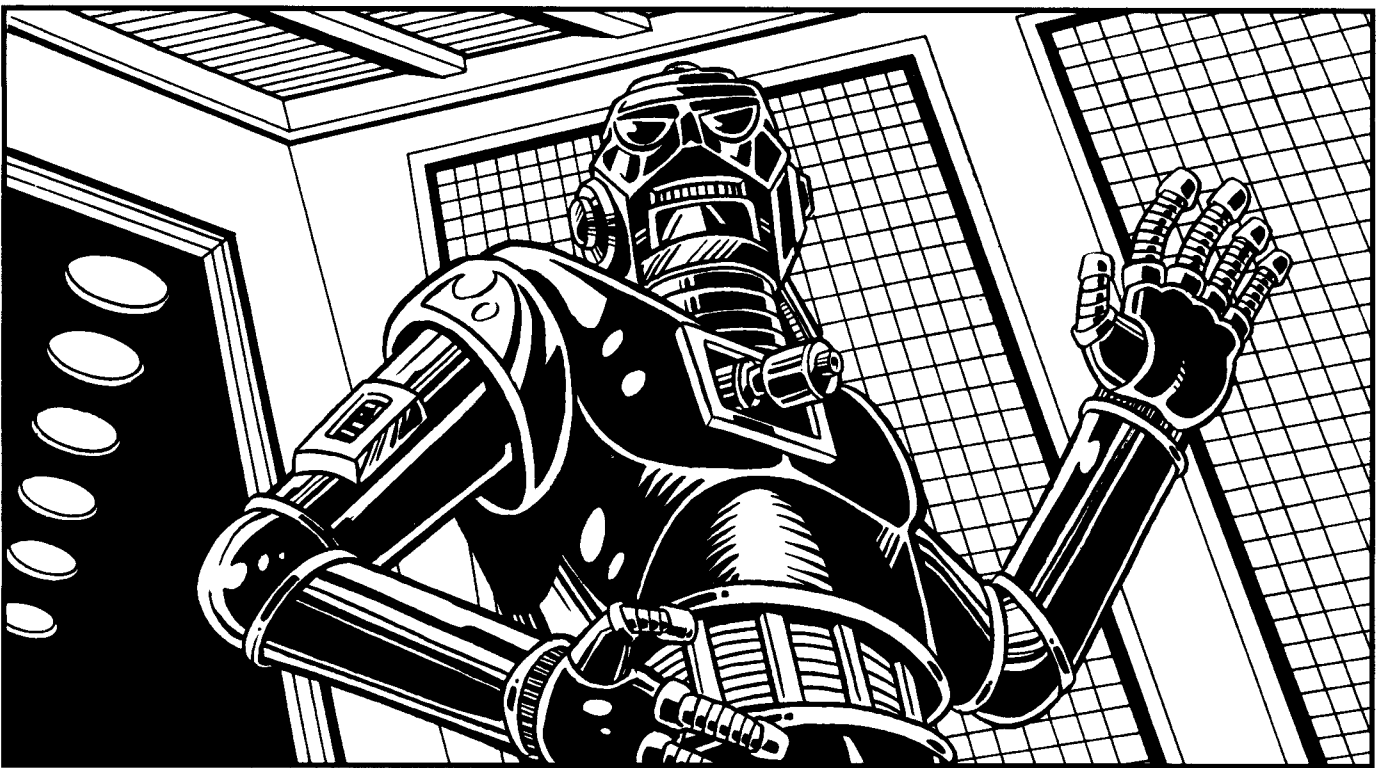
Capsule: V'Jar Industries once had a full range of vehicles adapted to the realities of Goroth's environment: hover vehicles and rotorcraft. After nationalization, however, the product line was substantially trimmed. Today, only the Silver Falcon rotorcraft and the Windstorm are still being actively produced.

The Silver Falcon is a bare-bones rotorcraft. Its body is a streamlined tear-drop shape, with a ducted tail rotor incorporated into the fuselage. Its six-blade, high-speed rotor looks dangerously small to rotorcraft pilots from other worlds. In fact, the design choice made by V'Jar engineers — to minimize blade length, and compensate for lost lift by increasing rotation speed — was made for safety. Short-blade rotors make the craft more stable in the unpredictable winds over the mountains.

Silver Falcons are too expensive for the majority of Gorothites to even consider ever owning one. Native businesses still sometimes buy them, and some of the corporations have recently acquired a couple.

Weapons

Before the coming of the Empire, the native Gorothites had developed an entire range of weapons to help them cope with the carnivores that preyed on them during the first centuries after the Scouring. None of these weapons were



Dan & David Day

■ K7 Security Droid.

based on standard blaster technology; even before the asteroid impacts, the Gorothis had never been really enamored with this technology. After the Scouring, they had lost the ability to replicate blaster technology even if they had wanted to.

One family, j'ber Jer'N, emerged as the premiere weaponsmiths during the Recovery, offering a full range of slug-throwers, "lightning guns" and microwave stunners. With the arrival of the Empire, j'ber Jer'N's good times came to an end. Production and ownership of ranged weapons was outlawed for native Gorothis, punishable by incarceration or even death, depending on the circumstances. Jer'N's operations were nationalized and then closed down. The Empire then tried to disarm the native population by announcing a two-week "amnesty" during which Gorothis owning weapons could turn them in to the Colonial Government for destruction, without any legal consequences. After that amnesty period was over, harsh penalties would be applied to anyone possessing a forbidden weapon.

Many Gorothis turned over their weapons during this amnesty. Some, however, kept theirs, hiding them from the Imperial "safety and security sweeps" which regularly passed through the cliff dwellings and subterranean neighborhoods. Today, although there are no new weapons being made on Gorothis Prime, there are stockpiles of old models hidden away, and a vigorous — but extremely cautious — black market in proscribed devices.

■ **Jer'N be' Milad Vel "Hammer"**

Model: Jer'N Weapons Systems Hammer

Type: Medium slug-thrower

Scale: Character

Skill: Firearms: pistol

Ammo: 8

Cost: 250 (ammo: 1 slug: 1)

Availability: 3, X

Ranges: 2-8/20/40

Damage: 4D+1

Game Notes: The Hammer's extreme recoil requires the user to make a Moderate *Strength* roll after the weapon is fired. If the roll fails, additional shots in that round or in the next round are at an *additional* -1D penalty; if the character waits a full round before firing again, there is no penalty. If the character succeeds at the *Strength* roll, there is no penalty beyond the normal multiple action penalties.

Capsule: The Jer'N Hammer is a brutal-looking — and brutally effective at short ranges — chemical slug-thrower. Its design is unmistakable because of the spring-loaded magazine that protrudes from the top of the frame. It is a semi-automatic weapon, based on a blowback design. Recoil is absolutely brutal — particularly to people used to blasters — and the noise is punishing in the extreme. Still, the large bullet packs a serious wallop. Although not specifically designed for this purpose, the caseless rounds act as armor-piercing bullets.

■ **Jer'N be' Milad Vel "Lightning Gun"**

Model: Jer'N Weapons Systems Lightning Gun

Type: Specialized energy weapon

Scale: Character

Skill: Blaster: blaster carbine

Ammo: 6

Cost: 875 (power packs: 35)

Availability: 3, X

Ranges: 3-25/50/75

Damage: 5D+2

Capsule: The only lethal energy weapon produced by Jer'N be' Milad Vel, the lightning gun uses an innovative technology. The weapon fires discrete "packets" of charged sub-atomic particles — two packets, in fact, one comprising positively-charged particles, the other negatively-charged antiparticles. They are kept apart — until they strike their target, at least — by "shepherd" packets of coherent light energy. On striking a target, the shepherd packets break down, and the particles and antiparticles annihilate each other, delivering a lethal energy "blast."

In appearance, a lightning gun blast resembles an elongated blaster bolt, except that it is a distinctive actinic blue-white in color. The sound, too, is distinctive: a ripping crack similar to a crack of thunder. Lightning guns cannot be set on stun.

■ **Jer'N be' Milad Vel Microwave Stunner**

Model: Jer'N Weapons Systems Microwave Stunner

Type: Specialized energy weapon

Scale: Character

Skill: Blaster: hold-out blaster

Ammo: 10

Cost: 175 (power packs: 25)

Availability: 3, X

Ranges: 3-5/10/20

Damage: 4D (stun)

Capsule: The microwave stunner looks much like a standard hold-out blaster, and has almost identical balance; anyone proficient with a hold-out blaster will be a good shot with the stunner as well. As its name implies, the Jer'N stunner fires a coherent bolt of microwave energy, tuned to interfere with the neural processes of a living creature. While there are probably some creatures in the galaxy whose neural anatomy makes them immune to this effect, none have yet visited Gorothis. The weapon's beam is invisible, but it does make a distinctive "thrum" sound as loud as the report of a blaster. Because of the relatively weak output of the microwave blast, characters wearing armor (blast vest, blast helmets or better) may choose to use the armor's generally better "physical" protection to resist damage.

Droids

Droids are nowhere near as common on Gorothis as they are on other Imperial worlds simply because the cost of modifying them to survive the radiation flux is often prohibitive. Most droids found on Gorothis are standard models, with additional shielding "retrofitted" to protect them from the environment. Over the last year or so, however, Karflo has started producing droids on-

Equipment Chart

The following table lists some basic survival gear — the kind of thing that a cross-country traveler would be well-advised not to forget.

Item	Availability	Cost
Flares (12)	1	5
Fusion Power Generator (light)	1	500
Glow Rod	1	10
Knife*	1	25
Radiant Heater	1	100
Rations (one person, one week)	1	200
Sleeping Bag	1	15
Survival tent (one-person)	1	200
Survival tent (two-person)	1	400
Survival tent (six-person)	1	800
Syntherope (50 meters)	1	2

*With self-sharpening sheath

planet designed specifically to resist the radiation flux. Although still much more expensive than standard droids, these models are significantly cheaper than the cost of retrofitting an existing droid. Of course, “cheaper” in this case is a relative term. Generally, it is still cheaper to use “client-workers.” The most popular of these droids — currently in service with most of the corporations operating on Goroth Prime — is the AR-2B utility droid.

■ Karflo Corporation AR-2B Utility Droid

Type: Karflo AR-2B Utility Droid

DEXTERITY 1D

KNOWLEDGE 1D

MECHANICAL 1D

PERCEPTION 1D

STRENGTH 1D

Lifting 3D

TECHNICAL 1D

Equipped With:

- Humanoid body (two arms, two legs, head)
- Two visual and two auidal sensors — Human range
- Vocabulator speech system
- C3-DD NeuroNet brain

Move: 7

Size: 1.7 meters tall

Cost: 2,250

Capsule: Classed as a fifth-degree droid, the AR-2B is designed specifically for menial labor, in the home, the office, or the industrial site. It can understand instructions given to it in Basic, but it has the disturbing tendency to be exceptionally literal-minded. (Sarcastically telling an AR-2B to “take off” might well result in it hurling itself from the roof.)

The droid’s rudimentary vocabulator allows it to speak Basic, but its voice is harsh and buzzing and obviously synthetic. The unit has a vocabulary of only 300 words.

The C3-DD NeuroNet brain is a functional unit, but it is totally incapable of abstract thought or

higher reasoning. AR-2Bs are incapable of understanding hypothetical situations, reacting to them as though they were the literal truth.

Survival Gear

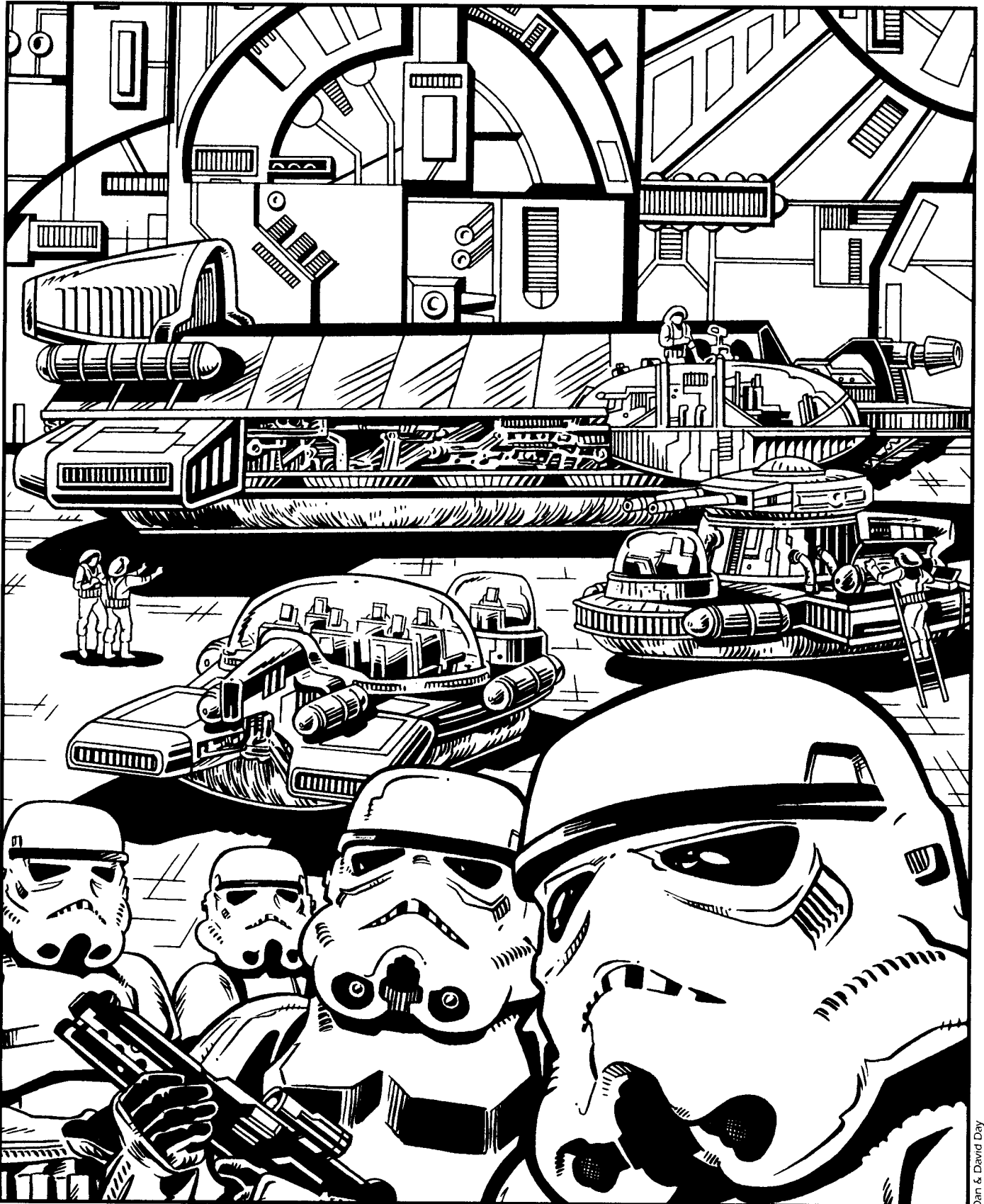
Clothing

Malik Technologies A-5 Envirosuit

The most popular of the eight or nine envirosuit models in common use on Goroth, the Malik A-5 is an expensive product but well worth the price. It provides a full, sealed environment for the wearer, protecting him from radiation and extremes of temperature, and shielding him from environmental contaminants. A sophisticated “scrubber/rebreather” in the backpack cleans and recycles air. This extends the life of the suit’s air supply to six standard hours. Heating and cooling systems maintain a wearer-selected internal temperature regardless of ambient temperature and incident radiation. The suit is warranted to handle temperature ranges of -60 degrees Celsius to 150 degrees Celsius.

Batteries in the backpack have a maximum life of 10 hours, which drops to four hours in extreme temperatures (when the conditioning system is working full blast, i.e., below -35 degrees or above 60 degrees). The outer shell is reflectant and fireproof.

The suit comes in three main parts. The bodysuit is light and flexible, similar in appearance to a space suit except without the anti-meteoroid reinforcement plates. The helmet is a transparent dome, giving full 360° vision. A mini-spotlight is mounted on top of the helmet. Fi-



Dan & David Day

■ Aratech 93-B light hovercraft (left), 101-C medium military hover (right) and 109-Z armored cargo hover (top).

nally, comes the backpack — at 10 kilograms, the heaviest part of the suit.

The A-5 provides limited armor protection: +2 against physical attacks, +1 against energy attacks. The helmet provides +1 against physical attacks and no protection against energy attacks.

■ Malik Technologies A-5 Envirosuit

Model: Malik Technologies A-5 Envirosuit

Type: Survival suit

Cost: 1,000

Availability: 2

Game Notes:

Basic Suit: Provides +2 to all physical attacks; +1 to all energy attacks for torso, arms, and legs. Provides +1 to all physical attacks for head (no protection from energy attacks). -1D penalty to all *Dexterity* attribute and skill checks due to bulk.

“Rock Boots”

Reinforced footwear designed to resist the harsh surface of the volcanic badlands, rock boots come in different models for different species. Envirosuit manufacturers typically claim that the footwear of their suits are resistant enough to stand up to the badlands. Understandably, however, few people want to take a chance; it is common practice to wear a pair of rock boots over an envirosuit.

■ Rock Boots

Model: Malik Industries Rock Boots

Type: Survival boots

Cost: 50-200 (depending on species)

Availability: 2

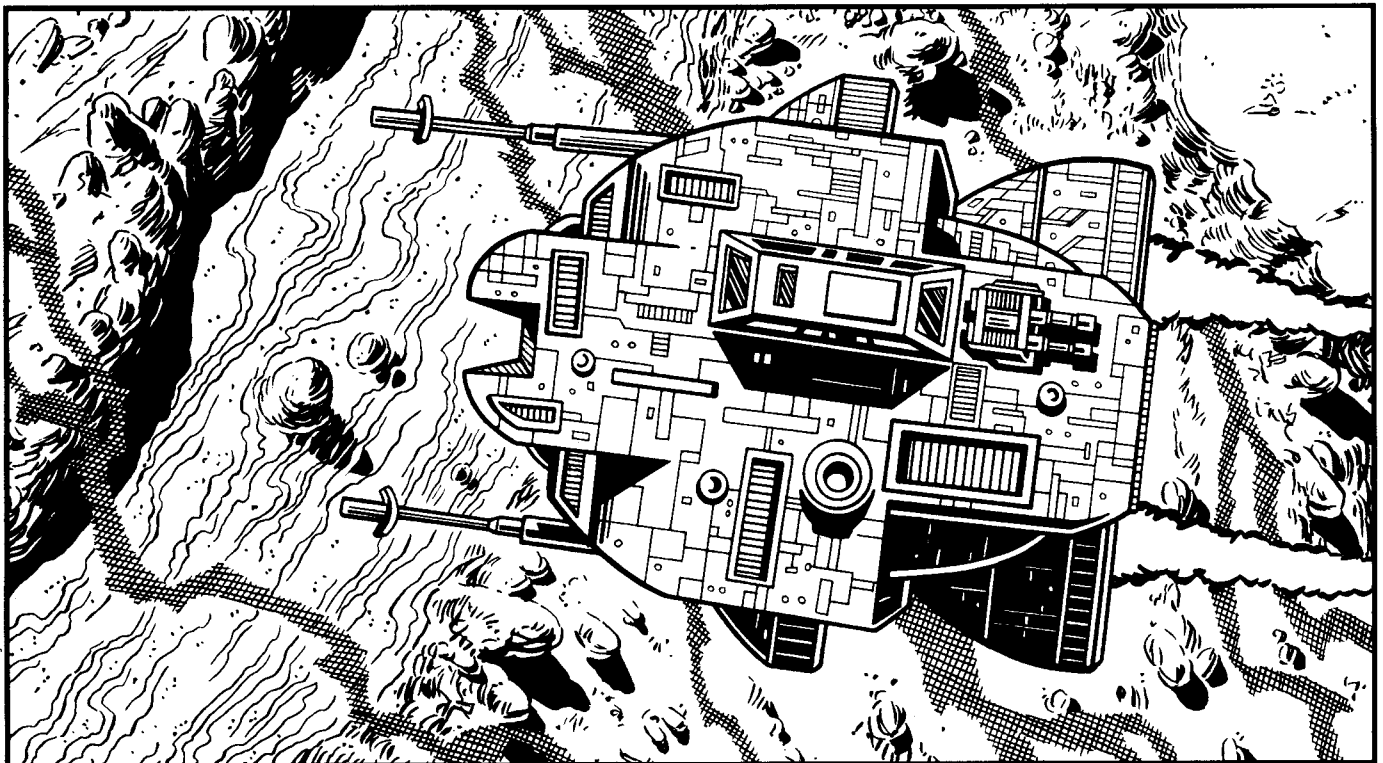
Goroth Planetary Police Armor

Goroth Planetary Police armor serves much the same purpose as stormtrooper armor, so functionally the two types of gear are similar. In appearance, however, they could hardly be more different. Although the Goroth Planetary Police armor shares the same 18-piece-cocoon paradigm, every facet of the design is more angular. There are no smooth, sweeping curves; instead, Goroth Planetary Police armor consists of flat planes and intersecting angles.

Its color, too, is very different: blood-red instead of white. The gaps in stormtrooper armor are missing, replaced by flexible red gaskets. All in all, the suit looks more thoroughly sealed, with the appearance of greater protection over the vulnerable joints.

The “backpack” built into the suit is also larger and heavier than the stormtrooper model. It contains an enhanced version of the “scrubber/rebreather” technology used in envirosuits, extending the life of the air supply to 10 hours. The heating/cooling unit keeps the wearer comfortable in ambient temperatures ranging from -75 degrees to 170 degrees Celsius. Advanced dylinium hydride power packs have a maximum life of 12 hours, dropping to eight in extreme temperature ranges.

Goroth Planetary Police armor has an inte-



Dan & David Day

■ Trask Industries 008 Heavy Landspeeder.

grated multi-band comlink, with a range of 2 kilometers, plus enhanced targeting optics.

■ **Goroth Planetary Police Armor**

Model: Goroth Planetary Police Armor

Type: Specialized personal defense armor

Cost: Not available for sale

Availability: 3. X

Game Notes:

Basic Suit: +2D physical, +1D+1D energy to *Strength* to resist damage. -1D to all *Dexterity* attribute and skill checks.

Comlink: Helmet contains tongue-toggled comlink for instant communication with other units.

Targeting System: Contains a Multi-Frequency Targeting and Acquisition System (MFTAS) which gives +2D to all *Perception* checks in darkness, smoke and other visibility-obscuring conditions. Also gives +2D to ranged weapon skill uses (such as *blaster*) when the user aims for more than one round (in addition to the normal bonus for "preparing," as described on page 65 of *Second Edition*).

Emergency Survival Kit: Incorporated into backpack, including two additional dylinium hydride power packs.

Dedicated Emergency Locator: 150 kilometer range.

■ **Typical Goroth Planetary Police Trooper**

Type: Goroth Planetary Police Trooper

DEXTERITY 2D

Blaster 2D+1, blaster: blaster rifle 3D+2, blaster artillery 3D, brawling parry 2D+2, dodge 3D+1, grenade 3D, vehicle blasters 3D

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Survival 3D, survival: hyperbaride-contaminated environment 4D+2

MECHANICAL 2D

Hover vehicle operation 3D, repulsorlift operation 3D

PERCEPTION 2D

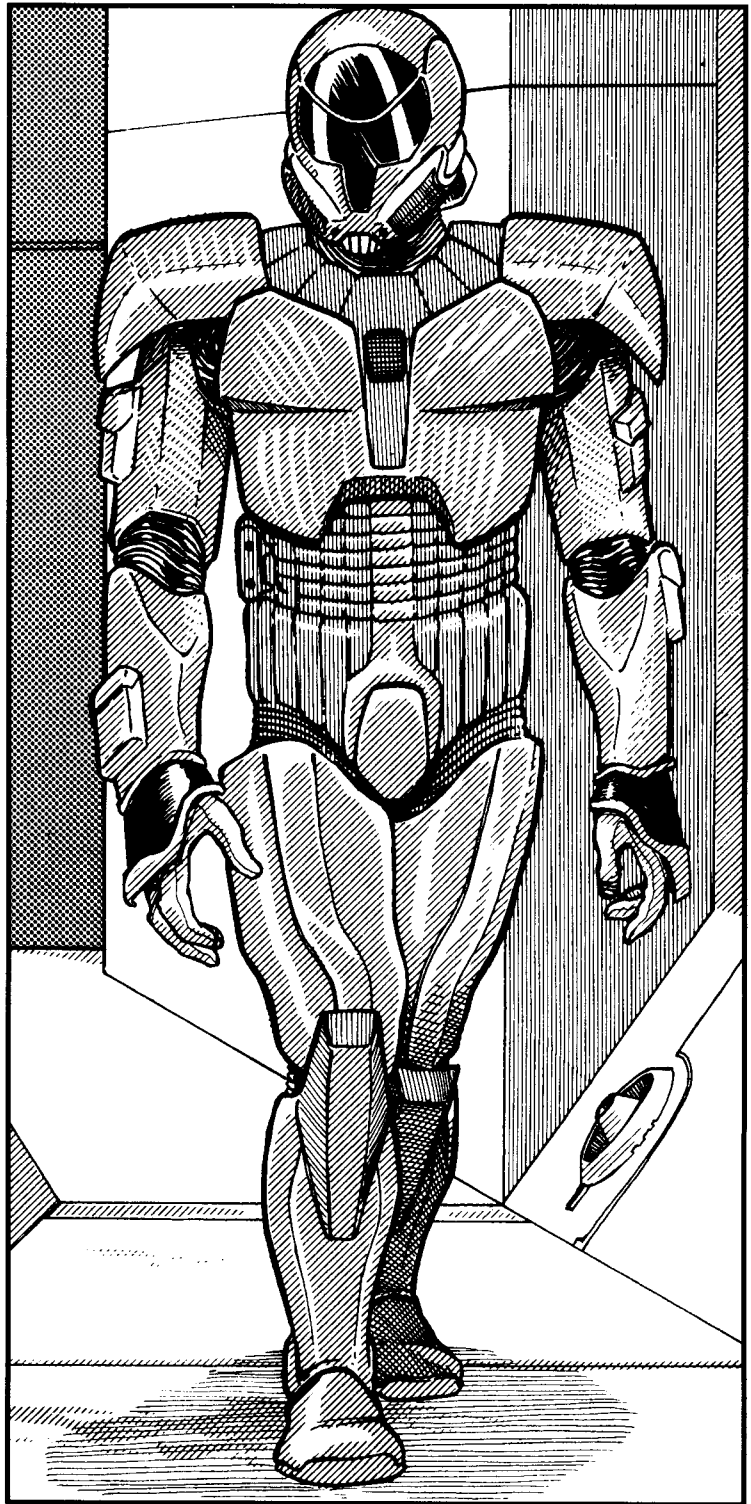
STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 3D, stamina 3D

TECHNICAL 2D

Move: 10

Equipment: Goroth Planetary Police armor (+1D+1D energy, +2D physical, -1D *Dexterity* and all related skills; see above for specifics), blaster rifle (5D), blaster pistol (4D), 2 grenades (4D)



Mike Vilardi

Chapter Nine

Adventures in the Wilderness

Leaving the O'bekis

On most worlds, wild, uninhabited regions are “merely” dangerous: on Goroath, the wilderness can be deadly within a frighteningly short time. Any number of events can strand characters far from a Goroath o'beki, resulting in them having to use their utmost cunning to survive.

When far from the protective pressures of Goroath, characters will have to contend with the poisonous air and water, massive lightning storms, incredible earthquakes, and, of course, the dangerous creatures of Goroath's wilds.

Gamemasters are encouraged to reinforce the characters' sense of isolation and helplessness in this environment. It is assumed that some sort of vehicle or starship malfunction is the most likely event to leave characters stranded in the wilderness; this event is also the one most likely to leave characters without adequate survival gear. Characters will not be able to comlink for assistance, so no one will know what fate has befallen them and no one is going to send help.

Characters may be lucky enough to have water filtration systems and full survival suits in the vehicle, but it is unlikely that they will have more than two or three days worth of rations.

Characters will be left with little choice but to travel overland towards the nearest known settlement. The gamemaster can easily build a true “wilderness” adventure, complete with massive lightning storms, erupting volcanoes and eerie night-time encounters with the nightdevils.

Characters also have excellent opportunities to encounter previously unknown creatures, forgotten Gorothite enclaves (which may be hostile, or may take the characters in) or discover rich concentrations of hyperbaride deposits — information that TaggeCo or another corporation would pay a fortune for.

Living Off the Land

All native Gorothite species incorporate trace elements (and contaminants) from their environ-

ment into their bodies. When these life-forms are eaten as food, those trace elements are passed on to the creatures that ate them. With each step up the “food chain” or “food web” — from “autotrophs” like plants and the equivalent, up toward secondary consumers like predatory carnivores — many of these trace elements are concentrated.

Thus, while the tissue of a plant might contain only small concentrations of a contaminant (such as hollinium chloride and other hyperbaride salts), predators at the top of the food chain might have much larger concentrations in their flesh.

This is the situation on Goroath. At the bottom of the food web are primitive autotrophs similar to mosses (most more advanced forms of plant life became extinct soon after the Scouring). They photosynthesize (in other words, use the energy of the sun to synthesize complex carbohydrates such as sugars, starches and similar chemicals). These mosses — of which there are literally thousands of species — are the ultimate source of food energy for all other creatures on the planet.

Gorothite mosses contain relatively small concentrations of hyperbarides, which they absorb from the rocks on which they grow and from the water that hydrates them. The moss species that have survived are unaffected by these toxins, having built up an innate resistance over the centuries. The primary moss consumers — the herbivores (including the Gorothites) — are also immune to the levels of toxins in the mosses that they eat. (Otherwise, they would have become extinct, too!)

Some of these “heterotrophs” — that is, creatures that live by devouring other creatures — are, in turn, eaten by still other heterotrophs: carnivores and scavengers. In some cases, the cycle turns one or more additional times as well: herbivores are eaten by carnivores, which in turn are eaten by larger carnivores. In all cases, the heterotrophs of Goroath are effectively im-

mune to the levels of toxins in the creatures on which they feed.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of off-worlders. All life-forms on Goroth are poisonous to non-natives. The mosses are the least poisonous of all: any non-Gorothite eating native mosses will lose -1D from both *Strength* and *Dexterity* for a period of 20 hours. The physical symptoms of these losses are agonizing cramps, sweating and dizziness.

This loss is cumulative: if a character eats native mosses again within 20 hours, he will lose a second die from both *Strength* and *Dexterity*. Worse yet, this cumulative loss does not go away until 20 hours after the last time the character ate native foodstuffs. In other words, even the strongest character will eventually die if he has nothing to eat but native mosses.

Example: *Tirog — lost in Yar'En (the "Firelands") without supplies — unwisely decides to settle his hunger pangs by eating some native mosses, at 0100 hours. His Strength and Dexterity — normally 3D+2 and 4D respectively — are now decreased to 2D+2 and 3D respectively. Tirog suffers through the cramps and nausea but he is still starving to death.*

At 2000 hours the same day, he eats another meal of mosses, dropping his Strength and Dexterity to 1D+2 and 2D respectively. Tirog will not regain any of the dice he lost for another 20 hours after his last meal — in other words, at 0400 hours the next day (since Goroth has a 36 hour day).

If he were to eat a third meal of local mosses before that time, his Strength and Dexterity would be 0D+2 and 1D respectively. Tirog would be too weak to walk, and crippled with cramps.

The situation is even worse if off-worlders eat native heterotrophs. A "first-order" heterotroph (in other words, a pure herbivore) is more poisonous than the primitive mosses; a "second-order" heterotroph (a carnivore that eats herbivores, such as a clawcat) is still more poisonous. A third-order heterotroph (a carnivore that preys on other carnivores, like a nightdevil) is the most poisonous of all.

An off-world character that eats the flesh of any native animal loses a certain number of dice from his *Strength* and *Dexterity* in exactly the same was as discussed above for the mosses. The number of dice depends on the "type" of animal involved:

- First-order heterotroph (herbivore): 1D+2
- Second-order heterotroph (carnivore): 2D
- Third-order heterotroph (higher predator): 3D

Only the most resilient of characters will survive more than a single meal of nightdevil flesh (a third-order heterotroph). Certain unwise visitors to Goroth have learned this to their detriment. Against the advice of the Colonial Governor, a visiting Imperial dignitary insisted on organizing a hunting party, which bagged a brace of clawcats. Again contrary to all advice, the dignitary had the "game" cooked up for his dinner ... and promptly died of hyperbaride poisoning.

Plant Life

The mosses of Goroth range from thick, lush growths that thrive in damp areas (bordering rivers, lakes and oceans) and sprout thick beds of slender stalks half a meter tall, to thin and hardy growths more like lichens that seem to extract the moisture they need from the air.

The native plants vary in color from rich, dark greens to striking oranges and yellows, and even as far as garish "neon" shades. All are photosynthetic; the green mosses use chlorophyll or related chemicals, while the more garish species use totally different chemical processes. All absorb hyperbarides and other contaminants from the environment, and all are poisonous to non-native lifeforms.

There are no forests, trees or bushes on Goroth. Different species and morphologies of moss can be found in almost all terrains (except for the highest mountain peaks and the worst of the volcanic badlands). There are some species that thrive in the warm, shallow oceans, either growing on the rocky seabeds or forming great, floating carpets on the surface.

Unlike true mosses, some of the Gorothite flora depend on animals to "cross-pollinate" them or to spread their seeds far and wide. For example, the "king moss" produces seed pods that are the favored food of b'karri. The seeds within these pods cannot germinate until their rock-hard outer coating has been stripped away by the corrosive digestive juices of a b'karr. Once the animal eliminates the undigestible seeds, they quickly sprout and begin a new colony of king moss.

Some of these species use color and appearance cues to attract specific animals. The seed pods of the king moss, again, are a bright yellow — a hue which seems to preferentially attract b'karri.

Many emit characteristic scents, to which specific animals respond. For example, Gorothites can smell a "ripe" colony of phytosus moss — a delicacy — up to half a kilometer away. While native life-forms find most of these scents pleasant and attractive, most off-worlders would rather sniff ammonia or live in a bantha-hide tannery.



Mike Vilardi

■ C'oron bels ("silverjaws") flee an immense jer'usk ("widowmaker"), the behemoth of Goroth's oceans.

Animal Life

Airborne Creatures

There are only a few flying creatures that still flourish on Goroth, and none of them are very big. Only one of these, the skinwing, is a true carnivore (in that it kills its prey), although several (including the highglide) are scavengers. Following are three of the most common airborne creatures on Goroth Prime.

■ M'Ven ("Swooper")

Type: Small avian

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 6D

PERCEPTION 3D+1

STRENGTH 1D

Move: 18 (flying), 6 (walking)

Size: 0.25 meters long, 0.6 meters wingspan.

Capsule: Fast and agile birds, m'vens are the most common creatures in the skies of Goroth. They have coarse black feathers, with a blood-red patch on the chest. They form large, raucous flocks of up to 50 individuals, swooping and chasing each other throughout their territory, screaming loudly at each other with harsh voices. They feed on a single species of moss common throughout all but the polar regions. They are highly territorial, and will swoop down — screaming at the tops of their lungs — at any creature, flying or land-based, that enters their "turf."

While they never physically attack, being beset upon by a flock of 50 m'vens is enough to break the resolve of just about anyone. Both the Gorothites and, recently, the Imperials recognize the territoriality of m'vens. A m'ven "rookery" is better than just about any intrusion alarm, since it cannot be "jammed." Once aroused, the screams of a m'ven rookery can be heard for more than a kilometer.

■ Highglide

Type: Large avian scavenger

DEXTERITY 1D

Dodge 4D

PERCEPTION 4D

Search 5D, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 2D

Special Abilities:

Silent Movement: Due to the arrangement of its feathers, a flying highglide is very difficult to hear. When diving, they add +1D+2 to their *sneak* attempts.

Claws: When diving, highglides rake with their two taloned feet (separate attacks, but normal multi-action penalties). Each inflicts STR+1 damage.

Beak: Highglides can bite with their powerful hooked beaks, but not when stooping on a target. A bite inflicts STR+1 damage.

Move: 16 (flying), 8 (walking)

Size: 0.8 meters long, 1.8-meter wingspan.

Capsule: A solitary, high-flying bird, the highglide holds a place in ancient Gorothite mythology as a symbol of nobility of purpose. In contrast with this imagery, however, the true highglide is a scavenger that subsists on carrion. Nevertheless, it is a beautiful creature: a brilliant emerald-green with faint highlights of blue that appear almost metallic. It

roots in the mountains, but ranges far over the lowlands using its exceptionally acute eyesight to spot prey from great altitude. Although they feed only on the dead, highglides are capable of driving all but the largest predator away from a kill. They are highly protective of their nests and will attack anyone or anything with the temerity or ill luck to approach. Highglides are classed as second-order heterotrophs.

■ Skinwing

Type: Ferocious flying predator

DEXTERITY 2D

Brawling parry 2D+2, dodge 2D+1

PERCEPTION 3D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 4D+1, stamina 4D

Special Abilities:

Claws: Hind claws do STR+1 damage, but only when the creature is airborne.

Bite: A bite does STR+2 damage.

Wing Buffet: A buffet from the creature's large wings does STR+1D stun damage.

Move: 14 (flying), 4 (walking)

Size: 1.8 meters long, 3.0-meter wingspan

Orneriness: 6D

Capsule: The skinwing is a pseudo-mammal that has much the same skull and body conformation as a Gorothite except that the bones of its arms are greatly elongated, and connected to its body by great membranes. The hands lack opposable thumbs; all digits — toes and fingers — are tipped with long, sharp claws. Although clumsy on the ground, the skinwing is an accomplished flier. It prefers to attack its prey by swooping down from above — perhaps launching itself from a cliff above — but it is definitely capable of taking off from the ground and climbing to an altitude of several thousand meters.

The creature is a ferocious and very dangerous predator. They are more common in the mountains, where they have their lairs (typically small caves). Individuals roam far afield, however, and skinwing attacks, though rare, do sometimes occur within o'bekis. Skinwings are dark, muddy brown on their upper surfaces, but are light gray on their undersides. They prey on other flying creatures, and on land animals up to the size of clawcats.

Conceivably, an Ewok or a similarly-sized character could ride a skinwing, but only with the greatest of difficulty. Skinwings are classed as higher predators (third-order heterotrophs).

Ground Creatures

■ B'karr

Type: Scavenger

DEXTERITY 2D

Dodge 5D

PERCEPTION 2D+1

Hide 4D, sneak 4D

STRENGTH 1D

Jumping 3D, Swimming 1D+2

Special Abilities:

Bite: To save its own life, a b'karr will bite, inflicting STR+1 damage.

Poisonous Saliva: If a b'karr's bite actually inflicts damage,

its saliva inflicts an additional 3D stun damage.

Poison Resistance: When resisting damage from poison, b'karri add +3D to their *Strength*.

Camouflage: Because of their natural coloration, b'karri get +1D to *sneak* when hiding in broken rock.

Move: 13

Size: 0.3 meters long

Capsule: B'karri (singular "b'karr") fall somewhere on the spectrum between reptiles and mammals. They are egg-layers; however, they are exotherms and they secrete milk (both genders) to feed their young, once hatched. Their skin is dry and rough, almost scaly, with a very sparse pelt. They are dark gray or black in base color, but striated with bands of gray and brown. In the broken rock of the lowlands, their natural home, this coloration makes them very hard to spot unless they move.

B'karri are almost unbelievably prolific, and are unarguably the most common form of life — bigger than a bacterium, at least — on Goroth. They are basically herbivores, but are not above scavenging from prey left behind by carnivores. Strictly, however, they are classed as first-order heterotrophs. Over the last several centuries, the number of b'karri has increased by at least an order of magnitude. Once limited to the rough foothills of the mountains, now they can be found in all parts of the planet.

Their behavior has changed, too. Once they were relatively solitary, now they travel and feed in packs of up to 50 individuals. Fortunately, they are still timid, and will flee — if they can — from any threat.

Scavenging packs sometimes make their way

into o'bekis, and individuals sometimes find their way inside Imperial and corporate pressures. Most sentient Gorothites accept the increasing numbers of b'karri as just another trial sent to plague them. The off-worlders, however, have been making great efforts of late to exterminate the "lizard-rat plague" with little success. B'karri are nocturnal.

■ Clawcat

Type: Cunning mountain predator

DEXTERITY 2D

Brawling parry 3D, dodge 3D+1

PERCEPTION 3D

Search 4D+1, sneak 5D

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 3D

Special Abilities:

Paws: Do STR+2 damage.

Jaws: Do STR+1D damage.

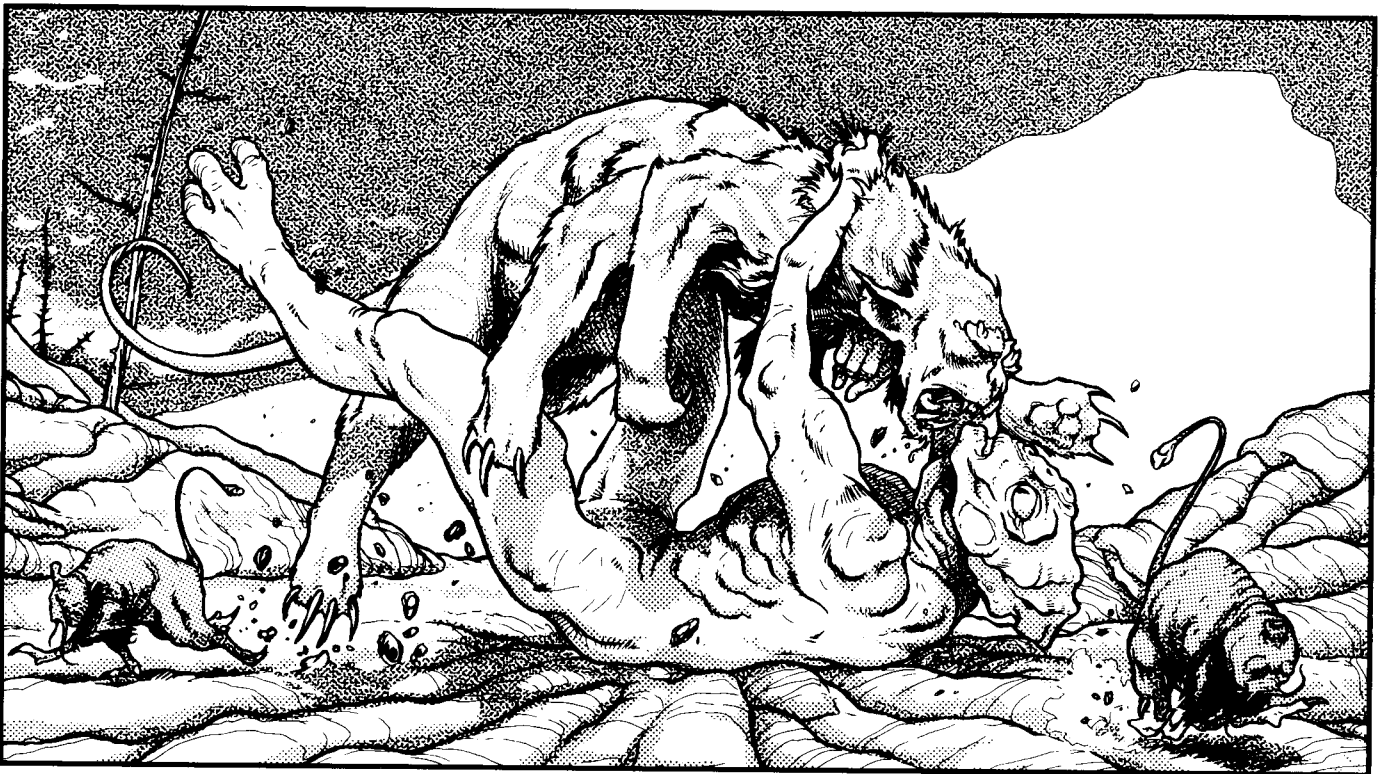
Hunting Cry: When they attack, clawcats emit a piercing, high-pitched scream. This hunting cry is so loud and shrill that it inflicts 2D+2 stun damage on any creature — other than itself or another clawcat — within 10 meters (the cry itself can be heard much further away, but it doesn't do damage). This damage cannot be dodged, and body armor has no effect. A blast helmet gives +1 protection, while a sealed helmet — stormtrooper armor, for example — gives +1D protection. A clawcat can cry once per round.

Move: 16

Size: 0.8–1.0 meters tall at the shoulder, up to 2.5 meters long

Orneriness: 6D

Capsule: Clawcats are fast and agile six-legged predators. They are native to the rough mountains of Goroth, typically preying on b'karri and other small



Mike Vizard

■ A clawcat tackles a nightdevil while b'karr scramble to safety.

herbivores. They are totally fearless, however, and will attack anything — even a nightdevil — that they encounter. Although they are fast enough to chase down many smaller animals, they prefer to lie in wait for their prey, and then leap from ambush. When they attack, they rear up — supported by their two hindmost pairs of legs — and deliver raking blows with their elongated front limbs. If the prey is close enough, they will also deliver a damaging bite. Once engaged, a clawcat will not withdraw from a fight unless it is mortally wounded. Fortunately, clawcats are solitary hunters (if they worked out any kind of cooperative tactics, travelers in the mountains would be in serious trouble!). They will attack and kill prey even when they are not hungry, despoiling anything they do not eat.

Clawcats are slender, wiry and extremely fast-looking. They are mammals, and are covered with a short but thick pelt of dark brown fur, shading to gray on the underside. Their eyes are small and well-protected by bony brow ridges. Long fangs protruding from their lower jaw extend past their lips even when their mouths are shut. Clawcats are diurnal. They are classed as second-order heterotrophs.

■ Nightdevil

Type: Semi-intelligent mountain predator

DEXTERITY 3D

Brawling parry 3D+2, thrown weapons 3D+2

PERCEPTION 2D

Search 3D, sneak 2D+2

STRENGTH 7D

Special Abilities:

Claws: Do STR+1D damage.

Jaws: Do STR+2 damage.

Low-Light Vision: Nightdevils can see in very dim light (verging on total darkness) at no penalty. If exposed to “bright” light (anything brighter than a typical noon on Goroth), they suffer a +1D penalty to all actions based on vision.

Smell: Nightdevils have a highly developed sense of smell, getting a +2D to search when tracking by scent.

Projectiles: Nightdevils often throw rocks, up to 30 cm in diameter, as projectiles. Range for a typical rock the size of a Human’s head is 2-3/5/10 meters, and will do STR+1D damage.

Move: 10

Size: 2.5–2.8 meters tall

Capsule: Very rare nowadays, nightdevils are primitive relatives of sentient Gorothites whose branch of the evolutionary tree diverged long ago. They are taller, broader and much stronger than their intelligent relatives. Their skulls are quite different in shape: nightdevils’ foreheads slope back much more sharply, vastly reducing the size of the brain case. Also, their eyes are larger, and are positioned more to the sides of their skulls. Otherwise, however, they strongly resemble Gorothites.

In the high and rugged mountains, nightdevils are the pinnacle of the food chain. The fact that they seem to be dying out could well arise from the fact that contaminants are concentrated the higher one goes up the food chain. They usually hunt by night — hence their name — but are sometimes abroad by daylight. Their eyes allow them to see without difficulty — and without penalty — in all but total darkness. They shun bright lights, however (“bright”

in this context meaning “considerably more brilliant than a typical Goroth noon”).

By night, nightdevils use their developed sense of smell to locate the lairs of clawcats and other prey. Using their strong limbs, they tear open the lairs and feed. They prefer the young — since they don’t fight back so hard — but will be quite glad to gobble down an adult clawcat or two if nothing else is available.

Nightdevils are classed as “semi-intelligent,” but this really only applies to hunting tactics. They have an innate sense of tactics, and are almost impossible to surprise. They typically hunt in pairs; one will often chase its chosen prey into an ambush, where the other kills the target with thrown or dropped rocks. Nightdevils have no language, however. They are cunning enough to recognize a losing fight — unlike clawcats — and will avoid stronger foes.

Instinctively, it seems, nightdevils avoid settlements of Gorothites. The two species rarely come into contact, and when they do, nightdevil attacks against Gorothites are exceptionally rare. This is not true for Humans and other off-world species, however, as Imperial and corporate prospectors have found out to their terminal detriment. Nightdevils are third-order heterotrophs.

Ocean Creatures

■ C’oron Bel (“Silverjaw”)

Type: Fast aquatic predator

DEXTERITY 2D

PERCEPTION 3D

Search 4D

STRENGTH 2D+2

Stamina 3D+2

Special Abilities:

Jaws: Do STR+2D damage.

Charge: The c’oron bel can, with a sufficient “run-up,” hurl itself rapidly onto the shore, to pursue prey near the water’s edge. This “charge” has an effective Move of 18, but can extend no more than two meters from the water’s edge.

Armor: The c’oron bel disposes of excess hyperbarides by incorporating metal salts into its scales. As hard as metal, these scales provide +1D protection against physical attacks, but no protection against energy attacks.

Move: 18 (swimming), 6 (land)

Size: 1.5–1.8 meters long

Capsule: Long, slender and very fast, the c’oron bel is a ferocious aquatic predator, feeding on smaller fish and anything else it can sink its teeth into. Its external anatomy matches the standard fish paradigm. It looks roughly like a long, tapered cylinder, with a broad caudal fin and small maneuvering fins along its length. Its snout is elongated; like some species of reptiles, it can unhinge its jaws, allowing it to swallow surprisingly large targets.

Like many Gorothite fish, the c’oron bel is able to breathe air for short periods of time, respiring through a modified swim-bladder that serves as a single primitive lung. Its forefins are thick and muscular, and it can drag itself — albeit slowly — on land. The c’oron bel seems to be eternally hungry, and it will attack just about anything, regardless of size. Land animals are not safe from its

attack; if it spots an animal — up to and including Human-sized! — within a meter or so of the shore (perhaps taking a drink), the creature can surge up out of the water in a kind of “charge” attack. Once on land, the creature can remain out of water for up to 10 minutes. Before it can breathe air, however, it must empty the water from its gullet, which it does with a loud, distinctive barking sound. The c’oron bel is classed as a third-degree heterotroph.

■ Jer’usk (“Widowmaker”)

Type: Gargantuan aquatic predator

DEXTERITY 1D

PERCEPTION 2D

STRENGTH 2D

Stamina 12D

Special Abilities:

Jaws: Do STR+1D damage.

Tail-Slap: A blow from the creature’s huge tail does STR+2D damage (speeder scale).

Broach: By hurling itself almost totally clear of the water, a jer’usk can crash down upon its prey in a punishing impact. A broach inflicts 5D damage (speeder scale).

Armor: Like the c’oron bel, the jer’usk disposes of excess hyperbarides by depositing the material as crystalline matter within its thick skin. This material provides +2D protection against physical attacks, but only +2 protection against energy attacks.

Engulf: A jer’usk can swallow whole any single creature of up to Wookiee sized with a successful bite. Rather than doing damage, the attack engulfs the character. Each turn thereafter, the engulfed victim takes 4D damage (character scale) from digestive juices; this damage cannot be dodged, although armor has normal effects. The character can cut or blast his way out presuming he has a suitable weapon on hand (a blaster, perhaps, or ideally a vibro weapon or lightsaber). A jer’usk has no armor protecting its innards. If the character within — entirely on his own — can inflict a wound on the creature, he has cut his way free.

Move: 21 (swimming)

Size: 75 meters long

Scale: Speeder

Orneriness: 6D

Capsule: The largest life-form on Gorothe, the jer’usk (plural “jer’uskae”) is a terrifyingly immense animal that is as ornery as it is large. It is a pure water-breather, incapable of breathing air.

It normally cruises near the surface of the ocean, visible as a huge, dark shape. Its bulk is such that even when it does not break the surface it creates a visible wake. Although it generally cruises slowly, when it wants to — when it is hunting, for example — it is capable of bursts of great speed. When

sprinting, it is capable of “broaching” — of hurling itself almost totally clear of the water, to splash down again with great impact. (This is a hunting technique; the pressure wave it creates often stuns its prey.)

Generally, jer’uskae are totally unconcerned with surface vessels, or vehicles like speeders flying low over the oceans; the huge creatures simply pay no attention. During their mating season, however, and while the males are rearing their calves, adults are particularly ornery, and will attack anything that comes near them. Low-flying speeders are not safe: a broaching jer’usk can arch 20 meters or more out of the water to pluck a low-altitude “inter-loper” from the air!

Jer’uskae are third-order heterotrophs, feeding on other aquatic carnivores. Their thick, hard skin is rich in hyperbarides and the corporations have begun an experimental “harvest” of jer’uskae using heavily-modified skiffs — armed with two power harpoons — as “harvesting platforms.” In the areas where this harvest has taken place — limited to the Ulan Bight, at the moment — the jer’uskae have become hypersensitive about any vehicle on or near the surface of the ocean, attacking on sight. There are hints that jer’uskae can hunt cooperatively: some months ago, four huge jer’uskae cooperated to smash a TaggeCo “harvesting skiff.”

■ Harvesting Skiff

Craft: Ubrikkian SuperHaul Model IIA mod 3

Type: Modified Cargo Skiff

Scale: Speeder

Length: 12 meters

Skill: Repulsorlift operation: skiff (unskilled: -2D)

Crew: 2, gunners: 2

Passengers: 2

Cargo Capacity: 150 metric tons

Cover: 1/2

Altitude Range: Ground level–20 meters

Cost: 32,000

Maneuverability: 0D

Move: 45; 130 kmh

Body Strength: 2D+2

Weapons:

Two Power Harpoons

Fire Arc: 1 front, 1 back

Crew: 1

Skill: Missile weapons

Fire Control: 1D

Range: 25-50/100/200

Damage: 3D

Chapter Ten

Story Starters

Gamemasters should have little trouble finding scores of “adventure hooks” in the preceding source material. The internecine squabbles between the military services, the corporations and the underground groups are prime sources for interesting adventures.

To help further, this chapter provides a range of “adventure seeds” to involve any and all types of characters (Rebels, smugglers, free-traders, corporate mercenaries, bounty hunters, and so forth) with the emerging crisis on Goroth. Each adventure seed will focus on one or more character types, but creative gamemasters should have little difficulty modifying them so they are appropriate for any mix of characters that happens to be in the game.

Rogue

A Rebel general has “gone rogue.” Unilaterally, she has decided that Goroth is a significant target because it is a key source of strategic resources for the Empire. Crippling the hyperbaride production on Goroth would hurt the Empire badly, and thus help the Rebel Alliance. Supported by a team personally loyal to her, she has started to smuggle sophisticated weapons to some of the more militant underground organizations on Goroth Prime. She believes — correctly — that one of the major obstacles holding back the T’B’Dellyi’Mai (“Freedom Action Council”) and K’Len J’Bar Kasoon is a lack of serious weaponry. By removing that obstacle, she believes she can significantly change the dynamic on Goroth, making it impossible for the Empire to continue producing hyperbarides.

The Rebel Alliance leadership believes she is right — but they fear that she has not adequately considered the consequences of her action. Even with a stash of weapons, the underground will not be able to remove the Imperial presence from Goroth. All they will be able to do is make it financially impossible for the corporations and the Empire to continue “business as usual.” What

will the Empire’s reaction be? An all too likely response will be sterilization of the planet — perhaps using bioagents delivered in missiles from orbit. With the world cleansed of the “troublesome Gorothites,” the Empire would like as not reestablish the hyperbaride facilities using other “client-workers” shipped in from other systems.

The characters’ job is to travel to Goroth and stop the rogue general before her program of arming the insurrectionists goes any further. They must operate under several major constraints. First, nobody knows who the rogue general’s contacts are on the planet. Second, the characters cannot let the other Gorothite resistance movements — particularly the conservative Gor’Jen’Ar (“Committee for Free Goroth”) — know that there is a schism within the Rebel Alliance. Thirdly — and most importantly of all — they must prevent the Empire from getting the slightest hint of what is happening. If the Empire comes to realize that such a scenario *might* be played out — if not now, then in the future — they might decide to take preemptive action.

Passive Resistance

Over the last several months, heavy Imperial crackdowns have led to the capture and execution of more than two dozen members of the various resistance groups. Morale in the underground has been plunging.

But that plunge now seems to have come to an end. A new resistance group — calling itself J’Mer Sab (“Night Wind”) — has sprung up, seemingly out of nowhere. This new group has claimed responsibility for several recent cases of limited (but highly effective) sabotage. In each case, the actual physical damage caused was minor but it was so strategic that it caused slowdowns in entire processing plants. J’Mer Sab’s reputation is growing by leaps and bounds. Members of K’Len J’Bar Kasoon who are tiring of the group’s high attrition rate are starting to flock to J’Mer

Sab, while those members of the Gor'Jen'Ar who are frustrated by the organization's conservative agenda are also starting to look favorably on the newcomer.

Through various sources, the characters have learned that J'Mer Sab is a fraud — a fake organization set up by the Colonial Government, using “trustees” from among the native population, designed to suck personnel and resources away from the real resistance groups. Once J'Mer Sab has expanded sufficiently — in other words, once a large number of true resistance members are sucked in — the Colonial Governor will “bust” the organization and net all of them. This will be a heavy blow against the “legitimate” resistance movements, and a major victory for Governor Limoth.

The characters' task, then, is to stop this from happening: to penetrate J'Mer Sab, and expose it as the sham that it is. Not only will this save the true resistance movement from a crushing defeat, but it will also strike a major morale blow against Limoth. Unfortunately, this will be easier said than done. J'Mer Sab has as intense security as any real resistance movement. Its “legitimate” members — those “true believers” who have been sucked in — will automatically distrust any off-worlders who try to pry. And the “trustees” who are at the heart of J'Mer Sab have even greater reason to distrust outsiders.

Take a Letter

Through their Gorothite contacts, the characters have learned that a member of the Gor'Jen'Ar has a package that she wants shipped off-planet and distributed to as many other worlds as possible. This package reputedly contains a detailed description of the Empire's oppressive activities and, for the first time, incontrovertible proof of that oppression. (Up until now, all the manifestos sent off-world by the Gor'Jen'Ar have been rather long on rhetoric and opinion, but notably short on indisputable fact.)

When the characters investigate, they find that their source is reliable. Presumably, they will make arrangements for the turnover. Unfortunately, the Empire (or perhaps one of the corporate security arms) has penetrated at least one cell of the Gor'Jen'Ar organization. The manifesto the characters have learned of is a fake — bait to draw a few more loyal Gor'Jen'Ar members and their off-worlder contacts into a trap. Can the characters discover this and save themselves (and their Gorothite contact) from this “sting” operation?

All That Glitters

One of the characters is a gambler, and has come to Goroth — accompanied by the others — to check out the casino. They meet another professional gambler, by the name of “Jerth Merin.” Over a number of days, the gambler character starts to realize that there is more to Merin than there appears.

Meanwhile, “Merin” — actually Lt. Jered Pole — is in trouble. One of his major contacts within the Gorothite underground seems to have been “turned” by Imperial security. Although this contact does not know Pole's name — real or assumed — she *does* know enough to let the Imperials eventually track him down. Jered has to get off-planet — ending his usefulness to the Operation Starbird, of course — or find some other way to cover his tracks.

The characters could get drawn into the fray in many different ways. Perhaps they will learn Pole's real identity and function, and choose to help him get off-planet and then take his place as an information conduit. Or perhaps they can track down Pole's contact — who was not “turned”, but only captured for interrogation — and rescue her. Or they could even find some other way of eliminating the evidence that will lead the Imperials to Pole.

STAR WARS®

GOROTH SLAVE OF THE EMPIRE

by Nigel D. Findley

Four thousand years ago, Goroath was a beautiful trade world. Caught between two warring factions that coveted its resources, Goroath was too difficult to occupy, yet too valuable to remain free. The solution was destruction: after "The Scouring," Goroath was forever changed into a wasteland.

Now, the native Goroathites are beginning to rebuild their civilization, but the horrors of the past have come to haunt the present.

Yet again the world is caught between two warring factions: the Empire and the Rebel Alliance.

Yet again the world is too valuable to remain free: rich deposits of hyperbarides have brought the galaxy's megacorporations.

Will Goroath suffer the same fate a second time?

A STAR WARS®

S U P P L E M E N T

For ages 12 and up.

©, TM & © 1995 Lucasfilm Ltd. (LFL). All Rights Reserved.
Trademarks of LFL used by West End Games under authorization.

A supplement for use with *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*



40098

0-87431-250-7 \$15.00



0 18874 40098 7